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Aesthetic Values in Kamba Children's Play Songs

Brigitte Mutindi Mutisya^{1*}, Dr. Peter Muhoro¹

¹Department of Languages and Humanities School of Social Sciences Mount Kenya University

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Abstract: The involvement of children in the creation and performance of children's songs creates the aesthetic beauty and the comprehension of themes. However, oral literature has been stereotyped as a rural concept and few scholars have given it serious literary attention to children's creative expression. Therefore, this study examines the aesthetic value and performance in Kamba children's play songs. The study employed Hymes (1991) ethnopoetic theory. The study employed ethnographic research design. Data was collected using participant observation. The findings of the study reveal that the songs are embedded on concrete textual traditions of Kamba society and they carry the aesthetic values of friendship and unity, aesthetic value of responsibility, aesthetic value of environmental issues, aesthetic value of Kinship System, aesthetic value of traditional food and the aesthetic value of hard work and condemn the vice of laziness. The study concludes that there are important aesthetic values in Kamba Children play Songs.

Keywords: Children's play songs Kamba Children's songs, Aesthetic value, Culture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Children's play songs fall under oral literature. Finnegan (1970, 1977) defines oral literature as that part of literature which has not been written down. Finnegan observes that oral literature is not famous and has not been emphasized so much as it is the case with written literature, because it is associated with the ancient communities which did not have any background of formal education. Keller (1970) defines children's play song is the combination of elements from singing with those of movement, ranging from the simple pantomime to dance and the dramatic representation of text scenes; it furthermore comprises the use of musical instruments (including the human body), the transformation of the song into an instrumental piece as well as the purely rhythmical presentation of spoken texts. Children play songs are songs performed by children at play. Children are always intertwined with songs everywhere they go. Sometimes they even unconsciously memorize and place them in their lives. Moreover, children learn many values and notions through the songs.

According Avergedor (1990) people sing to express themselves and to vent out emotions. Thus, songs are an important tool through which people express themselves and their needs. The study will focus on children's play songs. Neelly (2001) notes

that music provides a developmentally appropriate way for children to voice, understand, and control their emotions. Nelly argues meaningful text helps a child learn to express and control emotions. Songs are very essential in the life of a human being. All communal activities in African societies are accompanied by song and dance (Alembi, 2002). In most societies there are songs for every stage and occasion of a person's life, from the cradle to the grave. There are songs at birth, naming ceremonies, songs, and lullabies, singing games, songs in stories, initiation songs, marriage songs, work songs, war songs, praise songs, worship ordination songs, and lastly funeral songs. Songs demand that the composer should arrange his words in such a way that they should sound perfect especially in terms of rhythm and melody. These together with the meaning of the words enable the poet or the singer to express his feelings with the strongest impact possible.

Various studies show roles of children's oral literature. P'Bitek (1974) study on Acoli's children's poetry shows that poetry is an agent of socialization and it introduces children to the cultural and moral patterns of the Acoli community. Kartomi (1980) states that in enculturative process, children learn to sing and play the music of their particular cultural tradition, which is controlled by adults. In all cultures children are taught songs by adults for children, including such songs as

*Corresponding Author: Brigitte Mutindi Mutisya

Department of Languages and Humanities School of Social Sciences Mount Kenya University

lullabies, nursery rhymes and songs of advice. Children's songs have an important task of being part in the children's daily life and play an important role in their value transfer (Schwartz, 1994). Christie (2007) observes that children learn more about the cultural ideals of their own culture while dramatizing children's singing games. Dzansi (2002) correctly states that most fundamentally, as far as views, values, identity and sense are concerned, children are part of the macro culture.' The texts of the game songs are based on daily life and experiences, aside from nonsense syllables or meaningless phrases. Siamonga (2017) notes that children songs play a vital role in the community. Siamonga observes that indigenous knowledge is conveyed orally from one generation to another in traditional songs and is the basis for local decision-making on many aspects of life, including education and social cohesion among children from all walks of life, as well as a host of other rural community activities.

The Kamba are a Bantu speaking community (Kapiyo, Kiruthu and Muma (2011). They form part of Eastern Bantu who claim to have dispersed from Shungwaya. The main economic activities for Kamba people are agriculture and animal husbandry as well as trade. Craftsmanship is practiced by the members of the community. According to Mwikali (1990) Kamba people express their love for song and dance in their impressive performances in their day to day lives and during special occasions. Mwikali (1990) describes these songs as lovely and melodious and that Kamba people express happiness and sorrowfulness of life through song and dance which was embraced by all members of the community, from a toddler to the old in the society. In Kamba songs a soloist (ngui) is very important. Kamba songs are grouped with respect to age; thus there are songs of young children to old people. Worth noting, is that performance of the songs in Kamba culture is always done differently as per the nature of the song. According to Kilonzi (1998) some songs are performed with body accompaniment while others not while others include musical instruments which were played to the rhythm of the song (Zake, 1986). This paper focuses on aesthetic value of Children's Kamba songs.

The involvement of children in the creation and performance of children's songs creates the aesthetic beauty and the comprehension of themes. However, oral literature has been stereotyped as a rural concept and few scholars have given it serious literary attention to children's creative expression. The literature review clarifies on the need for scholars to take more interest in children's literature and especially children's songs. This paper examines the aesthetic value Kamba children's play songs. The study hopes to give serious literary attention to children's creative expression and thereby uphold their rights to contribute to the artistic life and culture of their societies. The

study illustrates the aesthetic qualities and features of Kamba children songs by drawing on relevant performance art. It is also hoped that the study sheds lights on societal values and organization of Kamba community. The study aims at strengthening the children's artistic work i.e. the children's play songs, which have not been given much attention.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is anchored on Hymes (1991) ethnopoetic theory. The main goal of ethnopoetic text is to show how oral performers enhance the aesthetic value of their performance enhance the aesthetic value within their cultural contexts. Thus this theory mainly emphasizes on the study of oral literature within a given cultural setting. The theory has various arguments relating to culture and creativity. Hymes argues that word choice and language in an ethnopoetic text is often informed by the social values of a given society. That is, a given text exists within the social and cultural realities of a specific society. Hymes argues that works of verbal art have subtle organizations of lines and verses. Hymes emphasizes that the "expressions are founded upon a socially constituted poetic structure that is presented in the organization of experience as well as in the organization of reports on that experience. The lines or verses are not only poetic but also a kind of rhetoric of action in that they carry hidden cultural schemes for the organization of experience (Attonen, 1994).

Ethnopoetic theory is based on the patterning of the texture, which must also be shown in the transcription (Attonen, 1994). Ethnopoetics approach stresses on the importance of the aural qualities in performance since they are viewed as being crucial to the meaning of the performance and text. Hymes emphasize the need to place cultural creative works within the culture that has produced them. Alembe (2002) also makes a contribution to ethnopoetics theory by arguing that interpretation of words and actions should be within specific cultural contexts. The implication here is that the meanings of the words and actions in the collected children's play songs can only be located within the perceptions of the sampled communities. Thus, interpretation of oral texts is within their cultural contexts. This theory is thus relevant to the study as it aims to explore how Children's Kamba songs reflect the values of Kamba community. Both the texts and the performances are analyzed to come up with a clear understanding of meaning.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This research study utilized a qualitative research design and more specifically ethnography. Creswell (2012) defines qualitative research design as a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. Ethnographic methods are a research approach where you look at

people in their cultural setting, with the goal of producing a narrative account of that particular culture, against a theoretical backdrop (Cresswell, 1994). It also involve broadly stated questions about human experiences and realities, studied through sustained contact with people in their natural environments, generating rich, descriptive data that helps us to understand their experiences and attitudes. Therefore, this approach provides a detailed data on Children's Kamba Song within their specific cultural setting.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were children from primary schools in Kibwezi Sub County, Makueni County. Makueni County is one of the forty seven counties in Kenya. It is situated in South Eastern part of the Country. It borders Machakos to the North, Kitui to the East, Kajiado to the West and Taita Taveta to the South. The County is located between Latitude 1 35' south and Longitude 37 10' east and 38 30'. It covers an area of 8,176.7 KM2. The specific schools were identified using stratified sampling. Kibwezi has 161 primary schools hence 10% of 161 will give us a sample size of 16 schools.

Due to their disproportionateness, the schools were stratified according to types: Girls boarding, Boys' boarding, mixed boarding, mixed day and mixed day and boarding. The five therefore constituted the strata. The researcher then used random sampling to visit the specific schools in each stratum. Standard 1 to 3 pupils will be sampled for the sake of collecting the Children's Kamba play songs.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected through participant observation and secondary data. Observation is a methodology by which the researcher becomes personally involved with the participants' behaviors or acts (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The investigator looks at the participants by observation without interfering with them (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). Okombo (1992) state that participant observation helps the researcher to uncover the subtle meaning in the oral texts in a given community. Observation allowed the researcher to watch pupils as they perform the Kamba play songs. The researcher closely participated when children were performing the games songs, in order to be able to examine the aesthetic value of the songs, significance of their performance on the origin of Kamba community and the different changing trends in their performance. The children's play songs were directly recorded and they were translated from Kamba language to English. The researcher also wrote down the field notes of what was being observed. The researcher also collected data from primary sources. Primary sources included the collection of Kamba children's play songs, books and published thesis.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used qualitative data analysis and specifically textual analysis. Textual analysis may be referred to as a data analysis tool, which specifically analyzes the content and message of a text (McKee, 2001). Textual analysis design was used to analyze the research findings from the collected Kamba children's play songs which was the aesthetic value and significance of the performance of Kamba children songs community.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on the aesthetic values in Kamba children's play songs. Kamba Children perform different play songs creatively that reflect aesthetic values. The play songs reveal different aesthetic values about the Kamba community. The aesthetics of Kamba Children songs reflects on the origin, nature, power, purpose, creation, performance, reception, meaning and value of music. Children in Kamba play songs perform them creatively and the songs reveal a set of values relating to nature and appreciation of beauty. The analyzed data revealed that the Kamba play songs reflect aesthetic value of friendship and unity, aesthetic value of responsibility, aesthetic value of environmental issues, aesthetic value of Kinship System, aesthetic value of traditional food and the aesthetic value of hard work and the vice of laziness as discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Aesthetic value of Kamba Children's songs

4.1.1 Aesthetic value of Friendship and Unity

One of the aesthetic values that Kamba Children's play song brings into the lives of children is friendship and unity. Children are attracted to different kinds of sounds and enjoy producing sounds in a variety of ways. Kamba Children songs are a means of teaching children how to socialize with others by sharing, caring and loving them. Thus, Kamba Children Songs have a variety of performances that enhance the aesthetic value of friendship and unity as shown in the song *Kavilu Kavilu Mutisya witu* below:

Kavilu Kavilu Mutisya witu x3
Welcome Welcome our Mutisya x3

Na ala oonthe muvokie twimunenga nguma
For those who have come we praise you

Na Moi aaisye (response) aa uu tukwata nei x4
Moi said that we should be united us children

Kisomo Kiendeeye na Mbee x4
So as to achieve our objectives in education

The aesthetic value of friendship and unity is dramatized in the performance of the singing game above about welcoming Mutisya. The children perform the song of friendship and unity using gestures. One of

the boys maim Mutisya and the others visitors. The performer of the songs walks towards Mutisya and the visitors. The soloist is always a big child among the others. In this song the children learn how to be thankful and appreciate one another. The song also emphasizes on unity among children as they make reference to the late President Moi who instructed them to always remain united as children in order to achieve their goals in education.

The use of repetition of the *Kavilu Kavilu Mutisya witu x3* adds musicality to the performance thus making the play interesting. The children hold each other's hand when singing this song to demonstrate the importance of being united.

The aesthetic value of friendship and unity is also shown in the way the children express concern and solidarity towards each other as shown in the song *Nthambi mbuta kokuuia na wiiwani kyau* below:

Nthambi mbuta kokuuia na wiiwani kyau × 2
(Nthambi are you crying what is making you cry)

Walea undavya ningwinuka ngathathe ngoo ningwinuka × 2
If you fail to tell me i will get angry)

Chorus: **Ningwinuka ngathathe ngoo ningwinuka × 2**

I will go home to praise my heart)

The song above expresses the children's feelings of solidarity for the boy, Nthambi, who was crying. The children sing inquiring about what has happened to Nthambi. The song teaches children empathy and sympathy. The song reflected the children's sympathy for Nthambi and they want to know what is making him cry and if he fails to tell them they will go home angry. The song demonstrates friendship, love and care.

4.1.2 Aesthetic value of responsibility

The second value that was identified in Kamba children play song is the aesthetic value of responsibility. Responsibility means being dependable, making good choices, and taking accountability for your actions. A responsible citizen looks out for the wellbeing of others and understands we all have a part to play in making the world a better place. The data collected revealed songs that instill responsibility and self-discipline in children as shown in the song below: *Ngaamuka kathamba maau* (When I wake up).

Ngaamuka kathamba maau
(When i wake up i wash my legs)
Nzanue nzwii na ndyela mbwaa
(I comb my hair , cut my nails)

Nzake maayo nikana nithiwe mutheu vyuu × 2
Brush my teeth so as to be very clean)

Chorus : Mundu utesi kuthamba soaniaa kuthamba
(Teach yourself on how to take bath)
Kuthamba ni kuseo nitwaiite kuthamba
(Bathing is good)
Mundu utesi kuthamba soaniaa kuthamba
(One who doesn't know how to bath think of bathing)
Kuthamba ni kuseo twimanyisye kuthamba tiitwaiite kuthamba × 2
(Bathing is good train yourself how to bath)

Kamba children sing and dramatize on the value of being responsible. The song is performed in a chesty, forceful way, with great vigour to demonstrate how the society values responsible citizens. The children sing showing the actions they do when they wake up. The value of cleanness is also demonstrated in this song. The children demonstrate the action of bathing and how it is important to teach yourself how to bath. This part is demonstrated by the children in a soft voice and meditatively.

More so, the performance is purely imitative and musical in order to develop creativity in the children. The chorus of the above song illustrates the responsibility lesson *Mundu utesi Kuthamba soaniaa Kuthamba* (Teach yourself on how to take bath). The song shows that apart from the lighter duties that the child is able to do they should also learn to take a bath which is good. In this song the child therefore learns that being dependent is a good thing.

The song on *Ngulu Ngulu wa Kasambe* below further illustrates the importance of taking responsibilities for everyday actions. Through illustrations, the song introduces Kamba children to punishment of their actions in a friendly way and teaching them about taking responsibility for their everyday actions. This song is performed by the children in a vigorous manner:

Ngulu ngulu × 5 wa kasembe
(Ngulu son of kasembe)
Ngulu malenge meene mwatemangie no mokaive
(Ngulu pumpkins you destroyed you have to pay)
Chorus : No mukaiva malenge meene mwatemangie
(You have to pay the pumpkins)

The song above shows how Ngulu son of Kasembe gets in trouble for destroying the pumpkin. Through repetition of *Ngulu's name Ngulu ngulu × 5 wa kasembe* the children show how it is wrong to destroy the pumpkin and therefore Ngulu has to take responsibility and pay for his action as it is shown by the chorus of the song Chorus: *No mukaiva malenge meene mwatemangie* (You have to pay the pumpkins).

The antics in the song actually help show the importance of taking responsibility for your actions. More so a pumpkin is valued in Kamba culture.

4.1.3 Aesthetic value of environmental Issues

The data collected revealed that Children's play songs highlight the relationship between human and the environment. Kamba songs aim at raising children who care about environment. The children are introduced to the environment issues at an early age. One way in which this is achieved is through children's play songs that offer meaningful messages about nature and preservation and conversation. The data below show songs about the environment and they aim to educate the children about it and how to preserve it. The aesthetic values in these songs are in line with their cultural aesthetics and beliefs. For instance the song below about the pumpkin and *githeri* reveal some environmental information and cultural information:

Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwa nzaa × 2

(Let us go and give thanks to gods children are hungry)

Syana syikolanye malenge , nzuu , tuue mukeu × 2

(Children to collect pumpkins , peas to cook githeri)

Tukathembe mumbi × 5 (response) ngai mwatuangi × 5

(We shall sacrifice to our gods)

Tusisya yiulu ituni tutaie ngai × 5

(Let us focus in our god and praise him)

The setting of the above song is after a long famine and the rains came and the pumpkin were available and peas to cook Githeri. The song is meant to teach the children the value of preserving the environment (plenty food) and the effect of environment destructions which include famine as reflected in the song. ***Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwanzaa:***

The song also reflects culture as in the line below:

Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwa nzaa × 2

(Let us go and give thanks to gods children are hungry)

In the song above the gods are given thanks for the plenty of food that has been made available due to rains. In this sense Kamba children learn to appreciate the rains and to value them. The song also reflects the aesthetics of Kamba people such as the gods as shown in the line below:

Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwa nzaa × 2

(Let us go and give thanks to gods children are hungry)

Syana syikolanye malenge, nzuu, tuue mukeu × 2

(Children to collect pumpkins, peas to cook githeri)

Tukathembe mumbi × 5 (response) ngai mwatuangi × 5

(We shall sacrifice to our gods)

Tusisya yiulu ituni tutaie ngai × 5

(Let us focus in our god and praise him)

The above lines show environment as creation and the metaphysical experience of our world. More so, the song also shows a celebration of the environment, its beauty and wonder. The song depicts nature appreciation and the changing of the seasons that from famine where the children were hungry to a rainy season which is characterized with plenty of food. The performance of this song is accompanied with dancing and a celebratory mood.

The Kamba children songs also revealed the negative negative impact of humanity on the environment. In the process, thus, the songs were as a reminder of the environmental conservation for sustainable development. This is dramatized by children songs revealing punishment to those who destroy the environment as shown below:

Ngulu ngulu × 5 wa kasembele

(Ngulu son of kasembe)

Ngulu malenge meene mwatemangie no mokaive

(Ngulu pumpkins you destroyed you have to pay)

Chorus : No mukaiva malenge meene mwatemangie

(You have to pay the pumpkins)

The above song clearly calls for preservation of the environment through Pumpkins (*Ngulu malenge meene mwatemangie no mokaive*) the pumpkins being the most available food in the environment of a Kamba child has to be preserved and not destroyed. Thus, Kamba children play songs highlight the Kamba's conscious control of the environment, their need to preserve the environment for self-sustainability and life-support.

4.1.4 Aesthetic value of Kinship System

Kinship system refers to a family organization that is based on a string of relationships of people who are directly or indirectly related through blood relationship or marriage. This basically is a kind of extended family lineage. This is the system that many African societies observe. This system is different from the western system of a nuclear family. The song *Niiwa wasya wa mama* below reveals the kinship of the children. The children sing about their close kin as being a mother as shown below:

Niiwa wasya wa mama × 2

(I can hear the voice of my mother calling me)

Yu ni saa sita × 2

(Now it is noon)

Mwalimu tiwa nesa tukaonana uni × 2

(My teacher i bid you goodbye we shall meet tomorrow)

Syana tiwa nesa

(Children goodbye)

Twonana uni ngai enda

(We shall meet tomorrow god willing)

In the song above the children bid their teacher as they recognize that it is noon and it time for them to go home and see their close knit family member (mother). The song reveals that in the Kamba community one close family member that the children associate with is the mother. This song is sung with a jubilant mood by the children and the children use body language and gestures to say goodbye to their teacher. The elder children normally act as the teacher. The teacher is also a performer in the song who appreciates the children and bids them goodbye. This song therefore involves dramatization of children happily bidding each other goodbye and noting that they will meet the next day God willing. The song thus contributes to the children's social, physical and moral development. The children are also made aware of their mental skills and their body awareness.

The song on *Mama Mutindi* below also depicts a close knit kinship in Kamba community and how Kamba people introduce kinship ties to children through play games. The song below shows how family ties and sense of belonging are revealed in children's play song:

Mama Mutindi x 2) responses (oo oo)

Mother to Mutindi ooo

Wandete va? X2 response Sokoni

Where are you going response (to the market)

Kuuwa Kyaux2 response (Sukuma)

What do you want to buy response (sukuma)

Ayaande nesa kethya syana syaku Ayaenda nesa

Okey bye great your children

Neewa muse waku niuumiwe ni nzeka

I have heard your husband has been bit by a snake

Uuwi niikata ndina ungi wakuuzisya

What am I going to do I have no other to check on me

The song above reveals a composition of a close knit family of mother, father and children. The performer is mother and a concerned party. The song reflects African kinship system as close knit family where people live together and care for one another. The concerned party inquires about the welfare of Mutindi's father who was bit by the snake which shows how people live closely and care about each other. The orator also tells Mutindi's mother to great the other children. This song is normally performed vigorously as the children are singing and jumping hence it develops them socially, physically and emotionally. The actions in the play song above involve physical skill and strategy.

The song *Lulu mwana* below also shows how the mother in a family is a significant person in kinship:

Lulu mwana × 2 kwakilya mwana × 2

(Ooh child , keep quite)

Mami athi muundani × 2 kutula kavemba × 2

(Mother has gone to the farm to bring maize)

Na kamwe ni kakwa × 2 na kangi ni kaku × 2

(One is for you and the other is for mine)

Lulu mwana × 2

(Ooh child)

In the song above the children sing about their mother bringing maize (**Mami athi muundani × 2 kutula kavemba × 2**) that is mother has gone to the farm to bring maize. The song thus reveals how farming and maize as a cash crop is important to the Kamba community. The song also depicts mothers as being responsible and caring. The song also reveals the fact that women have also become providers in the Kamba community. The song also reveals the blood ties of the child and the mother. The child is crying because the mother is not around. The song also reveals the economic activities of Kamba community from time immemorial such as farming.

The songs also show the value of visitors in the society. As children sing the play songs about visitors they reveal the binding ties in Kamba children's play songs. The songs show children excitedly and vigorously singing about their different relatives either from their mothers and fathers side as shown in the song *Aeni meiva* below:

Aeni meiva × 5 twende kumona ithyi syama × 5

(Where are you visitors we want to see the us children)

Mutiso eiva × 5 twende kumwona

(Where is Mutiso we want to see him)

Muthoki eiva × 5 twende kumwona yambee

(Where is Muthoki we want to see him)

Tumwine keli , tumwiwe katatu tumukethye na kana ni myo

(Firstly we want to see her secondly to great her , thirdly to buy us sweets , fourthly our hearts will be filled with joy)

Chorus : Aeni ni aseu × 5 aiaa iaa × 5

(Visitors are good)

Maundu ni maseo

(Things are alright)

The song above reflects the African kinship system as a close knit kind of family whereby people live together and assist one another and celebrate events together. The song above is sung with a joyful mood by children. In this sense, as children grow up they learn to appreciate their kin and visitors in general **Aeni meiva × 5 twende kumona ithyi syama × 5** (Where are you visitors we want to see the children). **Mutiso eiva × 5 twende kumwona** (Where is Mutiso we want to see him) **Muthoki eiva × 5 twende kumwona yambee** (Where is Muthoki we want to see him). The song reflects that in Kamba community the kinship system allows for close interaction and sharing among

members. First, the mood of the song is a joyful one and there is excited and later own there will be sharing due to the visit as shown in this line: *Tumwine keli, tumwiwe katatu tumukethye na kana ni myo* (Firstly we want to see her secondly to great her, thirdly to buy us sweets , fourthly our hearts will be filled with joy). The song shows how the community value sharing of food and no one should suffer hunger. The song ends by recognizing that visitors are good. The children are thus trained and brought up by appreciating solidarity and communality brought by visitors. The Kamba play song teaches the children how to socialize with others and the need to belong in a family.

4.1.5. Aesthetic value of traditional Food

The Kamba songs also reveal traditional foods and a significant role they play in the Kamba community. The pumpkin has been revealed in most songs as having a cultural implication and especially for carrying out rituals such as offering thanks giving to the gods as shown in the song.

Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwa nzaa below:

Muyukile ithyothe tuthi tukathembe kithembeoni syana syiwa nzaa × 2

(Let us go and give thanks to gods children are hungry)

Syana syikolanye malenge , nzuu , tuue mukeu × 2
(Children to collect pumpkins , peas to cook githeri)

Tukathembe mumbi × 5 (response) ngai mwatuangi × 5

(We shall sacrifice to our gods)

Tusisya yiulu ituni tutaie ngai × 5

(Let us focus in our god and praise him)

The song above shows that the pumpkin, peas and Githeri are special foods which are treasured and have many cultural functions. The pumpkin has many social and cultural values as shown in the following lines: **Syana syikolanye malenge , nzuu , tuue mukeu × 2** (Children to collect pumpkins , peas to cook githeri) **Tukathembe mumbi × 5 (response) ngai mwatuangi × 5** (We shall sacrifice to our gods). The song also describes the foods that are cooked to a multitude of people. The song also depicts the cultural festival of blessing the good harvest that shows plenty of food in the community due to plenty of rain. The children learn of the food items that are used to thank the gods such as the pumpkin, the peace, beans and maize. During the thanks giving ceremony these products are bought to be used for ritual and performance.

4.1.6 The aesthetic value of hard work and the vice of laziness

The data collected reveal how hard work is praised in Kamba community while laziness is condemned. Laziness is discouraged and is associated with negatively. The song below also discourages

laziness as symbolized by uneducated woman in the song below:

Nikilya nathia kukautwa × 2

(If a try to grind flour it is taken away)

Nila imutanyuka ya kivetii × 2

(By uneducated woman)

Yianya mbwaa syomaleve × 2

(It has long nails)

The song above teaches the children on the value of hardworking and discourages laziness which has negative effects as depicted in the descriptive language of imagery. *Yianya mbwaa syomaleve* (It has long nails). The long nails here symbolize a thief. Due to lack of hard work the uneducated woman has become a thief. The vice of laziness is also depicted in the song below:

Mutulu × 2 atindaa musyi aiya malenge meiko ayivaka mouu

The lazy children stay at home eating pumpkins applying themselves with ashes

Syna sya sukulu mwiasyata

(What do you have to say children?)

The song above discourages laziness and encourages children to work hard. Mutulu in the song above is condemned for being lazy hence emphasizing on the aesthetic value of hard work. The negative impacts are shown by the line **Mutulu × 2 atindaa musyi aiya malenge meiko ayivaka mouu**. The lazy children stay at home eating pumpkins applying themselves with ashes. Hence, laziness is presented as bad and hard work as good. The actions in the song were dramatized hence showing how laziness is a bad thing. The two children songs satirize the lazy people who do not want to work hard and they are portrayed negatively.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study was designed to critically analyze the aesthetic value of kamba children's play songs. The songs were analyzed as forms of children literature through the framework of ethno poetics theory. The study concludes that there are important aesthetic values in Kamba Children play Songs. The songs are embedded on concrete textual traditions of Kamba society. More so, the songs are typically oral kinesthetic and fluid, allowing for multi-level participation. The study observed that the performance of Kamba children songs emphasizes on values such as friendship, responsibility and love that aids in maintenance of ordered unity, relationships and cohesions. The songs are created by children at play for the purposes of the individual or group play situation. The study concludes that Kamba children play songs share a common approach to rhythm, formal structure, textual form and content, and performance style. However, the study concludes efforts should be made to

maintain the aesthetics of these songs since they are witnessing changes as reflected in formal education and religion.

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