

A STUDY ON THE BURA TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: THEIR CONSTRUCTION AND DEPLOYMENTS

 **Dr. Abdullahi Haruna**

Department of English, Nigerian Army University Biu, Borno State – Nigeria

Usman Abdullahi

Department of Languages, Nigerian Army University Biu

Godiya Mamman Pindar

Department of Languages, Nigerian Army University Biu

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ABSTRACT

Bura traditional music is facing existential threat due to the influence of modernity and assimilative tendencies of the cultures of other ethnic groups. If concerted effort is not made to arrest the situation, the culture of the people will soon disappear. Musical performance is central to the growth and development of the people's culture and any existential threat to their musical performance would reflect on their culture. This research work therefore studies Bura musical instruments, the process of construction and the occasions to which they are deployed. The musical instruments are identified and analyzed, the raw materials, the processes of their construction and the occasions to which the instruments are deployed are discussed. For the ease of discussion, the Bura musical instruments are classified in this discussion according to the sounds they produce using the Hornbostel-Sachs model. Thus, the instruments are grouped under the following classifications: the membranophones, the idiophones and chordophones. The outcome of the study shows that Bura people have highly talented musicians and instrumental craftsmen and that the musical instruments are deployed primarily for entertainment and for spiritual and martial purposes.

Keywords: Bura people, culture, musical instruments, classification, construction, deployment.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research examines Bura traditional musical instruments, their construction and the occasions to which they are deployed. Musical performance all over the world attract audiences and therefore serves as catalyst for unification of various ethnic groups and as a means of cultural identity. One of the causes of the death of people's identity is the dearth of their culture and musical performance is central to the articulation of the people's culture. The Bura ethnic group located in Biu, Hawul, Shani, Kwaya Kusar and Bayo local governments of Borno state and some parts of Adamawa and Gombe states of Nigeria suffers the dearth of culture. This is mainly due to modernity and the assimilative tendencies of Hausa language and culture. Hausa language has become the lingua franca of northern Nigeria. The language is widely spoken all over the north thus submerging other local languages (Yusuf, 2024). The Hausa language and culture come with accompanying music which tends to shove the Bura traditional music into the background. The influence of modern technologies such as the internet, compact disk plates, memory cards and television contribute in the spread and patronage of the

nonindigenous culture and music to the detriment of the native ones. The situation has reached the extent that Bura youths of today, both at home and in urban settings could not identify their traditional musical instruments.

The situation calls for concerted efforts at reawakening the people to their cultural heritage which defines their identity and humanity. This research work is part of such concerted effort. The essay identifies Bura musical instruments, how they are constructed and how they are deployed to the aesthetic, spiritual and martial purposes of the people.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Bura society has a highly developed culture but its traditional musical instruments are fading out of existence due to the influence of modernity and the assimilative Hausa culture. Youths of the Bura ethnic group tend to patronize Hausa and foreign music to the detriment of the indigenous ones. The Bura traditional musicians have almost disappeared as a result of age and subsequent deaths. If concerted effort is not put in place to document the traditional musical instruments, they would completely become extinct. Children born in the near future would not know their people had beautiful cultural heritage of which they should be proud. Towards this end, the researchers consulted knowledgeable individuals in the field for the purpose of identifying the various traditional musical instruments, how they are constructed and their uses. The result is expected to provide cultural rebirth and also to stimulate further studies on the subject.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to study the traditional musical instruments of the Bura people. The specific objectives are:

- (i) To identify the various traditional musical instruments of the Bura people;
- (ii) To discuss the raw materials used in their construction;
- (iii) To highlight the occasions to which they are deployed;
- (iv) To stimulate further studies on the subject.

1.4 Literature Review

Very few researches are conducted on the Bura people generally. Among the few studies includes that of Davies (1956). Davies concentrates on the origin of the Bura people with no attention focused on their musical instruments. Even though Davies' study does not say anything about the Bura cultural musical heritage, it is relevant in its anthropological postulation on the Bura people.

Usman (2015) is another study on the Bura nation even though it does not focus on the people's musical heritage. Usman's book is important in the sense that it provides a detailed history and geographical spread of the Bura people which make an outsider to the Bura society to appreciate the numerical strength, civilization and the cultural dynamism of the people.

On his own part, Mtaku (2016) studies the significance of music to the wellbeing of twins. According to him, Bura ethnic group, like other African societies, believe that twins are considered of preternatural origin and musical performance is part of the rituals carried out for them. Even though his study is good in its analysis of the cultural beliefs of the people, it doesn't say anything about the classification and construction of the musical instruments.

A more extensive study on the Bura culture is that of Haruna (1998) whose preoccupation centres on the folksongs of the Bura people. She says:

Analysis of Bura folksongs shows that there are various types of songs that are sung by Bura singers. These include songs of abuse, satirical songs, songs of

protest, funeral songs and wedding songs. Others are love songs, work songs, religious songs, political songs and children's game songs (p.i.).

Even though Haruna's study provides detailed exposition of the types of songs and the occasions to which the songs are sung, it does not focus on the musical instruments with which the songs are expressed.

The paucity of researches on the Bura ethnic group and their musical instruments suggests that there are still much to be done on the subject matter; hence the relevance of the present study.

1.5 Research Methods

Two broad research methods have been deployed for this study;

- (i) Library research method;
- (ii) Field research method.

The library research method entails consultation of available literature on the subject matter. The field research method involves conducting interviews with various traditional musicians and instrumental craftsmen. Direct observation on the field of performance has also been employed. This required the engagement of the performer to display his art for direct observation.

2. DISCUSSION

Classification of Musical Instruments

According to the Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, most methods of classifying musical instruments are specific to a particular cultural group and were developed to serve the musical needs of that culture but the most widely accepted system is the Hornbostel-Sachs system, developed by Erich von Hornbostel-Sachs. This system categorizes instruments into four main groups, with a fifth category added later. These include the membranophones, chordophones, idiophones and aerophones. The fifth group is the electrophones. The Hornbostel-Sachs classification system is therefore utilized in this study as it captures the essence of Bura musical instruments.

2.1 The membranophones

Membranophones according to the Hornbostel-Sachs classification system, are instruments that produce sound by vibrating a membrane. Membranophones are classified into five categories: struck membranophone, plucked membranophones, friction membranophones, singing membranophones, and other forms of membranophones.

2.1.1 *Dlumbwar* (Royal Drum)

The *dlumbwar*, according to Simon Musa Wida, with whom we had a useful interaction, is a royal drum used strictly for royal purposes. It is a large drum measuring up to 121 centimeters high and 60 centimeters wide. It is played when coronating a traditional chief called *kulthi* in Bura language or to announce the death of the *kuthli*. The royal drum is also played during the funeral of a departed *kuthli*. The *kuthli* is quite different from other politically appointed chiefs. The *kuthli* is usually the oldest person or a person selected and appointed by a traditional council of king-makers. He is in charge of the political and spiritual affairs of the community.

Musa is one of the members of the traditional council of king-makers of Wida village in Hawul local government area of Borno state. He took the research team to the royal drum and offered the following information: The *dlumbwar* is constructed from the trunk of a large black plum tree known as *mfur shika* in Bura language, with the cut desired part of the tree trunk made hollow through curving. According to the informant, *mfur shika* is generally

preferred because it is lighter when dry compared to other types of trees and it is easier to curve through its hollow trunk. The royal drum is cylindrical in shape with both ends covered with cow skins. The cow skins are braced, covering each ends of the drum. Strong cords made from the same cow skins are used to link and fix the skins covering the two ends of the drum. Little perforations are made from the ends of the skins after being spread to the desired lengths. The strings are inserted into the perforations from one end of the drum to the other to make the covering skins taut. A soft stick is used in beating one end of the drum to produce the desired bass sound. Sometimes both stick and palm of the drummer are used in beating the drum. When asked about the craftsmen for the construction of the drum, Musa has this to say:

Because of the cultural importance attached to the royal drum, each community selects some well-known craftsmen from the community who would go into seclusion to design and construct the instrument. The reason for going into seclusion is to ensure that the artists are not unnecessarily disturbed by other members of the community while on their assigned task.

Among the Bura membranophonic musical instruments, it is only the *dlumbwar* and *dang* that are played without the supporting instruments like the *tsindza* and *kwalla*.



Dlumbwar

2.1.2 *Dang* (Martial Drum)

As a custodian of traditional instruments and regalia, Simon Musa Wida has the *dang* in his custody as well. He informed the team of researchers that the *Dang* or Martial Drum is used solely for announcing the approach of enemies and a call for the warriors of the community to prepare for war. Like the Royal Drum or *Dlumbwar*, *Dang* is also constructed from a curved *Mfur shika* tree trunk with both ends covered with goat skins. Cords made from animal skins connect the two ends of the skin-covered mouths of the drum. It is shaped like an hourglass and played by being placed under the arm and beaten with a sickle-shaped stick constructed for that purpose. The drummer compresses or presses the narrow middle of the drum to change the pitch of the sound. The cords connecting the two ends of the drum create tension when compressed. The release-compression of the cords enable for changes in the desired sounds. Presently, says Musa, only few Bura communities are still in possession of the *dang*. This is because there are no more communal wars as obtained before the advance of western civilization and education. A visit by the research team to three other villages, namely Wuyaku, Dluma and Pusda that have the *dlumbwar* and *dang* confirmed the information provided by Musa.



Dang

2.1.3 *Ganga* (Ordinary Drum)

Danlami Sani Chata is a famous Bura musician who had inherited the art from his late father, Sani Chata. He plays the Bura ordinary or entertainment drum called *ganga* in Bura language. According to Danlami, he constructed his own drums by himself. *Ganga* are found in various sizes depending on the desired musical notes. Danlami displayed five drums which he manipulates simultaneously during performance. Like the *dlumbwar* and the *dang*, *ganga* is constructed from the black plum tree trunk, known as *mfur shika*. It is smaller than the *dlumbwar* but larger than the *dang*. The same process of construction as in that of *dlumbwar* is applied when constructing *ganga*. *Ganga* is deployed in various social contexts. It is played in ceremonies like weddings, funerals, farm works, political gatherings and religious/spiritual functions. A sickle-shaped thin stick is used in beating the drum. Sometimes the palms of the drummer are combined with the stick in the manipulation of the drum to produce the desired sound.

Ganga, in almost all cases, is played along with *kwala* and *tsindza* (which will be discussed subsequently) to produce the required combination of sounds. In wedding and funeral ceremonies, *ganga* is played in accompaniments of the *kwala* and *tsindza* for the audience to dance and be merry. The combination is also played on the farm to motivate able-bodied youths to cultivate a given piece of land. *Ganga* is equally played along with *kwala* and *tsindza* in sacred shrines of the Bura people. A good example of such functions is the musical performance for the *Angira mta* or the spirits of the dead.

Angira mta, literally translated from Bura language means “mother of all spirits”. It is an important aspect of Bura cultural beliefs. In Bura cosmology, as related by Joro Msirawa, who is the best-known xylophonist of the *Angira mta* orchestra, it is believed that when people die, it is only the physical bodies that die, but the spirits of the dead live on. At the harvest of the people’s crops, which mainly comprise of sorghum, millet and maize, the Bura people organize some kind of thanks giving ceremony to express their gratitude to God for the harvest. They equally believe that the spirits of their ancestors play vital roles of intercession between the living and God. So, it is only logical to venerate the spirits of the ancestors by “shaving the heads” of the ancestors. They shave the heads of the ancestors by visiting the tombs of the dead to clear the weeds and shrubs that may have overgrown the tombs during the rainy seasons. After the “shaving” the spirits of the ancestors are invited to partake in the feast to celebrate the harvest. Because they are considered special esoteric guests, the tunes of music played for them is special. The special musical performance is known in Bura language as *Kwadama*. Such musical tunes are never played for other forms of social occasions. There are strong

penalties meted to any musician playing the *Angira mta* tunes outside the *Kwadama* performance. *Ganga*, *tsindza* and *kwalla* are the instruments played for this very important occasion.



From left to right: Tsindza. Kwalla and Ganga being played together

2.1.4 *Kwalla* (Hanging Drum)

Kwala, as shown and demonstrated to the team of researchers by Danlami, is a small tension drum also constructed from the trunk of soft woods most preferably, the *mfur shika*. It is shaped like the hourglass with only one end covered with salamander skin (*kisim nguzhar* in Bura language). The preference for the salamander skin is informed by its texture. The skin of the salamander is light and can make loud musical pitch when stretched over the mouth of the carved wood and beaten with a soft beater. In the absence of the salamander skin, a goat skin could be used even though the goat skin does not make sharp musical note as does the salamander skin. The *kwalla* is so small compared to the other types of Bura drums that it is hang on the neck of the drummer while being played. Two rolled-up pieces of skin or clothes beaters are used to play the *kwalla*. The beaters are made of either rolled-up skin or clothes because the taut skin cover of the mouth of the *kwalla* could not withstand the use of hard sticks as in the case of the *ganga*. *Kwalla* drums are played along together with *tsindza* as complements to the *ganga* or *ganjau*. The *kwalla* cannot be played independently for entertainments.

2.1.5 *Ganjau*

Yamzi Chata is a popular *ganjau* player who lives in Chata village in Kwaya Kusar local government of Borno state. According to him, he makes a good living from playing the *ganjau* at various occasions. The *ganjau* is another hourglass shaped tension drum. It is larger than the *dang* and *kwalla* but smaller than the *ganga*. Everything about the *dang* applies to the *ganjau* except the sizes and modes of manipulation. While the *dang* is placed under the arm, the *ganjau* is placed between the two thighs of the drummer with a supporting cord which the drummer hangs on his shoulder. The middle of the drum is compressed by the two thighs of the drummer for change of musical notes. A sickle-shaped beater made of stick is used in beating the drum. The palm of the drummer is equally employed in manipulating the skin-covered mouths of the drum. The *ganjau* is used essentially for entertainments at social

occasions like weddings, funerals and parties. The *ganjau* is not used for religious functions. Like the ordinary drum, the *ganjau* is played along with *kwalla* and *tsindza*.



Ganjau

2.2 The idiophones

Idiophones, in the Hornbostel-Sachs classification, are percussion instruments that are set into vibration by either striking, shaking, scrapping, plucking or rubbing. They differ from chordophones and membranophones because the vibration is not the result of strings or membranes. The following are idiophonic instruments of the Bura people:

2.2.1 *Tsindza* (xylophone)

Joro Msirawa, mentioned earlier, is a traditional *tsindza* player who constructs his own musical instrument. When the research team called on him, he was on the process of curving one of the bars of his xylophone that had gone faulty. The following insights were obtained from him: *Tsindza* or Bura type of xylophone, is a complex musical instrument constructed from ebony tree known in Bura language as *mfur angilma*. *Mfur angilma* is considered as a sacred tree among some Bura communities because of its rarity and the uses to which it is deployed. *Mfur angilma* is used for the construction of mortars, pestles, gun butts, canoes and the xylophone among others. The xylophone (*tsindza*) is made up of seven wooden slats loosely corded with the seven bars producing different sounds. Msirawa's description of the process of constructing *tsindza* accords with Haruna's (1988) findings when she interviewed Usman Boja, the most famous *tsindza* musician in Bura land who had died some years back. According to Haruna (1988) in her interview with Usman Boja,

The seven pieces of ebony wood are carved into a flat shape with an axe, and made smooth. After the seven pieces of ebony have been carved and made smooth, they are arranged inside a horizontally dug hole with sand levelled under and on top of the pieces of ebony wood. The [sand-covered slats of] woods are then heated with fire continuously for seven days so as to dry out the gum inside the pieces of wood, [a process for] which enhances their sound (p.269).

After seven days of continuous application of heat, as learnt from Msirawa, the seven slats are removed from the pit and allowed to cool down. By then the gums and moisture contents of the wooden slats are removed. They are now ready for cording. The cord used for tying the slats are usually made from animal skins which are woven into thin strings and oiled.

A spherical shaped wooden structure called *gangdi* is made by bending a flexible stick to which is attached the *kugwa tsindza*. The *kugwa tsindza* is a spindle-shaped wooden frame

carved from *mfur debirau* (Boswellia tree). Attached to the *kugwa tsindza* are seven cow horns cut to the desired lengths to serve as resonators. A sharp knife is used to remove the bones and other debris from the horns to make them hollow and lighter in weight. The seven horns are stitched and gummed to the wooden frame with cow hide cords and bee wax. The tips of the horns are cut leaving a small orifice at the top which are covered with spider's filament. The spider's filament is slightly rubbed and brushed with ash powder to remove its various layers. The thin layer of the spider's web or filament is cut to the desired size and glued to the tip of each of the seven horns. The end of the cords suspending the seven slats of *tsindza* are now tied to the spherical support attached to the *kugwa tsindza*. Thus, the seven bars of *tsindza* are suspended. In this way, none of the seven bars would touch the wooden plank or *kugwa tsindza*.

Two Y-shaped sticks or *kuli tsindza* are carefully curved with which the seven bars of the *tsindza* are struck. A *tsindza* can be played either standing up or sitting down. A lengthy piece of woven cloth or rope is tied to the *gangdi* to allow the xylophone player to hang the instrument if he wants to play it while standing. When the *tsindza* bars are struck with the Y-shaped stick, the sound produced is transferred to the horns which serve as resonators. The thin filament creates a buzzing timbre depending on the musical note produced by the bars.



Tsindza

2.2.2 *Humbutu* (Musical Pot)

Humbutu, as we gathered from our interaction with Salviya Shehu, a *humbutu* player who inherited the craft from his father, is a specially designed clay pot. It is moulded by local craftswomen from clay soil found locally. *Humbutu* is played by placing the mouth of the pot on the belly of the player covering up the navel. It is so constructed that the mouth of the pot completely covers the area of the navel of the player so as to enable the player to control the flow of trapped air from the pot. The player exerts a gentle push on of the main body of the pot. In so doing, the mouth of the pot disengages from the tomy of the player thus releasing some air flow which produces the sound. A few coins are dropped inside the pot so that the jingling sound of the coins are mixed with the hooting sound produced by the pot. *Humbutu* can be played along with a calabash or with the combination of calabash and *tsindza*. *Humbutu* is normally played in funeral ceremonies of elderly departed but modernization and innovations have made young musicians to play *humbutu* along with *tsindza* and calabash during weddings and other festive occasions.



Humbutu

2.2.3 *Kugwa* (Calabash)

The musical calabash is a common instrument in Bura land. It is a natural round fruit of the calabash plant. Salviya Shehu told us the process of constructing the calabash into a musical instrument: The mature and dry calabash fruit is bisected and the seeds and other substances removed. It is properly dried in the sun to make it lighter in weight. The open parts of the hard gourd are placed on the floor and hit with two thin but hard sticks to produce the desired sound. The harder it is hit, the louder the sound produced. Calabash could be played along with *humbutu* or *tsindza* or with the combination of the two. The calabash is also played along with the local violin, known in Bura language as *kuku*.

2.3 The Chordophones

Chordophones in the Hornbostel-Sachs system, are instruments that produce sound by vibrating strings. The Bura chordophonic instruments produce sounds when the strings are plucked or struck with the fingers or a piece of twig constructed for that purpose. The Bura people are widely known in Nigeria for their chordophonic musical instruments.

2.3.1 *Gulum* (Bass Guitar)

Whenever *gulum* is mentioned in Bura land, famous names that come to mind are; Avi Pwasi, Danja Kiling, Gunda Milila and Saji Pindar. But all these players have died. Apparently, their children have not been able to take the art after their fathers except Saji Pindar's. Hassan, Hussaini and Dauda are the children of late Saji Pindar who have inherited the art from their father. An interaction with Hussaini and Dauda in January 2025 was fruitful: *Gulum* is a three-stringed musical instrument of the Bura people, they said. It is constructed from the combination of raw materials sourced locally. A sizeable oblong-shaped gourd; a long straight stick cut down to the required length; three strings and a monitor lizard or salamander skin are the basic requirements for the construction of *gulum*. The oblong-shaped gourd is cut from the top, creating an aperture where the skin is stretched. A small hole or opening is made on the gourd where the stick is inserted with the end of the stick slightly protruding from the other side of the gourd. The open top of the gourd is completely covered with the skin.

The three strings are tied to the slightly protruding end of the stick and passing across the stretched skin with the help of a bridge. The strings are tied to the body of the stick in a graduating length; that is, one string would be long, the second one shorter than the first and the last one shorter than the other two in that order. The arrangement of the strings in this order is to determine the production of the musical notes. The longest string produces the loudest bass sound while the medium length string produces a medium bass sound and the shortest string produces a twangy sound. In a nutshell, the graduation of the lengths of the strings

enables the *gulum* player to alternate the sound qualities of the instrument. A round sound hole is curved on the oblong gourd through which the amplified sound is released.

The *gulum* is played by either the use of a pick or with the fingers of the player. The strings are plucked with the pick or manipulated with the fingers to produce the desired sound. The *gulum* player wears an iron bracelet on his wrist with which he occasionally hits the gourd of the *gulum* to produce complementary musical note. The *gulum* is traditionally deployed for weddings and funeral purposes but today, it is also used in religious functions such as church services. The *gulum* is normally played alone without ensembles like *tsindza* and *kwalla*.



From left to right: Yakandi and Gulum

2.3.2 *Yakandi* (Banjo)

One of the famous and active *yakandi* players in Buraland is Paul Pukuma Bubalkwi. The research team called on him in December 2024 in his village of Bubalkwi. Ali Pindar and Musa Gwandzang, also notable in their days, have died. The interview with Bubalkwi who also allowed the principal researcher of the present work to play his instrument was interesting and revealing. The research team noted that *yakandi* is a two stringed instrument. Similar raw materials as are used in the construction of the *gulum* are also used in the case of the *yakandi* except that while the *gulum* has three nylon strings, the *yakandi* has two. Another difference between the two instruments is their sizes. While the *gulum* is comparatively larger and longer, the *yakandi* on the other hand is smaller and shorter. One string of the *yakandi* is longer than the other. A piece of flat tin with perforations all round and fitted with tiny rings is attached to the top of the stick of the *yakandi* to give the instrument additional tingling musical notes. *Yakandi* is played by manipulating the two strings with a pick or with one finger. *Yakandi* can be played in occasions such as funerals, weddings and other forms of social functions. The *yakandi*, like the *gulum*, does not require other accompanying instruments to play.

2.3.3 *Kuku* (Native Violin)

The *kuku*, or traditional Bura violin, is one of the musical instruments of the Bura people that is popular and appeals to all categories of audience. Both the young and old tend to take special liking to *kuku*. The *kuku* is also known as *goge* in Hausa language. Like most other music players of the Bura people, the *kuku* players are fading out of existence due to age and subsequent deaths. Ali Goge, Ajaja Bilatum and Shehu Nnggaftan were household names in the field of *kuku* music but they have all died. Of the three late musicians, it is only Ali Goge whose notable son, Ibrahim Ali Goge has taken after the father. When our research team visited the families of late Ajaja Bilatum and that of Shehu Nnggaftan, we met some of their children who confessed to us that they were not willing to take after their parents because, in their views, Islam and Christianity frown at traditional musical performances. However, we were able to

locate Audu Sindama in Tawasu village. Audu Sindama was mentored by Shehu Nggaftan who was a household name in kuku musical performance. He provided us with useful information on *kuku*. The *kuku*, according to him, is constructed and played in pairs. There are “male” and “female” *kuku* which combine to produce the sound.

The female *kuku* is made from raw materials including gourd, stick, animal skin and horse’s tail. A small round gourd is divided into two halves. One half is attached to a thin short stick. The gourd and inserted stick are covered with monitor lizard skin (*kisim ngwalahu*). The horse brittles are anchored to the end of the protruding stick and stretched to the end of the short stick. The male *kuku* on the other hand does not require any gourd or skin. The horse tail is simply tied to both ends of a bent stick giving it the appearance of a little bow. The male *kuku* is held in one hand and drawn or rubbed across the female while the other hand of the player controls the tension of the strings of the female *kuku* to regulate and coax the required musical notes. The amount of pressure on the female *kuku* strings determines the quality of the sound produced. *Kuku* can be played while sitting or standing. The *kuku* is played along with a calabash placed on the floor and hit with a pair of short sticks. It is also played along with cut pieces of calabash called *kithlim* in Bura language. The calabash is curved into small round pieces with a tiny hole created in the middle of each round piece and ringed round a thin stick. The ringed stick is shaken and to and forth to produce the required sound.

Kuku is mostly deployed during funerals where the *kuku* player extols the virtues of the dead in his songs. The melody produced by the *kuku* and the mentions of the deceased’s name in the songs are meant to comfort the children, relatives and friends of the departed. Modernity has however introduced the *kuku* into the group of musical instruments deployed for social functions like weddings and other forms of social gathering.



From left to right: Shehu Nggaftan, Amos Iliyasu and Audu Sindama playing Kuku and Kithlim during a funeral ceremony

2.4 Summary and Conclusion

Traditional musical performance of the Bura people in Nigeria faces existential threat due to modernity and the assimilative tendencies of larger ethnic groups. The situation calls for prompt response if the culture of the people should be salvaged; hence the present study. The team of researchers had visited the musicians and the instrumental craftsmen to interview them and to observe and document the practical performance of the music.

The study establishes that the Bura people have a sophisticated culture and musical performance plays a vital aspect of the culture. Bura traditional instruments are basically classified into the membranophones, the idiophones and the chordophones. Like other ethnic

groups and civilizations, the Bura people have their systems of beliefs and leadership. Thus, certain musical instruments are exclusively preserved for specific occasions and for the generations of traditional institutions and beliefs. *Dlumbwar* or Royal Drums is used exclusively for the installation and funeral of a traditional king or chief. *Dang*, or Martial Drum is used only when the society faces external aggression. It is manipulated to summon war council. Other musical instruments are used for entertainment purposes. These include *ganga*, *tsindza*, *kwalla*, *humbutu*, *kugwa*, *gulum*, *yakandi* and *kuku*. All the musical instruments discussed are constructed by local craftsmen from local materials. In most cases, the musicians are the craftsmen of their instruments.

Given the existential threat faced by this important part of the people's culture, concerted efforts such as the present study needs to be put in place to document such musical instruments for posterity. It is essential to employ modern technologies in preserving the instruments and to design and produce them using modern tools and materials. Desertification and cutting down of trees would adversely affect the production of the raw materials hence the need for the employment of modern technologies in the production and preservations of the Bura musical instruments.

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