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Sociocultural Contexts of Chaira Pottery Art

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Abstract

The uniqueness of pottery is synonymous with its makers. The pottery art of the various ethnic groups in Ghana is inseparable from their cultural identities in that, the art is entrenched in their cultures. Notwithstanding this, much is not documented about the sociocultural contexts of Chaira pottery art in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Adopting qualitative paradigm and case study design, the study purposively sampled eight (8) practising potters of not less than three decades of pottery experience in Chaira. Empirical data was collected through interviews and field observation in order to reveal the sociocultural contexts of Chaira pottery art. The study concluded that Chaira pottery art has long historical standing, however, the art has since become women's job in the generational life of Chaira, and largely practiced by old women. The study recommends massive involvement of Chaira women including the young ladies in the pottery art of Chaira since the practice of pottery/ceramic has become a lucrative business venture in contemporary Ghana. Also, it emerged that Chaira pottery art is a home affair. The establishment of a communal pottery centre in Chaira by the potters through the formation of a formidable front is recommended. The sociocultural contexts of Chaira pottery art is that which interlinks with the daily lives of the people. It is recommended that, Chaira potters should continuously produce such culturally-related pottery wares to showcase, and preserve the sociocultural identity of the people to their future generations and for public admiration.

Keywords

Chaira pottery,
decorative,
functional,
indigenous,
sociocultural

1.0 Introduction

The people of Charia belong to the Dagaaba ethnic group of northern Ghana and precisely speak the *Manlali* subdialect of Dagara. Charia is predominantly a farming and pottery community located near Wa, the capital town of the Upper West Region of Ghana. In Charia, indigenous pottery production has gained a sustained attention since the evolution of the community. Pottery products of all categories for varied purposes are continually produced in Charia, which over the years have attracted demand from local and international markets. The production and utility of pottery wares in Charia cast a concrete cultural image about the populace of the community. This is because, pottery products are inseparable from the cultural identity of the people of Charia, in that these handiworks are entrenched in their culture. Asante, Adjei and Opoku-Asare (2013) say that pottery products “are distinctive part of the visual culture of indigenous peoples in most parts of the world” (p. 60). The unending quest by scholars to holistically bring the nature and practices of indigenous Ghanaian pottery art to the academia space, has over the years, prompted many studies across the country such as: Sirigu Pottery in Upper East Region (Wemega, 2009; Asante, & Opoku-Asare, 2011; Yussif & Adu-Gyamfi, 2017, Yussif, Adu-Gyamfi & Tabi-Agyei, 2018) and Ekem Pottery/Ceramics in Central Region (Nortey, Amoanyi & Okai, 2019). Some of the studies also focused on Pankrono, Appiadu and Afari pottery located in Ashanti Region (Nortey, Amoanyi & Essuman, 2017; Nortey, Amoanyi & Okai, 2019), Banda Pottery in the Bono East Region; Kpando and Vume Pottery in the Volta Region (Halluska, 1999; Asante, Adjei & Opoku-Asare, 2013) amongst others. This has greatly revealed the material culture worldview of the understudied with their attendant impact on art education in Ghana. Although the pottery art of Charia seems equally vibrant just as the aforementioned, much has not been chronicled about its sociocultural contexts to the people of Charia. Therefore, this study is aimed at revealing the uniqueness of Charia pottery products in terms of their style, shapes, decorations, and their contextual standpoints in view of the sociocultural live of the people of Charia.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Meaning of Pottery

Pottery in its totality refers to the type of indigenous clay-wares that are produced within a locality by firing them at low temperatures between 600 to 850 degree Celsius (Nortey, Asiamoaso & Okai, 2017; Nortey, Amoanyi & Essuman, 2017). This is concurred by Baba (2009), as cited in Asante, Adjei and Opoku-Asare (2013) that “indigenous pottery is handmade by shaping plastic clay into objects and firing them to appreciable temperatures in the open fire or in pits to bring about a permanent physical and chemical change” (p. 60). Traditionally, pottery objects include a variety of pots of various sizes and uses which are

made and fired in the open at low temperatures (Thomas & Oteng, 2011). In Ghana, pottery making is considered a noble activity and, therefore, plays a very important role in the indigenous cultures of the various ethnic groups. This is because, the pottery wares of the various ethnic groups in Ghana are uniquely synonymous with their makers in that they cast concrete cultural image about the society. This could clearly be seen in the various distinguishable pottery design concepts as well as the culturally abound day-to-day utility of pottery wares amongst the various ethnic groups in the indigenous Ghanaian context.

2.2 Sociocultural Contexts of Pottery Art in Africa

The sociocultural relevance and context of pottery art in Africa is an area that has received significant scholarly and archaeological attention. Archaeological ceramics, especially their decorative motifs, are used in most parts of Africa to understand the historical and cultural complexities of Africans (Rice, 1987; Huffman, 1980; Livingstone and Smith, 2000, 2001 and Gosselain, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2011 as cited in Thebe, 2016). The sociocultural contexts of African pottery art are uniquely influenced by the social and cultural ideals of the people involved. Asmah, Frimpong and Asinyo (2013) say that “the forming and finishing techniques employed over the years in the production of traditional pottery for their aesthetic, philosophical and utilitarian values have varied in many ways” (p. 1). This is because, “design philosophy in any culture pulls its identity from its traditions, society and technology, its genealogy embedded with its localized and indigenous traditions. The perception of a unique worldview is rooted within the confines of its localized habitat” (Shastri, 2007; Shalini & Sibicham, 2011 as cited in Josephine, 2013, p.1). Gosselain (2000) (as cited in Nortey, Amoanyi & Essuman, 2017) concurs that:

Pottery traditions are socio-technical aggregates, an intricate mix of inventions, borrowed elements, and manipulations that display an amazing propensity to redefinition by individuals and local groups. A potter’s technical behaviour leaves room for choices both along functional and/or symbolic lines, creating multifaceted associations between technological styles and social identity. (p. 2)

This suggests that through pottery art, the unique sociocultural identity of a people is showcased and their production play functional roles in the sociocultural development of the people. John and Kigongo (2012) in a study on the royal pots of Buganda (Uganda) report that their pottery wares were “socially and symbolically constructed, reflecting the moral values of society” (p. 64). Nair (2009), as cited in Yussif and Adu-Gyamfi (2017) concur that, indigenous pottery decorative techniques are based on the potter’s concept of cultural symbolism. This means that pottery art in Africa are metaphorical

and or philosophical in nature. Asante, Adjei and Opoku-Asare (2013) also unearthed in Kpando sociocultural life that, shapes of pots communicate an idea of beauty to both the potter and the user. Per their consideration, beauty is linked to well decorated pottery wares with unique characteristics such as; shiny outer surface, ringed lines on the rim and neck and black colour from the smoking process. Yussif and Adu-Gyamfi (2017) also found amongst others that, there exist some basic concepts behind every decorative technique found on the indigenous pottery art of Northern Ghana. These decorative concepts are socially and culturally abound.

The above deliberations serve as the conceptual basis of gaining a larger understanding about the sociocultural contexts of pottery art as practised by different ethnic groups in Africa. This, therefore, provides holistic insights to the study as it aims to establishing the sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery art in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

3.0 Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is case study situated within qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. It is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative approach allows data to be generated through the use of interviews and observations. In this wise, the study through personal interviews and field observation, gathered empirical data from sampled potters in Charia in relation to the sociocultural contexts of their pottery art. Through analysis of the data collected, the study established the meaning and the sociocultural contexts behind Charia pottery art.

Research population is defined as a group of individuals, people, objects or items with the same or similar characteristics and whom the researcher is interested (Kusi, 2012). In this vein, the population of the study included all potters in Charia. However, the sample size was primarily determined by those accessible to the researcher (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Therefore, purposive sampling technique was utilised to obtain eight (8) practicing potters (women) in Charia. The eight respondents were chosen based on their long standing pottery practice/experience of not less than three decades in the community.

Structured observation and personal interviews were the research instruments used for data collection. The interviews took semi-structured format because it is “flexible, to a greater extent, offers the interviewees the opportunity to express their views, feelings and experiences freely and the interviewers the freedom

to divert from the items/questions in the schedule to seek clarifications (using probes) during the interview process” (Kusi, 2012, p. 46). Respondents were interviewed at their individual potting settings in Charia with each interview session tape-recorded for onward transcription. Each interview session involved asking open-ended questions and sometimes using probes to solicit responses from individual respondents on the nature of Charia pottery art, its cultural and historical foundations as well as finding out the unique sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery art to its adherents.

Visual and descriptive data analytical tools were utilised for the data analysis. The raw data was carefully transcribed and contextually reconciled with the field notes gathered through observation. After the researcher had read through the reconciled data and was certain that the data was well organised, he proceeded to discuss and analyse the data using the visual and descriptive analytical tools, and conclusions were drawn.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery art. This entailed identifying the types, signs, symbols, shapes or designs of Charia pottery wares and establishing their unique sociocultural connotative meanings and or contexts to the people.

4.1 Cultural and Historical Foundations of Charia Pottery Art

It was revealed from the study that, the historical antecedent of Charia pottery emanates from two of their great grandmothers whose identities remain unknown to the community folks. However, the respondents unanimously affirmed that Charia pottery art is attributable to the duo, who in time immemorial, adventurously discovered plastic soil (clay) in the community and serendipitously used it in hand-building basic containers such as pots, bowls and others. After several failed attempts in storing water in them, the two women later jointly discovered that those containers could fully be put to domestic use when burnt with firewood and grass. The trial burning (open firing) of the wares was successfully done laying the foundation for the practice of pottery art in Charia. As the sociocultural lives of the people of Charia advanced through generations, pottery art has since been continuously and exclusively practised in every household, by old women for the purposes of meeting the diverse social, cultural and religious needs of the community. The respondents indicated that women in Charia are culturally prepared to be potters upon traditional marriage into the community. Indigenously, freshly married women are ushered into their husbands’ homes with a ball of clay symbolising a cultural induction into the pottery art vocation in Charia. The respondents stressed that, a newly married woman is, thereof, taken through the unique potting skills of Charia

by elderly potters within her husband's household to become a competent potter capable of generating income to support the husband. With this cultural arrangement, it was pointed out that, pottery as a trade is seen as the most basic income generating venture for Charia women and could easily be resorted to ameliorate the socioeconomic plight of the women. Also, the respondents added that, men do not do potting in Charia. Although men in Charia do make use of clay in building their silos, pottery art in its strictest terms is considered as a vocation reserved for women only. The nature and historical development of Charia pottery art as revealed by the respondents is synonymously evidenced in archaeological findings in Africa and the world at large. Leila (2016) says that: synonymously evidenced in archaeological findings in Africa and the world at large. Leila (2016) says that:

Pottery is produced just about everywhere in Africa. Archaeological excavations both north and south of the Sahara have found pottery that can be dated to between ten and fifteen thousand B.C., the time when nomadic hunter-gatherers began to settle in permanent communities and used clay for making pots as the basic material for making shelters and utensils (pp. 6304-6305).

This means that the art of pottery has a longstanding history in Africa. Therefore, the revelations of the study as far as the development of pottery in Charia is concerned, is in conformity with the available literature as buttressed above. Also, the fact that the roots of pottery in Charia has links with women confirms the assertion that, "throughout Africa, pottery is traditionally being made primarily by women (Frank, 2003; as cited in Leila, 2016, p. 6305). Frank (2003) adds that:

Pottery is one of the household tasks that African women have been doing for centuries. Their pottery making process constitutes digging and preparing clays, modeling, firing and ends by selling it in local markets. The final products (pots and vessels) are also primarily used by women, as they are responsible for cooking and serving food, getting water, and brewing alcohol (p. 6305).

The above historical revelations emanating from the respondents as far as Charia pottery is concerned and corroborated by the available literature, justify the reasons why pottery production in Charia is still an exclusive vocation for women only

4.2 Sociocultural Contexts of Charia Pottery

The study established amongst other things that, the nature and utility of Charia pottery wares are closely interlinked with the sociocultural lives of the

people. Charia Pottery art has direct influence on the daily lives of the people such as; their domestic activities, indigenous marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funeral rites and other social functions in Charia are conspicuously characterised by the use of varied pottery wares. However, the respondents stressed that Charia pottery wares are culturally universal in function regardless of the primary utility of a ware. For instance, a *Daangdugu* (*Pito* pot) which is primarily meant to serve *Pito* (locally brewed beverage in Charia), could be adopted and worshipped as a deity or placed beside the corpse of a woman to connote womanhood and for such to be used by the woman in the ancestral world. For the sake of clarity, the sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery have



Figure 1: Dambie, N. (2019). *Uong* [Pottery ware used for washing and sieving boiled Dawadawa seeds]. Potter's Collection, Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

Figure 1 above is locally referred to as *Uong* in Charia. It is oval-like in shape with a short projected wider opening. The entire body of the fired vessel is characterised by smaller but round perforations with three decorative roulettes horizontally incised in style around its neck area to give it a charming appeal as well as ensure stability especially when those impressed surface areas are grabbed with the hands. It is revealed that, the vessel (Figure 1) is purposely used by women to wash and sieve boiled and dehulled seeds of *Dawadawa* (African locust bean tree) in the preparation cycle of the aromatic *Dawadawa*, an ingredient used in the preparation of soup in the community and in northern Ghana if not all parts of the country. The smaller but round perforations serve

as outlets through which water and chaff pass out during the washing process leaving the cleaned remnants of the boiled seeds/beans to be used for further processing into the spicy *Dawadawa* known as *Kpal* in Charia. Aside using *Uong* for the washing and sieving of boiled *Dawadawa* seeds (beans), it could also be used to smoke meat/fish. One of the renowned potters of Charia stated that, “we occasionally use *Uong* for the smoking of meat/fish as a means of preservation for future use” (N. Dambie, personal communication, October, 20, 2019). It was also observed that, the dark luster, which appears decorative to the ware (Figure 1), is often achieved through smoking during open firing. In addition, when solution (black) made of boiled ebony fruits or *Bichor* (African acacia) is sprinkled on the ware immediately after open firing, the result on the ware after cooling would be a glossy dark effect. However, the darkening of the ware has no specific symbolic interpretation. Rather, it is a mechanism adopted to decorate and or block the porosity of the wares in order to make it water impervious. This happens when, “the micro-pores of the pot are gently covered up by the smoke leading to the formation of a film of soot” (Roy, 2013; Yussif, Adu-Gyamfi, & Tabi-Agyei, 2018, p. 6). This accounts for the reason why the dark glossy effect has generally characterised most of the Charia pottery wares particularly, those that come into contact with liquid as herein observed by the study.



Figure 2: Deyeni, L. (2019). *Kpansar* [poultry drinking container]. Potter's Collection, Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

Another pottery ware revealed in Charia by the study is known as *Kpansar* (Figure 2). It is smooth and oval-like in shape with larger perforations than that of *Uong* (Figure 1) rounding only the upper part of the ware. The *Kpansar* (Figure

2) functions as a water container for feeding poultry birds. These perforations, as similarly discussed under Figure 1, do not have any symbolic cultural connotations but mainly function as openings through which only domestic birds such as ducks, ducklings, turkeys, hens, chicks, guinea fowls and others could be fed with water. It was highlighted that, “the perforations on the *Kpansar* are created in such a way that the heads of bigger domestic animals would not go through even if they attempt, and for that matter, such animals cannot drink the water served in it” (L. Deyeni, personal communication, October, 20, 2019). This corroborates the findings of Yussif and Adu-Gyamfi (2017) in a study conducted on the concepts of some indigenous pottery decorative techniques in Northern Ghana. They report that “pottery produce for the feeding of fowls and other domestic birds with water are decorated by means of perforating holes that are big enough for the head of the fowl or bird to pass through” (p. 86). Therefore, the social context behind the perforations of the ware is to prevent bigger domestic animals such as pigs, goats, sheep, cattle and dogs from drinking the water in the ware as they are restricted by the size of the perforations. Since the ware is meant to hold water, it is similarly given a dark glossy appearance in order to make it impervious to water as in Figure 1.



Figure 3: Babuye, B. (2018). *Kondugu* [pottery ware for storing drinking water]. Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

The study also observed among others, *Kondugu* (water pot) as seen in Figure 3 above, a pottery ware produced in Charia for the purpose of storing drinking water. It was established that water stored in *Kondugu* naturally becomes cool

for drinking just as the contemporary refrigerator does. Based on that, Babuye recounted that “in Charia, the elderly indigenes have since preferred storing their drinking water in *Kondugu* because it provides cool water with fresh taste at no cost” (B. Babuye, personal communication, October, 20, 2019). The brownish oval-like vessel has a short projected narrow opening as compared to *Uong* (see Figure 1) and other vessels revealed by the study. The narrowness of the opening is appropriately and purposely designed for drawing of water from the vessel with a sizable calabash for drinking. The vessel is decorated with three curvy impressions simultaneously rounding it as in the case of Figure 1. The brownish and rough textural effect of the ware (see Figure 3) was achieved by the application of a solution prepared from powdered brownish sedimentary rock and applied while the ware was at leatherhard state and subsequently fired. The dark spots on the vessel are due to the smoking effect that usually characterised open firing of pottery wares in Charia as established by the study. The brownish textural treatment given to the outer surface of the vessel is not the only way of decorating the ware but an alternative means of blocking the porosity of the ware just as the smoking effect does as pointed out under Figure 1 and 2, making it water impervious and charming to the eye.



A



B

Figure 4 A & B: Kanyie, G. (2019). *Dugre* [cooking pots]. Potter's Collection, Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

Additionally, it was established in the study that, the pottery wares produced and referred to as *Dugre* in plural and *Dugu* as singular (Figure 4 A & B) in Charia are said to be cooking pots. They are oval-like in shape with short projected wider openings. The vessels above (Figure 4 A & B) are smoothly rendered

and variously decorated with horizontally marked roulettes and dotted lines as seen around the neck area of the wares. The decorative effects created by the roulettes and dots on the wares equally ensure stability especially when those impressed surface areas are grabbed by the hands as already discussed under Figure 1 and 2. While Figure 4A is in leatherhard state, Figure 4B is fired and rendered dark with unblemished portions as a result of the dark treatment given it through similar processes as postulated under Figure 1 and 2. It was revealed that the above wares (Figure 4A & B) irrespective of their shapes, sizes or decorations, could be used for cooking food or boiling herbs for medicinal purposes or ritually adopted as deities and revered as such. For the sake of emphasis:

Traditionally, ritual meals are cooked in *Dugu* during initiations or celebration of certain rites of passage in Charia. Herbal medicines comprising roots, leaves and tree bark are also strictly boiled in *Dugu* as always prescribed by herbalists, and failure to do so, the potency of such herbal medicines is severely compromised. (B. Babuye, personal communication, October, 20, 2019).

By this, it is reaffirmed that, Charia pottery wares have universal utilitarian focus rather than their primary function.



Figure 5: Musah, V. (2019). Ze-uraa [pottery ware for mashing or grinding soup ingredients]. Potter's Collection, Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

Ze-uraa (Figure 5) is yet another interesting revelation as far as the sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery is concerned. It is generally used for mashing or grinding soup ingredients. The rounded ware has closely incised vertical lines rounding its brownish inner parameters except that the base has been seemingly given diagonal or horizontal incisions depending on one's viewpoint. According to Musah, the boldly visible interior incisions of *Ze-uraa* are purposively created to serve as "convenient footing for easy grinding [mashing] of soup ingredients such as; tomatoes, pepper, beans leaves and salt" (V. Musah, personal communication, October, 23, 2019). One unique identifiable characteristic of this ware is the rendition of the visibly bold incisions on the walls and the base of its inner parameters to serve as convenient grounds for mashing or grinding ingredients. Although the visibly bold incisions may appear decorative (see Figure 5), they serve a more functional purpose.



A



B

Figure 6 A& B: Musah, V. (2019). *Laa [bowls]*. Potter's Collection, Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

It was equally established from the study that, different sizes of pottery wares referred to as *Laa* (bowls) as seen in figure 6A and B above are produced in Charia purposely for serving food and other related services. The all-rounded wares are given the usual dark effect as discussed in Figure 1, 2 and 4. It was reaffirmed that, the darkening of the wares (Figure 6A & B) is not only a decorative mechanism but an appropriate means adopted to make them water impervious to fit for purpose. These wares are used for several purposes such as for serving meals, storing shea butter and others. Although, contemporary plastic and metal bowls are commonly available, it was established that, *Laa* are still of sociocultural relevance to the people of Charia. For instance, "to some elderly indigenes of Charia, meals are best enjoyed only when eaten from *Laa* (V. Musah, personal communication, October, 23, 2019). Generally, apart from

their universal utilitarian relevance to the sociocultural life of the people of Charia, the design characteristics of the wares (Figure 6A & B) do not have any specifically premeditated cultural connotations.



Figure 7: Kambayi, K. (2019). *Daangdugu [Pito pot]*. Charia. (Field Photograph, 2019).

In furtherance, the study observed *Daangdugu*, *Pito* pot, (Figure 7) as a ware for packaging *Pito* for sale. Also, *Daangdugu* could be imbued with powers, just as any other pottery ware, when incorporated into shrines by traditional priests or when adopted as an object of worship. Additionally, indigenous poultry farmers in Charia use old *Daangdugu* to trap termites as feed for domestic birds. By so doing, Kambayi explained that materials such as; “dried cow dung and pieces of corn stocks are parked in it and placed over habitats of termites to trap termites as they enter to feed on the substances” (K. Kambayi, personal communication, October, 23, 2019). The oval-like pot (Figure 7), is completely darkened with a solution made of boiled ebony fruits or *Bikyo* (African acacia) when sprinkle on it immediately after firing while the ware was still hot as already noted under Figure 1, 2, 4 and 6. The purpose of darkening the pot is not only to make it water impervious but rather, dark pots are considered appropriate for serving *Pito* in Charia culture and for that matter, *Pito* served in red pots is often rejected. It was also importantly noted in the study that its narrow opening is a house style characterising all of such pots produced in the community as other potters outside Charia render their *Daangdugu* with wider openings.



Figure 8: Pariba, A. (2017). *Senge* [storage ware]. Charia.
(Field Photograph, 2019).

Another finding of the study is the pottery ware known as *Senge* (see Figure 8) generally used as a storage facility for water, *Pito* and farm produce (legumes and cereals) in large quantities. *Senge* category of Charia pottery products usually come in large designs with wide openings and accompanied with a befitting hollow top cover known as *Gbaali* as seen in Figure 8. The hollow and fitting nature of the cover is purposively designed to completely prevent contamination of substances kept or stored in the vessel such as water and *Pito* as well as prevent air from entering the vessel especially when farm produce are preserved in it. The visible designs or signs observed on the above set of vessels (Figure 8) are two circular incisions rounding the edge of the cover. Beneath the *Gbaali* and on the vessel, are two similar circular incisions also rounding it, supported by three additional curvy imprints carefully marked out to give them stability. It was further revealed that, “the *Gbaali* was indigenously used as a container for bathing in the olden days” (A. Pariba, personal communication, October, 23, 2019). Premised on this, Pariba added that wares like *Gbaali* remain

the only appropriate container culturally used in washing (bathing) dead bodies of African traditional believers in Charia to ensure a smooth transition unto the ancestral world.

5.0 Implications for Art Education

The findings of the study as established above have significant implications for art education considering the case that typical art-based curricular have always provided some space for robust collaboration with local or indigenous artistic establishments because of their immense contributions to formal art education in schools. Therefore, the study which investigated into the sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery art has positive implications for art education.

The findings of the study have positive implications for art education in schools within Charia catchment area, Upper West Region, Ghana and the global world, which probably, have been oblivious of the active pottery activities in Charia community. This is because, the study has contributed in bringing Charia pottery activities to the academic limelight, by way of revealing their tools, materials, decorations, design concepts including their sociocultural contexts. Therefore, schools or institutions which are into ceramics education or study indigenous Ghanaian art forms could embark on educational trips to Charia pottery establishments in order to directly acquire knowledge or tap the indigenous skills and rich experiences of the potters to enhance art education in their respective schools. This will help to create a sense of Ghanaian identity in learners as they come into direct contact with Charia indigenous pottery practices and their sociocultural contexts. For example, in Ghana, even at the Kindergarten level, learners are required to use clay to mould familiar objects and paint them once they are dried (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment - NaCCA, 2019). This means that learners are supposed to be introduced to pottery art at the very onset of their formal education largely based on their sociocultural experience. As a buildup, the Creative arts curriculum for primary schools (basic 1 - 3) demands that basic one learners under the guidance of their class teacher should:

Visit the workplace of a visual artist (graphic designer making prints on T-shirts, pottery artist making clay pots, textile artist weaving Kente, sculptor making cement statue, etc.) to observe, ask questions, make notes and learn about their work practices; record knowledge gained for planning own visual artworks. (NaCCA , 2019, p.3)

The above requirement characterises the curricular of the succeeding stages in the Basic School level (NaCCA , 2019). At the Senior High School level, the art curriculum requires that teachers and students organise visits to museums, chiefs' palace, historical sites, pottery establishments in Ghana and other related

places on matters relating to Ghanaian indigenous arts and artists in their locality for students to study (Curriculum Research and Development Division, 2010). The status quo remains intensified at tertiary level due to the significant contributions of local or indigenous artistic establishments to art education in schools. For the aforementioned curricular demands, the findings of the study stand to have positive implications for art education as art educators and students are triggered to embark on educational trips to Charia pottery establishments to observe and/or study the potting activities and their sociocultural contexts. This will help them to gain firsthand knowledge of the art as they learn in their respective schools.

Also, the study has implication for pottery/ceramics scholarship. It stands to add to the already existing stock of knowledge on indigenous pottery art and its sociocultural contexts in Ghana and Africa in general thereby serving as a vital reference material. It will also contribute to providing fertile grounds for further research works to be conducted from different perspectives on Charia pottery art.

5.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

Charia pottery art has longstanding history. The study revealed that its cultural and historical foundations emanate from the adventurous activities of two of their great grandmothers. Through adventure and serendipity, they used clay to hand-build basic household containers for domestic use during the very foundation of civilisation of Charia. The art has since become women's job in the generational life of Charia largely practised by old women. Therefore, the study recommends massive involvement of Charia women including young ladies in the pottery art of Charia since pottery/ceramic has become a lucrative business venture in contemporary Ghana.

Also, Charia pottery art is a home affair. Pottery is practiced in smallscale in every home in the community. The study recommends the establishment of a communal pottery centre in Charia by the potters through the formation of a formidable front. This will create a central market in the community where collectively, their wares would be exhibited for sale thereby making Charia a pottery hub within the Upper West Region of Ghana.

The sociocultural contexts of Charia pottery art is that which interlinks with the daily lives of the people. In Charia, pottery wares are produced based on the domestic needs, religious needs and ceremonial needs (marriage, outdooing, funerals and so on) of the people. It is, therefore, recommended that, Charia potters should continuously produce such culturally related pottery wares to showcase and preserve the sociocultural identity of the people of Charia to their future generations and the admiration of the general public.

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