



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**  
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**BEMBA WORK SONGS AS LITERARY FORMS: FUNCTIONS  
AND SYMBOLISM**



**BY**

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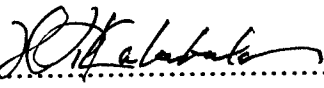
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD  
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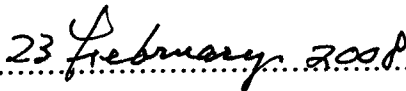
**DECEMBER 2007**

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## DECLARATION

I, HATSUKO TAKARA-KALABULA, do hereby solemnly declare ~~that~~ this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for an award of a Master's degree in Literature at this or any other University.

Signature  .....

Date  .....

## DEDICATION

I solemnly dedicate this Master of Arts in Literature dissertation to my late parents CHUGEN and KIYOKO TAKARA and my late husband Dr. DARLINGTON MWAMBA KALABULA.

I deeply appreciate your support, encouragement throughout my study programme.

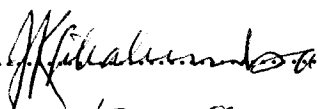
I pay special tribute to Okinawan Youths who lost their lives in the Second World War. MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.


I also profoundly dedicate this work to Zambian Youths.

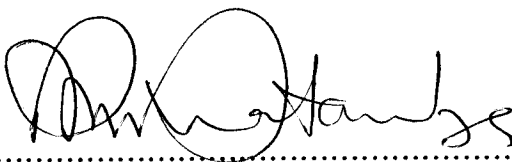
## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by HATSUKO TAKARA-KALABULA is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in English literature of the University of Zambia.

### Examiners

Signed..........  
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Date .28/02/08

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to collect and discover the efficacy of Bemba work songs and how they could influence the upbringing of the younger Bemba generation. The study was intended as referred to above, to collect, interpret and analyse the literary forms used in them bringing out the functions and symbolism. The analysis was made to gauge what contributions the Bemba work songs made in the development of well-rounded Bemba youths who could be relied on to become leaders in the Bemba societies.

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The study used qualitative methods in collecting data. A combination of data collection methods such as observation, asking questions, focus group discussion with various age-groups, and a self-administered questionnaire was used with what the researcher considered educated leaders who had made a lot of contributions to the educational, cultural and social life in Bemba societies.

Over twenty-five various songs were collected from five villages which were randomly selected. The random selection was made with an understanding that living in the same geographical areas during the same period, would make respondents familiar with work songs sung in these areas. Fifty participants all aged above forty years were randomly selected. In addition, the (10) participants from institutions of higher learning, twenty (20) youths –10 from urban and 10 from rural areas, who the researcher thought would and would not have any experience in work songs took part in focus group discussions.

The study revealed that most work songs sung by men were very simple two stanza ones which were repeated over and over in order to go with the rhythm and tempo of work.

The use of similes, metaphors, imagery and euphemism was seemingly missing. It was also revealed that the work songs that men sing are limited because the bulk of men's work do not need singing as this would disrupt concentration. The younger Bemba people were not involved in the work songs of their elderly parents.

As a consequence of the above findings, the researcher made a number of recommendations.

Among these recommendations are that:

1. Literary group activities should be established at community level where the young Bemba would express themselves in the oral literature for them to grow up as well-rounded future leaders of their societies.
2. Reading and discussion circles where contributions made by experienced leaders in their societies would be read, discussed and emulated.
3. **Establishment** of firm literary foundation in schools, community centres, etc., where African literature and artefacts can be created, appreciated and preserved for future generations.



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions and significance of the study are presented. A much elongated background has been included to elucidate the importance of the study.

### **BACKGROUND**

It is generally believed that most Bantu groups had no written language until the late nineteenth century when the Europeans came to Africa. It was believed that all Bantu history, culture and any artefacts were transmitted by the word of mouth from generation to generation. This was popularly referred to as “Oral Literature”. Oral literature is intricately related to the social environment of the people who create and perform it. As the creative expression of a people’s culture, it manipulates language to express their values, beliefs, traditions and entire worldview. No culture is static; culture develops alongside the progression of history. These oral literary works included traditional poems and stories that had been preserved and passed on to the younger generations from mouth to mouth orally. It is believed that a lot of wisdom was preserved in proverbs and songs.

More than fifty years ago, despite the work of Islamic scholars and oral historians, it was widely assumed that Africa had no history that nothing of any great importance had happened in Africa until the end of the nineteenth century and the invasions by colonial powers. It is imperative that no one can be excused for believing this any longer.

Beginning with the work of the Nigerian scholar Omwuka Dike in 1956, the study of African history has grown to the point where our knowledge of significant change in African societies extends back many centuries. There is a sense, though, in which our appreciation of the literatures of Africa, and especially African oral literature, has not yet caught up with this expanding knowledge. We still speak of oral 'traditions'; we collect proverbs, riddles, songs and folktales; we talk of 'heritage,' which is rapidly disappearing with the advent of modernity. Today, as in the colonial period, our emphasis when speaking of African achievements in oral literature is on changelessness and continuity – on stories passed from one generation to the next, on customs and community sayings preserved by the elders, the whole making up a 'culture' of the type celebrated so vividly in Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart.'

There are two things to be said about this. First, just as three-quarters of the people of modern Africa continue to live outside the cities, so an even higher proportion of the literature created in modern Africa continues to be oral. So far from dying under the impact of western ways, oral literature remains a vigorous art, rooted in rural communities but flourishing too in the towns. It is adapting to modern circumstances just as it is adapted to and reflected change in the past.

The second thing is that without wishing to criticize proverbs, trickster tales and animal stories, it is misleading to give them the prominence they have been accorded in the past. Colonial anthropologists had their own reasons for emphasizing the role of 'folklore'. Not only were such items much easier to collect in the days before tape-recorders, they were also very easy to fit into the overall picture of an Africa that was

assumed to have no history, where life was believed to consist of the repetition of the same patterns and the same simple forms of knowledge over the generations.

Each human community engages in social activities and, at the same time, observes itself and makes value judgements on its own behaviour. In other words, each community turns its own eyes upon itself and looks at what it does; each community turns its own ears upon itself and listens to its own utterances. On the basis of what it sees and what it hears, a community describes itself and evaluates its own activities.

Song is perhaps the most powerful genre of oral literature because of its versatility and communicability. It is distinguished from the oral narrative not only by its mode of performance and use of verse, but also by its extensive use of imagery and symbolic language. Song has permeated so many areas of Bemba people's social existence that it requires somewhat extensive classification into many sub-categories. These are lullabies and children's songs, songs for childbirth and child naming ceremonies, initiation songs, wedding songs, work songs, satirical songs, war poetry, political songs, praise songs, ballads, epics, funeral and ritual, and songs on cultural transition.

In this researcher's opinion, the eyes of a poet discover in each person a unique and irreplaceable humanity. While arrogant intellect seeks to control and manipulate the world, the poetic spirit bows with reverence before its mysteries. The poetic spirit can be found in any human endeavour. It may be vibrantly active in the heart of a scientist

engaged in research in the awed pursuit of truth. When the spirit of poetry lives within us, even objects do not appear as mere things; our eyes are trained on an inner spiritual reality. A flower is not just a flower. The moon is no mere clump of matter floating in the skies. Our gaze fixed on a flower or the moon, we intuitively perceive the unfathomable bonds that link us with the world. A poet is one who offers people words of courage and hope, seeking the perspective – one step deeper, one step higher – that makes tangible the enduring spiritual realities of our lives. The poet does not use language as we do in ordinary communication. Words in poetry and indeed, in songs are not tools designed for a particular function, but have an aesthetic quality and a creative purpose which we, the readers respond to and enjoy. As Sarvan and Crehan (1986) postulate, poetry begins historically, as an oral form. Religious prayers and hymns, ritual incantations, praise songs, ballads and epics were transmitted orally from generation to generation long before they came to be written down. Poetry is often defined as the arrangement of words in the best possible order (Miruka, 2001 p89). Inherent in this definition is the element of beauty but that beauty is not in the order of words. It is in the choice of those words (diction), their arrangement (syntax), and their layers of meaning that accrue from their usage (polysemy, ambiguity) as well as the licence with which poets create new words (coinage) as we see in Bemba songs. Poetry and songs have the power to change circumstances in any society. For example, in the apartheid system of racial discrimination or racial segregation in South Africa considered a grave crime against humanity was committed, Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali, in resisting and combating this evil used the only weapon of keen sword of words to fight iniquities of apartheid. Poetry became his greatest weapon and the use of words played an important role.

As Mtshali writes “Poetry reawakens and reinforces our real, innermost strength, our spirituality. It is the force that makes us decent people, empathetic with those in need, or pain, those suffering from injustice and other wrongs or societal ills”. Mtshali has this verbal magic; for the reader he makes-by-naming areas of experience that for fellow blacks, will provide a shock of recognition, and for whites, a revelation of a world they live in and never know (Mtshali, 1971).

In the opinion of the present writer, it is envisaged that now more than ever, society needs the thunderous, rousing voice of poetry and a return to the lost glorious roots which they treasure and nurture in their poetic hearts, enabling them to grow so that they also lead adult lives into realms of discovery.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The current times seem to have alienated the younger generation from the traditions of their ancestors. For example, they do not seem to take interest in the traditional work songs but have opted to modern and global songs and dances such as Rap, R and B, and Hip Hop that have distanced them from their traditional roots. The almost deplorable status of a younger generation drifting away from their traditional roots has prompted the present researcher to find out how the younger Bemba generation could develop interest in the traditional work songs in order to preserve them for posterity.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to attempt to delve into the Bemba work songs to discover their efficacy and roles they play in the upbringing of the younger Bemba generations.

Further, the study was intended to collect, classify and analyze the Bemba work songs literary forms in order to gauge what contributions these songs make in developing well-rounded Bemba youths.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study was to collect and classify as many task-specific Bemba songs particularly those being sung while working. In order to help the researcher come up with tangible data on this important task, the objectives of this study were as listed below:

1. To collect the Bemba work songs.
2. To investigate ways in which Bemba work songs influence the younger generation and the community.
3. To examine the literary forms engaged in these songs.
4. To evaluate the situations in which work songs can become effective.
5. To examine the ways in which these Bemba work songs are preserved for future generations.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To fulfill the objectives of the study, the following questions were asked:

1. How do the Bemba work songs come about?
2. In which ways do the Bemba work songs influence the younger generation?
3. What literary forms are engaged in these songs?
4. In which situations do the Bemba work songs become effective?
5. How are these Bemba work songs preserved for future generations?



## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It was hoped that going back to the roots of indigenous Bemba work songs and showing their functions, symbolism and literary forms as the way of the peoples' expression of their feelings, and as a way of preserving and passing their culture on to the younger generation, would help the Bemba and other interested people, particularly the scholars to re-instil the required expectations of the Bemba young people's wellbeing.

It was further hoped that bringing these work songs to the fore, would help readers understand the thinking processes that go through the minds of the singers as they sing on Bemba indigenous themes as stated in the background or introduction and the statement of the problem of this study.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As the study was set in a rural area, there were a number of limitations for the researcher to overcome. Among these limitations were:

- the researcher was among the respondents who spoke Bemba, a language she did not fully understand,
- the research site was not easily reachable by car. A distance of more than eight kilometers from the tarred road was covered on foot, along a long-grown footpath with overhanging ferns and brushes,
- the researcher had to cover a distance of over two thousand kilometers in total travelling to and from the research site,

- there was no running water from taps as the researcher is accustomed to which meant trekking to the river to draw water for washing the body and clothes,
- there was no electricity and all the necessary facilities associated with electricity in the houses where the researcher had to sleep with the respondents,
- since in the rural towns the fuel is higher than in cities and towns like Lusaka, it was rather expensive to drive from Lusaka to as far as Mbala to collect data, but overall.
- the research was expensive, tiring, stressful but rewarding.

## **LITERARY DEFINITIONS USED IN THE STUDY**

**Alliteration:** The repetition of consonants or vowels at the beginning of words, or of stressed syllables within words.

**Allusion:** A brief reference to a person, place of event, either in history or previous literature which the reader is assumed to know.

**Assonance:** The repetition of identical or related vowel sounds, especially in stressed syllables, or of identical consonants with different vowels.

**Cisungu:** Bemba traditional ceremony for girls at becoming of age.

**Diction:** The selection of words, i.e. the 'vocabulary' used in a work of literature.

**Euphony:** The use of pleasant and musical diction.

**Figurative language:** The use of metaphor and simile.

**Hyperbole:** Extravagant exaggeration.

**Imagery:** Basically, anything descriptive and evocative in poetry, anything which helps to visualize or ‘realize’ a scene or situation. Sometimes the word imagery is used in a fairly narrow sense, to signify metaphors and similes, and the various figures of speech.

**Imbusa:** Bemba secret wedding paraphernalia.

**Irony:** This refers to one thing being said when the opposite is implied. This is the underlying mode of satire, comedy, and many sub-divisions such as sarcasm, ridicule and mockery.

**Metaphor:** A word or phrase, which in ordinary usage signifies one thing, is made to stand for another, e.g. the moon was like a silver coin.

**Mood:** Atmosphere of a song or poem.

**Onomatopoeia:** The use of words which resemble – or enact – the sounds they describe.

**Repetition:** Repeated phrases, words, lines or stanzas in a poem or song.

**Personification:** Lifeless objects and animals are given human attributes.

**Rhyme:** Repetition of the same sound at the end of the poem or song.

**Rhythm:** Pace of delivery to suit the kind of event.

**Simile:** A direct comparison between two essentially different things, introduced by the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.

**Stanza:** A stanza is a division in the formal pattern of a poem or song, signified by a space between groups of lines.

**Structure:** The organization or total design of a particular poem or song; the ‘form’ to which all the parts contribute.

**Style:** The characteristic manner of expression in a poem or song; how it says what it says, and is what it is.

**Symbol:** At its simplest, a 'symbol' is any word or thing taken to represent something else, especially an abstract concept.

**Symbolism:** Using the name of one thing to represent another.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In this chapter, the relevant literature that has to do with poetry, songs and culture has been reviewed. The literature search for work songs without the discussion of culture would be incomplete. It is, therefore, imperative to discuss what culture is before discussing songs in general and work songs in particular, in this literature review.

Culture can be defined as the complete way of life of a group of people or society. It includes all aspects of a people's way of life such as the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the type of housing they live in, their sporting activities, music, dance, beliefs, values, attitudes, symbols and meanings, ideas of beauty, economic activities, education system, their legal and political systems, the fundamental rights of a human being, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects of a society. A cultural group has members sharing an area, language and feels responsible for each other. People become useful members of their society as they learn and take part in its social norms. Culture also includes an individual's or group's way of responding to survival issues.

Culture is dynamic, which means that it is a process that is subject to on-going change. A culture is governed by core values. It is seen through traditions and forms of expression.

(<http://www.newi.acuk/rdoover/med-stud/culture.htm>).

Work songs fall under what can be defined as 'oral literature'. According to Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) oral literature may be defined as "those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristic of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression". It consists of narratives, recitations, songs, proverbs and riddles which are composed and performed orally to a live audience. These oral genres are literature because, like written literature, language is their medium of communication. Their artistry emanates from the fact that they "move us by appealing to both our understanding and feelings (Ibid 1983, p.1).

Chesaina (1997) postulates that Oral Literature is one of the most vibrant aspects of African's cultural heritage. He further maintains that if culture is a dynamic process, then it is inevitable that Oral Literature should be equally dynamic. Oral Literature is both a reservoir and a creative expression of cultural values; hence, it is a vehicle for propelling a society along its moral path. It is an art based on the cultural aesthetics of people so that, besides giving a society a sense of direction, it also responds to the human need to appreciate beauty, and in this way contributes towards making the world a better place to live in.

Scholars seem to agree that performance in oral literature entails all variegated oral potentialities that contribute to the effectiveness of oral transmission. Therefore, apart from allusions and other metaphorical associations of the verbal aspects of oral literature, the real exposition of an oral creation depends on actual performance.

In other words, although contemporary oral literature has managed to exist in the written form, it does not attain its true fulfilment. According to Finnegan (1977) "The printed words alone represent only a shadow of the full actualization of the poem as an aesthetic experience for poet and audience. For, quite apart from the separate question of the overtones and symbolic associations of words and phrases, the actual enactment of the poet also involves the emotional situation, for instance, such as that of a funeral (p.3).

The audience can be said to be woven into narration and singing. Through songs, choruses, comments and laughter, they become an integral part of the performance. Sometimes a performer may be laughed at, corrected or even encouraged by the audience. The songs and choruses and even some facts included in narratives, for example, are well-known to the audience and thus they come in right on cue or the role they play.

Composition is also a crucial aspect of performance. According to Lord (1964) "For the oral poet the moment of composition is the performance" (p.8). Stories and songs performed during gatherings could have a well-known, memorized, and sometimes even stereotyped skeletal plot. However, it is according to the environment, audience, occasion and function that the particular performance will be built. As already alluded to, a song to a particular audience will be quite different when performed to a different one. Audience depends on age, type, and characteristics among others. For example, a song meant for nursery school children would be a big bore for the adult miners.

Conversely, a song meant for adult miners would equally be boring to nursery school children. Therefore, from a given skeletal patterns of a song, the singer can derive the lines s/he needs for a particular context as s/he spontaneously composes and performs it. An oral performer can be said to be spontaneous performer cum composer (Masinjila and Okombo, 1994).

Mapanje and White (1983) argue that when a song was well sung, everybody admired it. When it was badly sung, everybody knew it was badly sung. If the language was fresh, the singer was praised for his/her creative imagination. If the song was just repeated without new insight, it was rejected (p.4). When a singer leads off a song, everyone present shares to some extent a certain framework of assumptions, a set of expectations about the sort of things which can be said in this kind of song as opposed to that kind of a song, about the kind of language in which it should be sung, about the social occasions to which it is suited, about how far the performer should respect custom and how far s/he may invent and experiment.

Songs play an important role in any community around the world. For example, in Indian communities in East Africa, songs play an important role especially at religious and social occasions (Kirmani and Kirmani, 2002). The fabric of humanity is interwoven with songs and music. For example, in Bemba society and indeed, in every society around the world, there are songs to celebrate life and mourn the dead, songs for fun and humour; farewell songs, songs of the seas, forests and travel, songs of seasons, work songs, dance songs, praise songs, lullabies and children songs, songs for child-birth and child naming ceremonies, wedding songs, satirical songs, war poetry, political



songs, songs on cultural transition, religious songs and so many others too numerous to be listed. Whatever the occasion, a suitable song would be sung.

Song is perhaps the most powerful genre of Oral literature because of its versatility and communicability (Chesaina, 1997). This means, as alluded to above, that in every situation a song will be sung and the words will automatically come to suit that occasion. Usually these words would easily be communicated depending on the audience. The song is distinguished from the oral narrative not only by its mode of performance and use of verse, but also by its extensive use of imagery and symbolic language. Song has permeated so many areas as elaborated later in this review. Finnegan (1977) elaborates that songs are known to be based on events and to have been composed with the purpose of influencing people with regard to these events.

Work songs sung while working is a unique genre in Oral Literature. (Kirmani and Kirmani, 2002) postulate that work, especially physical labour, ceases to be boring when it is accompanied by a song and music. Work is perhaps the greatest inspiration for the song genre (Chesaina, 1997). There is a song for almost every type of work and people are always creating new songs out of new jobs or working situations. It is always true that work provides an opportunity for performance of satirical songs that may not be appropriate in other social contexts. The song becomes a rhythmic outlet instead of a monotonous drudgery. This means that the tempo of work is dictated by the speed and rhythm of the song. The higher the speed, the more vigorous the workers

work. If it is too slow, the work slows down tremendously. At home as in the fields, there is a lot of work to do. Women, for example, prefer to work in groups and sing as they perform their chores. This work, particularly in Bemba society, may include cooking, pounding maize, sorghum or cassava, grinding millet, washing clothes, sowing seeds, or weeding in the fields.

Finnegan (1970) points out the songs to accompany rhythmic work seem to occur universally in African societies. These songs are extreme examples of "special purpose" poetry in that they have a direct connection with a specific occasion and with action itself, to an extent not found in most hunting and war chants. The sort of work that these songs accompany usually consists of routine tasks such as paddling, threshing, or hauling which are not in themselves regarded as glorious or romantic. Unlike hunting or military poetry the work thus provides the occasion rather than the subject matter, and the song depends on the rhythm of the work rather than an audience for its point of departure.

The occasions for these work songs include almost all contexts in which monotonous labour is involved; though conventions as to their use vary in different societies. There are co-operative songs for hoeing, weeding, mowing, launching a boat (e.g. Nalikwanda of the Lozi people of Western Province in Zambia), sawing, hauling in fish nets (e.g. the Shila of Luapula Province of Zambia), pounding, floor-beating, throwing water up from deep wells in a human chain, carrying a chief in his hammock (e.g. Mwata Kazembe of the Lunda people of Luapula Province of Zambia), hanging up beehives

(e.g. the Lunda people of North-Western Province of Zambia), or rubbing animal skins to make them soft. There are domestic and solitary songs for women grinding corn or pounding rice, there are gang songs for pulling trucks, for road work, for factory hands and for miners.

In rural areas, agriculture work provides the occasion for work songs. For instance in Zimbabwe, maize threshing is a popular time for songs. The men and boys do the singing while the women stay in the background, yodeling at intervals with staccato effect (Finnegan, op cit). As often with work songs, the words themselves are simple, with many nonsense words such as ee, yoyo, iya, iya, etc, to fill up the rhythm effectively, and there is alteration between leaders and chorus. The leaders lead certain lines in the song while the chorus sometimes echo the leader or may sing completely different lines from the leader.

To conclude this literature review, it is imperative to note that work songs stand out from others in their directly functional relationship to the activity they accompany. Occasionally they appear as separate art form for sophisticated audience but normally they are inextricably involved with the work itself. This is particularly true of songs accompanying collective work. The joint singing songs co-ordinates the action and lead the workers to feel and work as part of a co-operating group, not as separate individuals. Such co-operation may be essential to the job in hand (e.g. in hauling, paddling and other tasks which depend on exact joint timing), but even where this is not essential, as in hoeing or road work, the rhythm of the song still encourages collaboration and control within the group, a pressure on all to take part equally within

the given rhythmic framework. The function of rhythmical music in encouraging people to work harder, faster, and with more enjoyment has frequently been noted.

Work songs can also comment on life in general, on local events, or on local characters, and can express ideas of love, friendships, or even obscenity. In short, work songs lighten the labour and give an opportunity, however limited, for poetic and musical expression in the midst of work.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology that was selected and used in the study. The methodology includes the research design, the target population, sampling techniques, the sample size, instruments for data collection, data collection techniques and analysis.

As the study was designed to collect the work songs of the Bemba people the methods used were mainly qualitative. The researcher employed the research methods as used by anthropologists when they need to collect data. The study opted to use ethnomethodology as a research strategy. This means that a combination of data collection methods such as observation, asking questions, self-administered questionnaires and focus group discussion were adopted as would befit any qualitative research.

The spirit of ethnomethodology is based on the recognition by social scientists of the fact that human communities are not just communities of naïve actors but they are also communities of analysts, who reflect and pass judgment on their own actions (Okombo, 1992). This work of the individual members of a community is on the whole directed by their own consciousness of the judgmental expectations of their community. The ethno-methodological programme adopts a radical approach to the investigations of human social behaviour, which makes it fundamentally different for conventional sociological approaches. The whole programme is thus defined as “the study of how persons, act as parties to ordinary arrangements, use the features of the arrangement to

make for members of the visibly organized characteristics happen. It is concerned with the procedures members use to “going about knowing the world” (Benson and Hughes, 1983, p.56).

In ethnomethodology research paradigm the student's objective should be to identify and explain the aesthetic, cognitive and ethical properties of diverse creative verbal cultures, with the ultimate and distant goal of arriving at a universal understanding of what characterizes the human literary experience and, concomitantly provide a definition of what constitutes great literature anywhere in the world (Okombo and Nandwa, 1992).

The role of the researcher working within ethnomethodological paradigm is stated by Benson & Hughes (1983, p.133) as “the task of the analyst is to provide a description of the apparatus which enable members to do activity . . . of producing ‘possible’ descriptions.” These descriptions must be relevant to what the researcher is pursuing.

Thus, the researcher of creative verbal art must realize that it is not only the art which exists in the target community, but also the criteria for judging that art. The researcher's duty is to discover those criteria. The discovered criteria should be laid open to other researchers to verify and advise.

Ethnomethodologists are interested in the processes and techniques that people use to interpret the world around them and to interact with that world. They are interested in trying to discover the categories and systems that people use in making sense of the world. Therefore, they do not conduct large-scale surveys of populations, devise sophisticated theoretical models of social organization, or hypothesise that some social

theory or other will adequately explain social organization. Instead, they focus on the phenomena of everyday existence, actually on various bits and pieces of it, in an attempt to show how those who must deal with such bits and pieces go about doing so.

In the study of Oral Literature two methods may suffice for fieldwork purposes, observation and interviewing. Participant observation is also important in the recording and description of Oral Literature as witnessed by the Researcher. Interviews are useful because they help the researcher obtain data about ideas and events outside the performance. Personal histories of informants, aesthetics of informants, feelings, attitudes and knowledge, information on the transmission process, description of contexts, and repertory and knowledge of Oral Literature are some of the areas where interviews can focus in the study of Oral Literature.

This seemingly extraneous information is usually very useful at the analytical stages (Masijila and Onkombo, 1994). It was expected that this data would help the researcher in discussing key areas such as the role of the individual in the creation and recreation of Oral literature.

## **DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

The research used interview and participant observation methods. Technical devices such as video cameras, still camera and walkman were used to record all the activities by the respondents. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and some unstructured

questionnaires were employed for triangulation purposes. The unstructured self-administered questionnaire was used for one category of respondents who were thought knowledgeable about the research topic.

Up to twenty-five women and five men gathered at one house where the purpose of this research was explained. Thereafter, the researcher identified the five villages where she decided to “go native” during the study. All the data collection instruments were used although the challenges of flat batteries were experienced.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The researcher lived with the respondents in one of the villages for a period of two weeks as a participant observer. During this period, the researcher used technical devices listed above to collect data. Since it was not possible for the researcher to understand fully what the respondents were saying in Chibemba, a Bemba-speaking interpreter was specifically used as a research assistant and confidant.

The observations were made at Kabwe and four other villages in chief Nkolemfumu’s area in Kasama District. As alluded to earlier, electronic instruments were used to record the responses received with express permission from the respondents. As alluded to earlier, the electronic devices were used in collecting data. This is a great improvement in data collection as compared to those of early scholars. The modern electronic equipment in recording data has become a cheap and versatile tool for recording Oral Literature and other related data. One of the greatest advantages of the



electronic recorder is the freedom it gives the fieldworker. It does the recording, leaving the researcher free to observe and take notes.

Besides the reasons given above, there is the accuracy of textual reproduction at the transcription stage. If properly stored, the recorded material can be used over the years by other researchers should need arise.

The data were transcribed, translated from Chibemba to English Language. The data were coded arranged in an appropriate manner in readiness for reporting, using narrative method.

## **POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

Over twenty-five work songs were collected from five villages that were randomly selected from Chief Nkolemfumu's area. The random selection was made with an understanding that living in the same area during the same period, respondents would be familiar with the work songs sung in that area. For analysis purposes, four work songs were strategically selected. Fifty (50) participants all aged above 40 years from these five villages were selected using a simple random procedure as stated above. Ten (10) participants were selected from higher institutions of learning in Kasama District who the researcher thought would have had a lot of experience in work songs. Additionally, 20 youths (10 from urban and 10 from rural area) who the researcher thought would have perhaps no or a lot of experience in the work songs took part in Focus Group Discussions. The FGDs were conveniently controlled by using carefully prepared discussion points for the purpose of triangulation. This process had to be carried out to enable the researcher to verify the correctness of the findings in the study.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data were recorded by using electronic devices. The data were transcribed and translated from Chibemba to English Language and coded. Literal and deep structure meanings were carefully analyzed by using an elderly Chibemba speaker as an informant. Data were further evaluated and triangulated according to the themes that emerged, by employing narrative methods. Data from unstructured questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions were analyzed by interspersing them with narratives.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Consent to collect data from the villagers was sought from the village chairperson and the respondents themselves. The respondents were assured that whatever information they would release to the researcher would strictly be used for research purposes only.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF BEMBA WORK SONGS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, fourteen of the collected forty-four songs on various themes (wedding, cisungu, hunting and work) have been presented. Out of the fourteen songs presented, only four work songs were analysed. The rest were inserted in the appendix for future reference.

The Bemba work songs being presented in this chapter were collected in five villages in Chief Nkolemfumu's area, of the Chief Nkolemfumu is situated 50 kilometres from Kasama, the Provincial capital of Northern Province. He is one of the most senior chiefs in the Bemba hierarchy of succession. When Chief Mwamba dies, it is Chief Nkolemfumu who should ascend to the throne. From Chief Mwamba, the incumbent may ascend to Paramount Chief Chitimukulu everything being right.

The villages were clustered within 50 kilometres radius. The main occupation of the people of these villages is subsistence farming. They grow cassava, millet, maize, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, beans, groundnuts, sorghum, melons and others not very significant to mention. Some of the crops like beans and maize are sold at very low scale otherwise the crops are used for home consumption.

Although there are no big rivers in this area, there are two reasonably sized rivers named Chambeshi and Lukulu. Lukulu river flows into Chambeshi just a few

kilometers from the research site whose main centre was Kabwe village. Having two rivers cutting across the research site meant that some kind of fishing was done by both men and women. Men used different fishing methods such as traps and a great variety of fishing nets whilst the women used not very acceptable methods of poisoning the fish and catching them using baskets as the fish come to the surface, possibly in order to catch 'fresh air'.

The people around Kabwe village did not rear big animals such as cows but here and there could be seen a goat and chickens looking for food. For their proteins the people travel to Kasama to buy beef from butcheries. The other protein source comes from what they grow such as beans.

The researcher lived with the people and participated in the activities listed above. The women located their singing in the villages and in the chores of for example, grinding millet, pounding cassava and preparing meals for themselves and for men and children. In contrast, the men went out to the bush where the strenuous work of hoisting and pulling logs as appropriate would be done. Mostly, the men and women who participated in this exercise were aged above 45 years. There were of course married women in their thirties who looked like being apprenticed by their seniors in the trade.

Although the study was mainly designed to collect and analyse Bemba work songs, in this chapter a selection of work songs and other occasion songs have been collected and presented. The rationale for including songs such as wedding, cisungu (initiation ceremony for girls) and hunting songs is the same as the purpose of this study: to

preserve the songs so that they are not lost through modernity and diffusion of other cultures. Although a selection of songs from other occasions, as alluded to above, have been presented in this chapter, only four work songs by men were analyzed. The rest had been appended. It was thought that the appended songs might become useful to future researchers and to posterity

Since work songs typically accompany collective rhythmical movement, it is not surprising that a common form is that of a leader and chorus. The chorus words tend to be particularly often simple and meaningless e.g., *iya, ee* etc. (Finnegan, 1970 P238) or involve repetition from the solo part.

It has been discovered that it is the rhythm and the melody, not the whole words that are the most striking aspects of work songs. The rhythm of the work provides the fixed framework within which the song must be developed, a framework which is likely to continue for a long period of time during which the song (and the work) is repeated again and again. In this regard, the Bemba rhythm is a free one to which one cannot beat time regularly and a fixed one which can enable one to beat time. Bemba melody and words have their own rhythm. Most European popular tunes often need a band to make them sound nice but Bemba melody is so strong that it stands being sung without any accompaniment. Sometimes Bemba vocal music consists of single melodies without harmony. Harmony in Bemba songs can only be noticed when a group sings. Basically, Bembas are fond of harmony. To enhance Bemba rhythm, the clapping of hands is essential. The other way is by beating sticks together or drumming. In the work songs presented in this chapter, there is no clapping or drumming as all the hands

would be needed to hold a tool either for digging or any other chores.

As already alluded to in the literature review above, work songs stand out from others in their directly functional relationship to the activity they accompany. Occasionally they appear as a separate art form for sophisticated audiences but normally they are inextricably involved with the work itself. This is particularly fine for the songs that accompanying collective work. The joint singing co-ordinates the action and leads the workers to feel and work as part of a co-operation may be essential to the job in hand (e.g., hauling, paddling and other tasks which depend on exact joint timing) but even where this is not essential, as in hoeing or road work, the rhythm of the song still encourages collaboration and control within the group, a pressure on all to take part equally within the given rhythmic framework. The function of rhythmical music is encouraging people to work harder, faster and with more enjoyment has frequently been noted (Finnegan 1970, P240).

Work songs can also comment on life in general, in local events or local characters and can express ideas of love, friendship, or even obscenity, in short, work songs lighten the labour and give an opportunity, however limited, for poetic and musical expression in the midst of work.

Work is perhaps the greatest inspiration for the song genre. There is a song for almost every type of work and people are always creating new songs out of new jobs or working situations. It is also true that work provides an opportunity for performance of satirical songs which may be appropriate in other social contexts (Chesaina 1997).

Below are some of the presented work, wedding, cisungu and hunting songs.

### SONG 1 (Work)

Mother goes to the field and leaves a young girl looking after the child. The girl might, in addition to looking after the child, be given the work such as pounding groundnuts, maize or cassava. As she pounds she might sing the following song that may match her rhythm of pounding.

(Bemba version)

1. Pakuti bamayo bese
2. Cafukula mala caposa
3. Caposa noko bele

(English translation)

1. Before my mother comes back from where she has gone
2. I will be so hungry that I will be feeling as if bowels have been removed out of my stomach
3. And thrown away to the bush/forest.

### SONG 2 (Work)

Occupational songs do not begin in adulthood only but begin with children and their respective occupations as entrusted by their parents. Mother entrusts the baby to one of the senior children (brother/sister) while they perform their various duties. The baby may cry for lack of comfort, hunger or want of motherly care. When this happens, the baby-sitter might sing as she/he paces up and down shaking the baby to enable the baby to sleep.

(Bemba version)

1. Umwana talilalila
2. Kumfwa alila tuulo

(Repeatedly)

(English translation)

1. The baby doesn't cry anyhow
2. If he/she cries, he/she wants to sleep

### SONG 3 (Work)

Moving heavy logs from the place of cutting to the place where they are needed to construct, for example, a footbridge across the river requires more than several strong men.

These men might be needed to lift and carry such heavy logs shoulder high, moving fast while singing the following song.

(Bemba version)

1. We uli munshila selako
2. Cingongongo caisa
3. Cingongongo caisa
4. Cingongongo caisa
5. Cingongongo caisa
6. Cingongongo caisa

(English translation)

1. You in front of us clear the way the heavy log is coming behind you
2. The heavy log is coming
3. The heavy log is coming
4. The heavy log is coming
5. The heavy log is coming
6. The heavy log is coming

### SONG 4 (Work)

Some logs for the same purpose are too heavy even to be lifted by ten strong men – more than this number have to pull or drag the log along the ground all the way from the cutting place to where it is needed. In order to be able to pull together in unity and harmony and good timing so that if they want to rest, they should know when to rest according to the movement of the song.

(Bemba version)

1. Tukule kalambe
2. Mpamba ya muntu
3. Tukule kalambe



4. Mpamba ya muntu
5. Tukule kalambe
6. Mpamba ya muntu
7. Iyalyo munensu
8. Mpamba ya muntu
9. Iyalyo munensu
10. Mpamba ya muntu

(English translation)

1. Let's together drag the log
2. Although our stomachs are empty
3. Let's try and drag the log
4. Although our stomachs are empty
5. Let's try and drag the log
6. Although the emptiness of the stomach
7. Although our friend died of hunger
8. while dragging this log
9. Which has killed our friend
10. We'll do it.

#### SONG 5 (Work)

Once one village had work to be done, e.g., planting of the field, all villagers would go to his/her aid. They would move from field to field until all fields owned by various villagers have been planted. Because there are so many people involved in the work, some are not so active. They would do a little bit of work and stand to watch others work or look at something else. Instead of telling them to go home, otherwise other workers would emulate them and thereby derail the progress of the work being done.

(Bemba version)

1. Pakubomba tabeminina
2. Kuti cabula fye walaya
3. Pakubomba tabeminina
4. Kuti cabula fye walaya
5. Kuti cabula fye walaya
6. Kuti cabula fye walaya
7. Pakubomba tabeminina
8. Kuti cabula fye walaya

(English translation)

1. You should not stand idly at work
2. You should go home when you are tired
3. You should not stand idly at work
4. You should go home when you are tired

5. You should go home when you are tired
6. You should go home when you are tired
7. You should not stand idly at work
8. You should go home when you are tired

## SONG 6 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Tukupule Kalulu Musanse
2. Akalwani Katwangalila
3. Akalwani Kaume ifumo
4. Kalwani Katwangalila

(English translation)

1. Let us discipline the hare
2. The enemy has given us trouble
3. The enemy with a hard stomach
4. The enemy has troubled us

## SONG 7 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Nchito yalucelo ee
2. Chungulo twangasha tute (twice)
3. Ali kwi
4. Ngoyo mulelya
5. Ali kwi
6. Ngoyo mulelya

(English translation)

1. The bulk of the work is done in the morning
2. In the afternoon we play with cassav
3. Where is it?
4. That is the one you are eating
5. Where is it?
6. That is the one you are eating

## SONG 8 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Ipenga Iyakokolo kulila
2. Bwana, mwingalisha, atulaya

(English translation)

1. The trumpet has taken gong to be sounded
2. Boss sound the trumpet so that we can knock off

## SONG 9 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Ba mayo ako baombele
2. Kakunkukupwila ee (bis)
3. Ba mayo akali na mano

(English translation)

1. What my mother clapped for
2. was to open my eyes
3. My mother, one who is reasonable

## SONG 10 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. We musha munkoloto
2. Kunto mwansa ee
3. Iya iya, kunto mwansa
4. Mayo cipekule
5. Tacakuleke ee
6. Iya iya tacakuleke iya iya
7. Tacakuleke

(English translation)

1. You slave Zebra
2. Shake your mane ee
3. Iya iya shake your mane
4. The trouble you have
5. won't leave you ee
6. Iya iya it won't leave you
7. Won't leave you

This is another wedding song advising the young married woman to shake off her own problems because no matter how much other people may try to help her, the solution would still lie with her.

## SONG 11 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Akabende kandi
2. Balakamekela
3. Kabende kandi
4. Balakamekela

(English translation)

1. My pounding mortar
2. Makes people proud
3. My mortar
4. makes people proud

## SONG 12 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Mwebalume ukunjebesha (bis)
2. Kwati tamwamwene kumyesu ee
3. Ukunjebesha
4. Twendeni muntwale ku mwesu ee
5. Ukunjebesha
6. Nganabule ngoma milandu ee
7. Ukunjebesha

(English translation)

1. My husband you harangue me so much
2. As if you did not see how I looked like ee
3. You harangue me
4. You take me back to my mother's house ee
5. You harangue me so much
6. When I take a drum, you take offence ee
7. You harangue me

## SONG 13 (Chisungu)

(Bemba version)

1. Epakuntumya masaka
2. Masaka yakuno yalikosa
3. Lelo masaka kaipele
4. kaipele lelo masaka kaipele

(English translation)

1. Send for sorghum
2. The sorghum in this area is hard
3. Today, sorghum crush yourself
4. Crush yourself sorghum today

Literal meaning:

This is a cisungu song where the initiated are expressing their disappointment that the girls are incapable of absorbing the wisdom as it is being imparted to them. Since they can't absorb new knowledge as growing up generation, the traditional counsellors are advising them to crush themselves. Although this is so, the meaning is different. The elders are actually giving them injunction that if they do not follow what they are being advised about the outcomes or consequences are absolutely theirs to bear. They should not blame the elders.

#### SONG 14 (Hunting)

Some of the work songs, such as hunting songs are rather sung in a whisper so that they do not scare the game.

(Bemba version)

1. Umwana alelila
2. Tata umuto
3. Nshitobela cilemba
4. Nshitobela cilemba
5. Umwana alelila
6. Tata umuto
7. Tata umuto
8. Nshitobela cilemba

(English translation)

1. The child is crying
2. Father give me some gravy
3. Father give me some gravy
4. I don't eat nshima with beans
5. The child is crying

6. Father give me some gravy
7. Father give me some gravy
8. I don't eat nshima with beans

The children of the hunter are used to eating game meat as opposed to a non-hunter's children who feed on beans and other vegetables. If the hunter has not killed the game and feed his children on beans, they will refuse and cry for gravy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the four work songs selected from the fourteen presented in the earlier chapter will be analyzed by using narratives and some other literary methods.

### ANALYSIS

Songs to accompany rhythmic work seem to occur universally in African societies. They use work songs which are extreme examples of 'special purpose' poetry in that they have a direct connection with a specific occasion and with action itself, to an extent not found in other genre, like hunting and war chants. The kind of work which these songs accompany usually consists of routine tasks such as paddling, threshing, or hauling which are not in themselves regarded as glorious or romantic. Hunting songs seem to involve ideas of romance and glory. They are used to honour, for example, a man who had killed a leopard with a spear. The subject of hunting involves action which is out of the run of ordinary every day pursuits. There is danger, triumph or heroism; and boasting, challenge and specialized ability. Unlike hunting and war poetry, the work song thus provides the occasion rather than the subject matter, and the song depends on the rhythm of the work rather than an audience for its point of departure. The occasions for these work songs include almost all contexts in which monotonous labour is involved, though conversations as to their use vary.

There are co-operative songs for hoeing, weeding, mowing, launching a boat, sowing,

hauling in fish nets, pounding, floor-beating, throwing water up from deep wells in a human chain, carrying a chief in his hammock, hanging up bee hives or rubbing animal skins to make them soft; there are domestic and solitary songs for women grinding corn or pounding maize, there are gang songs for pulling trucks, or for miners as they busy around cutting and moving rocks and stones containing whatever mineral they are mining.

Words in work songs are simple, with nonsense words to fill up the rhythm effectively, and there are alliteration between leaders and chorus. The way such songs can at once lighten, co-ordinate and embellish agricultural labour can be briefly illustrated from two types of work songs among the Bemba such as "*Tukupule kalulu. Musanse*" (Let us beat the hare up) a millet sowing song which effectively binds and harmonises the workers as they go about their arduous tasks and '*tukule kalambe*' (Let us drag the heavy log) which also require controlled and co-ordinated effort in order to accomplish the task as required, otherwise disharmony may make the dragging difficult.

One of the most demanding occasions of the Bemba farming is sowing millet in a *chitemene* patch. This work is not undertaken by an individual because it can be wearisome and exhausting labour. The most common practice is to form special 'companies, working groups or gangs', each with a drummer, to go round to the villages to recruit labour. When the actual time of working comes the occasion is turned into festivity. The drummer stands in front, beating his drum and leading the song.



Next follow those who are scattering the seeds. And finally, the hoers come, perhaps fifty or more of them in the *chitemene* patch. They place themselves up in the long line singing in reply to the leader. The whole line raises their hoes simultaneously then strike together at the ground once raising soil and scattering it over the patch in front of them in a marked rhythm of dig, throw, dig throw with strong emphasis on the down stroke as they scoop the soil. The beat and song keep the line exactly together, with a feeling of competition and excitement which keeps all in their places with no falling behind or faltering. In this way, the *chitemene* patch gets planted with incredible speed.

Since work songs typically accompany collective rhythmical movement, it is not surprising that a common form is that of a leader and chorus. The chorus words tend to be particularly simple, often meaningless ones such as 'iya, ee' etc. (Finnegan 1970, p. 238). It is the rhythm and the melody, not the whole words that are the most striking aspects of work songs. The rhythm of the work provides the fixed framework within which the song must be developed, a framework which is likely to continue for a long time during which the song (and the work) is repeated again and again.

Work songs stand out from others in their directly functional relationship to the activity they accompany. Occasionally they appear as a separate art form for sophisticated audiences but normally they are inextricably involved with the work itself. This is particularly involved with the work itself. This is particularly true of songs accompanying collective work. Joint singing co-ordinates the action and leads the workers to feel confident and work as part of a co-operating group, not as separate individuals.

Such co-operation may be essential to the job on hand (e.g., hauling, paddling and other tasks which depend on exact joint timing) but even where this is not essential, as in hoeing or road work, the rhythm of the song still encourages collaboration and control within the group, a pleasure on all to take part equally within the given rhythmic framework. The function of rhythmical music is encouraging people to work harder, faster and with more enjoyment has frequently been noted (Finnegan 1970, p.240). Work songs can also comment on life in general, on local events or local characters and can express ideas of love, friendship, or even obscenity. In short, work songs lighten the labour and give an opportunity, however limited, for poetic and musical expression in the midst of work.

To conclude this introduction, it is perhaps prudent to say that work songs seem to approach a fixed formulaic utterance with little room for alteration, change and innovation which, as a result are thus at a minimum (Finnegan, 1970:207). Singing seems to be a special way of speaking and expressing one's feeling. It is done in an articulate way or in a melodious sound. People sing to express happiness, sadness, praise, despise, encourage, discourage, mourn, celebrate, and they sing at work. They sing in every aspect of life. Singing while working, apart from entertainment, fosters concentration and exertion of effort at that particular work the person is performing. For example when moving heavy logs from the place of cutting to the place where they are needed to construct, a footbridge across the river requires more than several strong men. These men might be needed to lift and carry such heavy logs shoulder high, moving fast while singing the following song:

## SONG ONE

### (Bemba version)

1. We uli munshila selako
2. Cingongongo caisa
3. Cingongongo caisa
4. Cingongongo caisa
5. Cingongongo caisa
6. Cingongongo caisa

### (English translation)

1. You in front of us clear the way the heavy log is coming behind you
2. The heavy log is coming
3. The heavy log is coming
4. The heavy log is coming
5. The heavy log is coming
6. The heavy log is coming

The men dragging the log may warn a lone traveller that s/he should be careful because the log may injure him/her. In the song “chingongongo” is repeated. This means that an extraordinarily big log is being tackled. The structure of the song is simple. It is fundamentally relying on repetition to emphasize the logs size. The emphasis on repetition in oral literature, particularly in work songs makes a lot of sense. Repetition makes it possible and easier for the audience to grasp what has been sung and gives the singer confidence that the message in the song has been understood and communicated. From the point of view of audience participation too, repetition can be important. In antiphonal forms, refrains, choruses or direct repetition of a leader’s line like in this “Chingongongo” song are a permanent feature.

“Chingongongo” symbolizes the toughness of the job. The men are expressing anxiety or even the fear of failure. The dragging action symbolizes the co-operative nature of

the men in the gang. It acts as an agent of unity, harmony and orderliness. If the qualities just listed are missing, the dragging of the log might prove difficult like the Bembas would say “*Ubwingi busuma bwabipila ukushinka umunani*” (multitudes are good but they finish the relish quickly). This means that when there are many hardworking people, the work would be done with ease but when it comes to eating, the relish served with Nshima would finish quickly, through many hands.

Some logs for the same purpose are too heavy even to be lifted by ten strong men – more than this number have to pull or drag the log along the ground all the way from the cutting place to where it is needed. In order to be able to pull together in unity and harmony and good timing so that if they want to rest, they should know when to rest according to the movement of the song.

## SONG TWO

(Bemba version)

1. Tukule kalambe
2. Mpamba ya muntu
3. Tukule kalambe
4. Mpamba ya muntu
5. Tukule kalambe
6. Mpamba ya muntu
7. Iyalyo munensu
8. Mpamba ya muntu
9. Iyalyo munensu
10. Mpamba ya muntu

(English translation)

1. Let's together drag the log
2. Although our stomachs are empty
3. Let's try and drag the log
4. Although our stomachs are empty
5. Let's try and drag the log

6. Although our stomachs are empty
7. Although our friend died with an empty stomach
8. While dragging this log
9. Which has killed our friend
10. We'll do it, with empty stomachs

In the song above, the singers have expressed many ideas about the dragging of the log. They have for example, registered unhappiness in the line “although our stomachs are empty” which means although we are hungry. They have also indicated that their friend had died of hunger while pulling the log. The image depicted in this song is that the work is dangerous, workers are forced to do the work and that supervisors are either inconsiderate or are cruel. The song’s function seems to encourage the members of the gang to keep working although the circumstances are not favourable. This is probably to show the men’s perseverance and pride as achievers of tough things under difficult conditions. Function in this literary form seems to fall under functionalism as a theory propounded by a French Sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917). This theory emphasizes that in order to explain a social phenomenon one must first discover the cause that produced it and then the function that it fulfills in the total social activity. Functionalism is conceptualized as a principle used in architecture, design and literature, that the purpose and use of an object should determine its shape and construction. So the function of the above song is really to draw the attention of the workers and the society and show them that the work is not easy but perseverance must be observed to see the job to its logical completion while acknowledging the hardships encountered during the process of executing the hard work.

The long heavy log symbolizes the long human life and the hurdles that a human being must go through. As expressed in the song “let us together drag the log although our

stomachs are empty meaning although we are hungry and although our friend died of hunger while dragging this log,” symbolizes long life and indicates that while some human beings can live longer, others must die. Even if one dies, the rest of the people must not be discouraged and stop the zeal for living. The round shape of the hard heavy log also symbolizes the wholesomeness of life. Only those who take life seriously survive the hardships inherent in human life. Those who succumb like the worker’s friend who died in the process of dragging the log may be described as weak and the weak cannot withstand obstacles in life. The song, in essence, is encouraging the people in the society that “no matter what happens in the process of life and living, they must persevere, concentrate on whatever tasks they are involved in and bring their plans in life to a meaningful conclusion without complaining or begrudging their lives”.

Once one village had a job to be done, e.g., planting of the field, all villagers would go to his/her aid. They would move from field to field until all fields owned by various villagers have been planted. Because there are so many people involved in the work, some are not so active. They would do a little bit of work and stand to watch others work or look at something else. Instead of telling them to go home, they sing a song in unison to advise the stand-bys to go home otherwise other workers would emulate them and thereby derail the progress of the work being done. The song below expresses this idea.

### **SONG THREE**

**(Bemba version)**

1. Pakubomba tabeminina
2. Kuti cabula fye walaya

3. Pakubomba tabeminina
4. Kuti cabula fye walaya
5. Kuti cabula fye walaya
6. Kuti cabula fye walaya
7. Pakubomba tabeminina
8. Kuti cabula fye walaya

(English translation)

1. You should not stand idly at work
2. You should go home when you are tired
3. You should not stand idly at work
4. You should go home when you are tired
5. You should go home when you are tired
6. You should go home when you are tired
7. You should not stand idly at work
8. You should go home when you are tired

In co-operative work, such as planting millet in the '*chitemene*' patch, the gang must move at one pace. If one or some of the gang members stop work, stand and aimlessly look at others or just be there, it discourages those who are working hard. Because others don't appreciate laggards, they would sing the above-given song. This song, as many other African songs, run one stanza after another followed by the chorus. We can notice that the leader starts the song as "*pakubomba tabeminina*" (You should not stand idly at work) and the others reply "*kuti cabulafye walaya*" (When you are tired just go home). The laggard is being despised by the other workers singing the song in unison instead of telling him/her to go home and rest rather than discouraging those who wish to continue to work hard. The general advice to society is that whatever work you are engaged in, particularly that job which involves many people working together, it is better to continue with the task in tandem with the group rather than stop and disturb others from working hard.

The function of this song being analysed is to give constant reminders to workers that whenever they have to do something in a group, they should not seem to discourage

others. It also goes down to making it sure that good working habits and individual values are upheld. Individual commitment and reputation in the village or wherever one is should be exhibited in tandem with societal values. If these sentiments expressed above are entrenched in an individual, the song then would have achieved its function. The song symbolizes the societal standing and values the people would like to keep and transmit to the younger generation.

## SONG FOUR

(Bemba version)

1. Tukupule Kalulu Musanse
2. Akalwani Kaatwangalila
3. Akalwani Kaume ifumo
4. Kalwani Kaatwangalila

(English translation)

1. Let us beat the hare up
2. This enemy that has troubled us
3. This enemy with a hard stomach
4. This enemy that has troubled us.

The whole population in a village may come together to plant millet in one person's 'chitemene' patch as a way of lightening the work. In the villages the researcher lived, this type of co-operative work was a very common feature. Once one villager had work to be done, e.g., planting maize in the field, all villagers would go to his/her aid. They would move from field to field for the same purpose until all the fields owned by various villagers have been planted.

This song is sung towards the end of millet growing session. The singers are happy that



the difficult task that they had embarked on was almost coming to an end. In the line “*tukupule kalulu musanse*” (Let us beat the hare up) the singers are actually saying let us finish this tough work which has occupied us for many hours and in “*kalwani kaume fumo*” (This enemy with a hard stomach) symbolizes the toughness of the job. If the field is big, the workers feel threatened as to whether the work they are embarking on would finish. So, when they are almost coming to the completion of this work which looked impossible to finish just when they started, they feel inflated and delighted that they have at last conquered the ‘enemy’. The function of the song is obviously to encourage each other never to give up when they are almost about to complete the work. It would be shameful if they failed to finish the job after they had covered a bigger part of the field. They are also delighted because they know that beer and other good food specifically prepared for this occasion would be served. Thus the looking forward to the celebration makes them quicken the rhythm and the pace of work.

Generally, the function of the song is to encourage and warn the people in the society that there is nothing impossible when the people have decided and determined to accomplish some task. They should not be defeated even before they embark on that task. The “hare” in the song symbolizes being crafty or being tricky. In almost all stories and folklore where the hare has been depicted, it has always been used as a trickster making the lives of other animals difficult although the hare does not always succeed. Sometimes the plans crafted by the hare hit back at it when the tricks are uncovered. So, in the song being analysed, the singers are saying that although the hare is tricky, its trickery has been brought to light and cannot trick them any more. The

song also functions to warn the people that they should not be tricky because no trick remains covered up for ever – it is always uncovered in the end.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and direction for the future generation. The researcher's opinions are also expressed before making recommendations.

The purpose of this study was to attempt delving into Bemba work songs to discover their efficacy in the upbringing of the younger generation. Further, the study was intended to analyze Bemba work songs literary forms to gauge what contribution they make in developing well-rounded Bemba youths. Among the objectives of the study were to investigate ways in which Bemba songs influence the younger generation and the community; to evaluate the situations in which work songs can become effective; and to examine the ways in which these Bemba songs are preserved for future generations to learn from. Among the questions asked to help achieve the objectives were: How do Bemba work songs come about? In which way do the Bemba work songs influence the younger generation? In which situations do the Bemba work songs become effective? And how are these Bemba work songs preserved for future generations?

It would appear from the research findings that the younger generation is not so much involved in the execution of Bemba work songs. The reasons seem to be that while the adult men and women are performing various types of work, the young men and women and youths are either attending college or school, respectively.

The situation is made more serious that the work songs are sung while doing the actual work and not in ordinary situation. Since the young people are away from the scene of work, it is probably understandable that they can't take part in work songs.

As was feared from the onset of the study, the non-participation of young people in Bemba work songs could be attributed to the alienation of the traditional activities in preference to modern foreign songs and dances. These foreign songs seem to spread very quickly due to the benefits of improved technology. For example, in no time, new songs and dances emanating from the United States of America considered the most advanced area in the world, attracts the young ones so that they are 'with it' or on the run or on par with America.

Apart from the information passed from generation to generation orally, the study did not discover any other way of preserving Bemba work songs for the future. It was discovered that the songs which were sung about twenty years ago had undergone change as they were passed on orally from one person to another. The impact or uniqueness of being 'real Bemba songs,' has been lost. The beauty that the work songs possessed is no longer there. Many words and meanings have also been lost. One of the explanations of the trivialization of words in Bemba work songs could be that the songs themselves are simple because of the lightness of the work being performed.

The study discovered that Bemba work songs basically employed two-line and repeated stanzas. This further made them so simple that even a foreigner to the Bemba Language

could immediately catch the melody and comfortably sing with them. They also used many nonsense words such as 'Iya, iya', 'ee ee' to give some effect to the song. The rhythm used was also simple, depending on the type of work being performed. Regarding how Bemba work songs come about, it was discovered that as people work, they observe what is happening around them as they work. If they see someone just standing doing nothing while other colleagues are busy, they compose a song to ridicule such behaviour to enable this person desist from such actions and as a warning to others who may consider doing the same. The workers adopt what is called phenomenological view of the world; that is, the world is something that people must constantly keep creating and sustaining for themselves. In this view, composing a song helps the people become creative and sustaining the world they have thus created e.g., the working world and workers in it. The Bemba workers rely on commonsense knowledge and practical reasoning. Commonsense knowledge refers to variety of things. It is the understandings, recipes, maxims, and definitions that we employ in daily living as we go about doing things, e.g., knowing that thunder usually accompanies lightning; knowing how houses are usually laid out and lived in; knowing that there 'types' of people, objects and events. These help us to classify and categorize what is 'out there' and guide us in interpreting what happens out there. Because of different commonsense knowledge, the source of Bemba work songs cannot be clearly defined.

The study finally concluded that the literary forms engaged in Bemba work songs were basic. Although poetry uses much of imagery, similes and metaphors, and songs are regarded as special literary genre, Bemba work songs were devoid of these devices. This scenario may be attributed to the simplicity of the work being performed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is the researcher's overall opinion on the findings of this study before making recommendations.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "I have a dream!" The present writer wishes to ask the Bemba youths what dreams and hopes they have in their hearts? The writer strongly believes that a life filled with hope is strong and that hope with courage is the greatest weapon in the world.

The writer harbours feelings that youth is the time of great challenges; so it is equally a time of great confusion. Society, too, offers little comfort and young people may feel as though they are standing alone in a wasteland or on a battlefield. At times they may feel that they can't believe anyone, that no one loves them or that they have no reason to live. Since literature is the spirit of an age and a mirror reflecting the trends occurring in the society producing it, many literary currents arise in an age of multiple value like the present one.

True art for art's sake is art for life's sake too. Of course art does sterilize itself if the artist turns himself into a professional specialist who writes primarily or exclusively for his fellow specialists, instead of writing for all his/her fellow men and women. It ought to face the evils and difficulties of life without despairing of human nature's ability to respond victoriously to life's challenges. We must strive to win the battle of life, though we have no guarantee that we will.

The writer's hope is for literature that can give the people of our age courage. The writer does not condone literature that finds beauty in a vision of humanity falling head on into hell. Instead the author prefers to seek the dignity of life in the image of humanity living in sincerity and good will.

Before the coming of western civilization to Africa and Zambia in particular, the people's culture flourished and brought the people together in happiness. They sung songs, performed traditional dances and told stories and passed their customary artifacts orally. At the time of the western civilization coming to Africa and Zambia, in particular, the already established traditions and customs were suppressed by incoming civilized cultures. They thought African culture, expressed in songs, poems and dances were narrow, inferior and primitive. This led to the colonialists to deny, ban and restrict African culture and traditions.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Africans, including Zambians began thinking about ruling themselves. This thought came without the people being properly prepared to rule themselves but the motivating factor was the attractive educational achievement, technological advancement, or simply the civilization that existed in the western countries. Since the idea was to catch up with the western social status, many important developmental phases in education, technology, voting rights, democracy and in literature and so on, were glossed over. This rapid need to catch up brought confusion and complications in society. Even development of literature was overlooked as the government and the people looked to the outside for financial, spiritual, political and even literary aid.

The people failed to understand how they could bridge the big gap that existed between them and the developed western countries. They underestimated their own wisdom and power and relied on the might of the outside forces. Although it is inevitable to look to the outside for support in various ways, it is important to look back at what contributions our ancestors made to the descendants, in terms of literature.

Even though customs and traditions were suppressed by the outsiders, some Africans, particularly in Senegal, where Leopold Senghor emerged as a poet, there appeared some Africans who came together and had heart to heart dialogues which enabled them to recreate the human consideration and compassion which their ancestors had. They vowed to re-determine the African renaissance particularly through culture and in literature field.

For the future, we need to revisit the actions we have taken and rebuild the environment where literature can flourish. We need to critically look at oral literature and where necessary borrow and study from other people in order to enrich our own literature. We can tease out the bad and adopt the good ones and justify ourselves by nurturing and building up beautiful art from other countries connected to Zambia. We need to break the walls around our hearts and let our hearts open to accept or reject literature that seems unpalatable. As literature develops on daily, monthly and yearly basis, it becomes dynamic. The environment where literature can grow will need to have heart to heart human research to bring out the truly rich human being as this is a richness that is the greatest treasure and jewel of our lives. We need to break through the darkness and confusion in our lives by revolutionizing our inner world. It may take a long time



but we must persevere and create a pabulum replete with happiness of people to live in society.

As a result of the above findings, the recommendations below have been proposed:

### **1. Literary Group Activities**

These are activities which should be formed in strategic areas where the people in that community could be availed with reading materials for them to enjoy literature. These groups should not only be for chibemba speaking youths but should be open to anybody wishing to study work songs.

### **2. Reading and Discussion Circles**

These circles should have a collection of literary works by renowned and experienced leaders in society could be placed, read and discussed and probably emulated.

### **3. Establishment of Firm Literary Foundations**

These foundations could be established in schools, community centres and other places where African literature and artefacts could be created, appreciated and preserved for posterity.

### **4. Provision of Pabulums**

Rich literary environments where both oral and written literature could be enjoyed by people of all ages in the society should be provided. Talented and untalented artists could meet to share their experiences and ideas and learn from each other.

### **5. Provision of Literary Works**

Literature gives people the power of thought and wisdom. Publications on various subjects should be produced cheaply to enable many people to have access to them. This would improve reading habits which have fallen (refer to Kashoki's assertion).

#### **6. Open Air Theatrical Activities**

These spaces should be made available where people in the society could enjoy poems, songs and popular theatre. This open air theatre would also help take youths off the streets.

#### **7. Mobile Literary Schemes**

In places where there are no libraries and any other means of obtaining a book, a mobile literacy unit would help avail literature to the people in these places.

#### **8. Government Will**

The government should take particular interest in establishing or encouraging people capable of establishing the recommended activities to do so. The activities above would not only assist the government in teasing out unnecessary youths in the streets but will help garner a literate youth who can make meaningful contributions to the development of the country.

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## Appendix I

### Song 1 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Ba mayo ako baombele
2. Kakunkpukwila ee (bis)
3. Ba mayo akali na mano

(English version)

1. What my mother clapped for
2. Was to open my eyes
3. My mother, one who is reasonable

### Song 2 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Newali kupungama kwine
2. Lelo naikala mumiseke
3. Napona
4. Naikala mumiseke

(English version)

1. Me who was stooping down
2. To day, I am in the baskets.
3. I have fallen down
4. I live in the basket

#### Literal meaning:

When millet is growing, it stands upright before it bears fruit. When the fruit is born, it becomes heavy and the millet plant bends with the weight. When it is harvested, it is put in the baskets where after the husks are separated from seed.

**Significance:**

When a girl is growing up, she is like millet without any wisdom but when the seed is born, the sense begins building in this girl. She will safely be kept in the traditional mainstream until she is finally disposed off.

**Song 3            (Cisungu)**

(Bemba version)

1. Epakuntumya masaka
2. Masaka yakuno yalikosa
3. Lelo masaka kaipele
4. kaipele lelo masaka kaipele

(English version)

1. Send for sorghum
2. The sorghum in this area is hard
3. Today, sorghum crush yourself
4. Crush yourself sorghum today

**Literal meaning:**

This is a cisungu song where the initiated are expressing their disappointment that the girls are incapable of absorbing the wisdom as it is being imparted to them. Since they can't absorb new knowledge as growing up generation, the traditional counselors are advising them to crush themselves.

**Significance:**

Although this is so, the meaning is different. The elders are actually giving them injunction that if they do not follow what they are being advised about the outcomes or consequences are absolutely theirs to bear. They should not blame the elders.

Song 4 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. We musha munkoloto
2. Kunto mwansa ee
3. Iya iya, kunto mwansa
4. Mayo cipekule
5. Tacakuleke ee
6. Iya iya tacakuleke

(English translation)

1. You slave Zebra
2. Shake your mane ee
3. Iya iya shake your mane
4. The trouble you have
5. Won't leave you ee
6. Iya iya it won't leave you.

This is another wedding song advising the young married woman to shake off her own problems because no matter how much other people may try to help her, the solution would still lie with her.

Song 5 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Akabende kandi
2. Balakamekela
3. Kabende kandi
4. Balakamekela

(English translation)

1. My pounding mortal
2. Makes people proud
3. My mortar
4. Makes people proud.

Song 6 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Mwebalume ukunjebesha (bis)
2. Kwati tamwamwene kumyesu ee
3. Ukunjebesha
4. Twendeni muntwale ku mwesu ee
5. Ukungebesha
6. Nganabule ngoma milandu ee
7. Ukunjebesha

(English translation)

1. My husband you harangue me so much
2. As if you did not see how I looked like ee
3. You harangue me
4. You take me back to my mother's house ee
5. You harangue me so much
6. When I take a drum, you take offence ee
7. You harangue me

Song 7 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Twalanda nobe
2. Ngoli citongo
3. Ukaye shimika

(English translation)

1. We have talked to you
2. If you are uninitiated
3. You can tell others about it.

Song 8 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Mukashi wandi nakusha (bis)
2. Mukapele uwacuma
3. Nokwakulola mufwaye
4. Nacinda cindafye
5. Mukapele uwacuma
6. Nokwakulola mufwaye



(English translation)

1. My wife I leave you
2. You be given to someone rich
3. And look somewhere else to go
4. I just dance for nothing
5. You be given to someone rich
6. And look somewhere else to go.

Song 9            (Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Kandeyenda ubwamba (bis)
2. Balume baliya kubena mwanga

(English translation)

1. Let me walk naked
2. The husband has gone to a Namwanga woman

Song 10          (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Chitensha na malimba
2. Kali na nyina ee
3. Somone Tumulange
4. Ifyo bachinda ichitensha

(English translation)

1. Xylophone shaker
2. The one with a mother ee
3. Come we will show you
4. How they shake.

Song 11          (Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Sansamuna akafunga
2. Pabalume bobbe tapaba nsoni

(English translation)

1. You flush open your skirt
2. You can't be shy, in front of your husband

Song 12 (Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Kanchindemo
2. Namungwa kancinde
3. Namungwa

(English translation)

1. Let me also dance
2. Ostritch, let me dance
3. Ostritch.

Song 13 (Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Abana natuma ku Nsenga
2. Nalelo kawa tabesile
3. Abana natuma ku Nsenga
4. Nalelo Kawa tabesile
5. Citongo wintulila ngoma
6. Nemwine shaba nemilimo (twice)
7. Umwana natuka banyina
8. Leken i umwine acimone (twice)

(English translation)

1. The children I have sent to Nsengaland (bis)
2. It is dark again they haven't come back
3. The children I sent to Nsengaland
4. It is dark again they haven't come back
5. The uninitiated one don't break my drums
6. I have business for them
7. The daughter has insulted her mother
8. Let her face the consequences.

Song 14 (Social)

(Bemba version)

1. We mukashi na mungoli

2. Lilya wamona noko
3. Wamunaila umututi,
4. Mayo wandi kalifi
5. Ukunaya nine naya
6. Nokupela nine mpela
7. Nokucisa nine ncisa

(English translation)

1. My wife na Mungoli
2. When you see your mother
3. You make a very big nshima
4. My mother kalindi
5. I'm the one who makes nshima
6. I'm the one who grinds the millet
7. I'm the one who irons the clothes.

Song 15 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Nchito yalucelo ee
2. Chungulo twangasha tute (twice)
3. Ali kwi
4. Ngoyo mulelya
5. Ali kwi
6. Ngoyo mulelya

(English translation)

1. The bulk of the work is done in the morning
2. In the afternoon we play with cassava
3. Where is it?
4. That is the one you are eating
5. Where is it?
6. That is the one you are eating.

Song 16 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Chiba wesu
2. We mwana wakwe, yangu katuibale (twice)
3. Chati kuu
4. Kanshi no kulima tulona, ngatulyafye

(English translation)

1. Chiba our relative
2. Let us rejoice with the child
3. It emits the kuu sounds
4. We waste time growing food, we should just be eating

Song 17 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Bwana tapata Bantu
2. Bakapitao mulomo (twice)

(English translation)

1. The white man does not hate people
2. But captains tell lies

Song 18 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Ipenga lyakokolo kulila
2. Bwana, mwingalisha, atulaya

(English translation)

1. The trumpet has taken long to be sounded
2. Boss sound the trumpet so that we can knock off

Song 19 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Nchito yonse balabomba ee
2. Kubala waya mona noko

(English translation)

1. Whatever job you do
2. You must get back to your mother

Song 20

(Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Iya kumbo mwansa
2. We musha munkoloto
3. Yangu chipekule
4. Tachakuleke
5. Iya iya tachakuleke (Repetition)

(English translation)

1. Shake your mane
2. You slave Zebra
3. The problem you have
4. Won't be shaken off
5. Iya, iya it won't be shaken off

Song 21

(Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Koni mulongwe, ee
2. Katape amenshi
3. We koni mfundwa,
4. Amenshi bafundaula, ee, ee.

(English version)

1. Thou little beaver bird
2. Go and fetch water
3. You little bird that we teach,
4. They made the water muddy ee ee

Interpretation:

If you do not always have fresh water (or dirty water) in your house, blows will fall. It means that when the wife does not do her domestic duties properly, her husband will beat her. When a husband comes back from the bush, he is usually very thirsty and expects to find fresh and clean water in his house. The song emphasizes the duty of the wife to have fresh water for her husband. You have the voice of a weaver bird, a very

nice one but take care, you may attract the eyes of men other than your husband when at the river or on the way there.

Song 22 (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Kabende kandi balakamekela (Repetition)
2. Kabende kandi
3. Balakamekela
4. Kabende Kandi balakamekela

(English version)

1. My little mortar, a nice little thing to show off.
2. My little mortar.
3. My little mortar, a nice little thing to be fond of.
4. My little mortar

Interpretation:

A wife has to pound well for her husband and not badly, as she did when she was just a girl. The mortar reminds a young girl of her duty to provide and prepare food. As it also represents the woman, it teaches a husband to be proud of his wife and not to look at other women.

'The mortar and pestle' is the Bemba symbol of an ideal couple, well united in mind, body and soul.

'Ibende' is the mortar in which millet is pounded.

'Kabende' is the diminutive; a small mortar.

Song 23

(Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Amalabi yalila ukulya
2. Amalabi ayo

(English version)

1. The birds are crying for food
2. Those birds.

Interpretation: .

'Amalabi' are birds that keep together. Here in the song they represent;

- a) Those who come to the initiation ceremony - after dancing they will be asking for food.
- b) The husband and his children – a good housewife must always ready to prepare a quick meal for her family and even for relatives and guests.

Song 24

(Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Lelo wateema pa mbusa
2. Lelo wateema pa mbusa

(English version)

1. Today, you swing over the 'Mbus
2. Today, you swing over the 'Mbus.

Interpretation:

It is the man's duty, not a woman's to find a new site for building a house. Man received his superiority (his rights) from God, and so he faces the fire when he sleeps. He sleeps near the door. The woman sleeps between her husband and the wall, away from the door, away from danger. Another lesson that is learnt is that the emblem

teaches the man's duty to build a nice house for his family and the need for his wife to help with the building. The song also refers to the swinging from a roof. The girl is lifted up and made to hang by her hands from the rafters under the roof, with her knees pulled up under her chin. She is swung to and fro.

This ceremony and the emblem reminds the girl that a man who builds a nice house wants to be treated with due respect, as a real husband with honour.

The support: the peak of the house is the man. His wife must be obedient to him. She is inferior to her husband, but not a slave. The apex of the roof: a ring of bound reeds or creepers used as a support for rafters on the top of a conical roof.

Song 25      (Wedding)

(Bemba version)

1. Mwibala, teti mupite muntu
2. Nga apita, mwine we bala

(English version)

1. No one should pass through the garden
2. If he passes it means it is her husband.

Interpretation:

The woman's duty is to cultivate and be industrious in the garden. A married woman is like a garden through which another man should not pass when he knows the woman is someone else's wife. If others respect his wife he should do the same with theirs.



Song 26 (Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Sensenkete, ne ushilima
2. Na muntu ibala.
3. Ndekupalanganye bala,

(English translation)

1. I am a strong woman who does not dig
2. With someone else in the garden.
3. I will cultivate the garden myself.

Interpretation:

I am strong enough to work alone in the garden. We should not be two – a warning to the husband not to take her second wife. This song is against polygamy.

Akabala symbolizes the girl and the little garden of groundnuts.

Interpretation:

Be ready to work hard at the beginning of the rain season. Do not expect groundnuts without work. If you want something in this world you have to work for it. (On n'au sien suns pifine).

Singing is a special way of talking or speaking but it is done in an articulate way or melodious sound. Variety of speaking because all things people speak about can equally be sung about. People sing to express happiness, sadness, praise, despise, encourage, discourage, pray, mourn, and celebrate at work. They sing in every aspect of life. Why we sing at work apart from entertainment fosters concentration on that particular work that person is performing.

### Song 27

Mother goes to the field and assigns a young girl to do the job such as pounding groundnuts. As the girl pounds she may sing as follows:

(Bemba version)

1. Pakuti bamayo bese
2. Cafukula mala chaposa
3. Chaposa nako bele

(English translation)

1. Before my mother comes back from where she has gone
2. I will be so hungry that I will be feeling as if bowels have been removed out of my stomach
3. And thrown away to the bush/forest.

### Song 28 (lullaby)

Mother entrusts the baby to one of the senior children (brother/sister) while they perform their various duties. The baby may cry for lack of comfort, hunger or want of motherly. When this happens, the baby-sitter might sing as she/he paces up and down shaking the baby to enable the baby to sleep.

(Bemba version)

1. Umwana talilalila
  2. Kumfwa alila tuulo
- (Repeatedly)

(English translation)

1. The baby doesn't cry anyhow
2. If he/she cries, he/she wants to sleep

Occupational songs do not begin in adulthood only but begins with children and their respective occupations as entrusted by their parents.

Song 29            (Social)

Bembas are not professional fishermen (women). There are no great rivers in Bemba land, but they need to learn to swim for their informal fishing, river crossing when rivers are in floods. They have to swim to rescue certain objects, animals, or save their and other peoples' lives when they are drowning. So it is important for them to learn how to swim. It is a task, it is work, it is business. They will sing as they are learning to swim.

(Bemba version)

1. Katuku cenda buseneme                      (repeatedly)

(English translation)

1. The cursed one who moves on water with the face up.

Song 30            (Work)

Moving heavy logs from the place of outing to the place where they are needed to construct for example a footbridge across the river and more than several strong men are required to lift and carry such logs shoulder high moving fast while singing.

(Bemba version)

1. We uli munshila selako
2. Cingongongo caisa                              (Thrice)
3. Cingongongo caisa
4. Cingongongo caisa
5. Cingongongo caisa
6. Cingongongo caisa

(English translation)

1. You in front of us clear the way the heavy log is coming behind you.
2. The log is coming
3. The log is coming
4. The log is coming
5. The log is coming
6. The log is coming

Song 31 (Work)

Some logs for the same purpose are too heavy even to be lifted by ten strong men – more than this number have to pull or drug the log along the ground all the way from the cutting place to where it is needed. In order to be able to pull together in unity and harmony and good timing so that if they want to rest, they should know when to rest according to the movement of the song.

(Bemba version)

1. Tukule kalambe
2. Mpamba ya muntu
3. Tukule kalambe
4. Mpamba ya muntu
5. Tukule kalambe
6. Mpamba ya muntu
7. Iyalyo munensu
8. Mpamba ya muntu
9. Iyalyo munensu
10. Mpamba ya muntu

(English translation)

1. Let's together drug the log
2. Although our stomachs are empty
3. Let's try and drug the log
4. Although our stomachs are empty
5. Let to the death of our friend
6. Although the emptiness of the stomach
7. Although our friend died of hunger
8. While drugging this log
9. Which has eaten our friend
10. We'll do it.

Song 32 (Satire)

Gun and bicycle are regarded as wealth among the Bembas. Bicycles appeared around 1910. The respondent own experience: 65 years ago my grandfather bought muzzle-loading gun (Nanututula), started off at 05:00 hours to have his gun licensed. His village peer who bought a bicycle started off at 08:00 to go to the same place to license the bicycle. The bicycle man took over the gunman and sung a song to tease him.

(Bemba version)

1. Uwashite mfuti cipumbu
2. Nchinga chilubula (thrice)

(English version)

1. The one who has bought a gun is a fool.
2. He who has bought a bicycle has bought a redeemer.

Song 33 (Satire)

Colonials brought a variety of jobs where Bemba people were employed although they were not employers' favourites. The employers relied so much on kapitaos (captains) who should see to it that the work is done. The other workers took them to be cruel, thought they told lies to the employer about them and they were hated.

(Bemba version)

1. Musungu tapata bantu
2. Bakapitao mulomo (bis)
3. Nici balyako tunama
4. Nici balyako tunama

(English Translation)

1. The white man does not hate the black people/workers
2. The causers are the kapitaos who incite the white man
3. Because they eat his left over pieces of meat from him
4. Because they eat his left over pieces of meat from him

Song 34 (Satire)

Once one villager had a job to be done, e.g., planting of the field, all villagers would go to his/her aid.

They would move from field to field until all fields owned by various villagers have been planted. Because there are so many people involved in the work, some are not so active. They would do a little bit of work and stand to watch others work or look at something else. Instead of telling them to go home, they sing a song in unison to advise the stand-bys to go home otherwise other workers would emulate them and thereby derail the progress of the work being done.

(Bemba version)

1. Pakubomba tabeminina
2. Kuti cabula fye walaya
3. Pakubomba tabeminina
4. Kuti cabula fye walaya
5. Kuti cabula fye walaya
6. Kuti cabula fye walaya
7. Pakubomba tabeminina
8. Kuti cabula fye walaya

(English translation)

1. You should not stand idly at work
2. You should go home when you are tired
3. You should not stand idly at work
4. You should go home when you are tired
5. You should go home when you are tired
6. You should go home when you are tired
7. You should not stand idly at work
8. You should go home when you are tired

Song 35 (Satire)

All occupational songs go with the body movements and the rhythm and lyric etc.

(Bemba version)

1. Pakulima nalifye neka
2. Pakulya twabo mulongo
3. Pakulima nalifye neka
4. Pakulya twabo mulongo

5. Pakulya twabo mulongo
6. P:akulya twabo mulongo
7. Pakulya twabo mulongo
8. Pakulya twabo mulongo

(English translation)

1. When growing food I was alone
2. When eating it we are a crowd
3. When growing food I was alone
4. When eating we are a crowd
5. When eating we are a crowd
6. When eating we are a crowd
7. When eating we are a crowd
8. When eating we are a crowd

Literal meaning:

When people are growing crops for food they are alone but when it comes to eating a multitude comes and eats. This is cautioning other people not to harvest where they did not sow. If they can't do it themselves, let them help that one who is tilling the land.

Song 36      (Hunting)

Some of the occupational songs such as hunting songs are rather sung in a whisper so that they do not scare the game.

(Bemba version)

1. Umwana alelila
2. Tata umuto
3. Tata umuto
4. Nshitobela cilemba
5. Umwana alelila
6. Tata umuto
7. Tata umuto
8. Nshitobela cilemba

(English translation)

1. The child is crying
2. Father give me some gravy
3. Father give me some gravy
4. I don't eat nshima with beans
5. The child is crying
6. Father give me some gravy
7. Father give me some gravy
8. I don't eat nshima with beans

The children of the hunter are used to eating game meat as opposed to a non-hunter's children who feed on beans and other vegetables. If the hunter has not killed the game and feed his children on beans, they will refuse and cry for gravy.

Song 37            (Hunting)

(Bemba version)

1. Mulya mucipya
2. Muli nama
3. Muli nama
4. We mfuti wansebanya
5. We mfuti wansebanya
6. Mulya mucipya
7. Muli nama
8. Muli nama
9. We mfuti wansebanya

(English translation)

1. In that plain
2. There are wild animals
3. There are wild animals
4. You muzzle loader has let me down
5. You muzzle loader has let me down
6. In that plain
7. There are wild animals
8. There are wild animals
9. You muzzle loader has let me down



Song 38

(Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Tukupule Kalulu Musanse
2. Akalwani Kaatwangalila.
3. Akalwani Kaume ifumo
4. Kalwani Kaatwangalila

(English translation)

1. Let us discipline the hare
2. The enemy has given us trouble
3. The enemy with a hard stomach
4. The enemy has troubled us

Song 39

(Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Tutande amakula
2. Tuyemona nakulu bebele
3. Tutande amakula
4. Tuyemona nakulu bebele.

(English translation)

1. Let us plant millet in the chitemene field
2. Let us go and see the famous grandmother
3. Let us plant millet in the chitemene field
4. Let us go and see the famous grandmother

Song 40

(Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Ukutwa ukutwa
2. Ndafwaya ukutwa
3. Ukutwa ukutwa
4. Nomba ukulima

(English translation)

1. Pounding, pounding
2. I wish to pound
3. Pounding, pounding
4. Now I wish to plough

Song 41

(Work)

(Bemba version)

1. Cikunkumwina ee
2. Mwanakashi ashishamo bunga
3. Twalala nensala
4. Mailo ucelele kwibende.

(English translation)

1. You who likes finishing everything
2. You who does not leave any mealie-meal
3. We have gone to bed without eating anything
4. Tomorrow get up early and find your mortar

Song 42

(Social)

(Bemba version)

1. Mayo namukope ya
2. Chingulako icibi
3. Tumone bukwe bobe
4. Wa katwe kalembwa
5. Kalembelwa makola
6. Amakola chichintimbwe
7. Nachotamanga mpe
8. Ulekufita mpe
9. Ngolufungo mpe
10. Ulwamabengo mpe

(English translation)

1. Mother namukope ya
2. Open the door
3. So that we see your sister/brother-in-law
4. With a shaven head
5. Shaven for the show
6. Chichintimbwe's show
7. Chota's manga mpe
8. who is getting blackened mpe
9. Like wild berry mpe
10. Sliced wild berry mpe

Song 43            (baby sitting)

(Bemba version)

1. Chiminina tente
2. Nomuleshi ati yande
3. Ati yande nemwine
4. Nomuleshi ati yande
5. Ati yande nemwine

(English translation)

1. Stand up tente
2. The nanny rejoices
3. Rejoices at the spectacle
4. The nanny rejoices
5. Rejoices at the spectacle

Song 44            (Baby sitting)

(Bemba version)

1. Chenda ntaya ntaya
2. Ngokenda lilali
3. Bawiso bakota

(English translation)

1. Clumsy and wobbly walker
2. When are you going to walk
3. You father has grown old

GENERAL NOTES:

Language means music (p8);

It is the people's race and language that determine the nature and the character of its music, like the language, like the music.

The Bemba melody;

Most European popular tunes need often a band to make them sound nice but most African melodies are so strong that they stand being sung without accompaniment.

Their vocal music consists of single melodies without harmony.

Bemba harmony;

When a crowd sings, there is usually some harmony. The Bembas are fond of harmony.

The Bemba rhythm;

Their rhythm is a free one to which you cannot beat time regularly and a fixed one which you can identify:

- Melody and words have their own rhythm.
- The clapping of hands is essential.
- Drum beating, three or four together adds a wonderful cross rhythm.
- The movements of the body underlines alternately of the above.

Rhythm of the Bemba songs;

By clapping hands, by beating sticks, by drumming, the hand clapping are being the usual one.

Bemba Dances;

Basically three movements: arms, legs and middle of body. Each movement is guided by a drum.

## The Cisungu Ceremony

When a girl begins to menstruate for the first time, she runs into the bush outside the compound, crying like a young child. The first woman who finds her rushes to the village to announce the good news to the girl's mother.

Mother of girl says "Very well, you the one who found her, are now the "Nakalamba" (great mother, which means – in relation to the ceremony – the assistant to the Nacimbusa.) Go and take care of her.

### The Preparation and organization of the ceremony

Nacimbusa is an exceptional woman, with an important social position in the society, and must be a woman of the tribe. Her dual role is (a) to initiate girls as they reach puberty, (b) later on, to deliver their first baby.

The initiation ceremony or 'Cisungu' symbolizes the ritual burial of childhood and the taking on of the higher status of womanhood.

Nakalamba comes the following (a) midwives of second rank, (b) the mother, (c) the girls who have already been initiated.

The 'Cisungu' ceremony of the Bemba tribe is in three parts:

a) The private initiation concerning hygienic precautions, carried out by a friend or a grandmother.

- b) The semi-public ceremony in the bush, or in the hut.
- c) The public initiation, with processions and dances.

Nacimbusa uses:

Pottery models – decorated with white earth and red powder, - water buried again at the end.

Paintings of models are put on the ‘floor’ and ‘wall’ - after each ceremony they are destroyed. These are called the “MBUSA” or Sacred emblems.

## Appendix II

### Self-administered questionnaire

1. Do you know any work song?
2. Why do people sing as they work?
3. How do the Bemba work songs come about?
4. In which way do the Bemba work songs influence the younger generation?
5. What literary forms are engaged in these songs?
6. In which situation do the Bemba work songs become effective?
7. How are these Bemba work songs preserved for future generation?

## Appendix III

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. All Bemba youths should know their tribe's work songs.
2. People should sing as they work.
3. Bemba work songs come according to the type of work.
4. Bemba work songs influence the younger generation.
5. Literary forms are engaged in these songs.
6. Bemba work songs are very effective.
7. Bemba work songs should be preserved for future generations.