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The Philosophical Epistemologies of Asante Proverbs in Ghana's Biodiversity Conservation

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Abstract

One of the vibrant ancient vehicles for instructing indigenous Asantes on their cultural values and the accepted behavioural patterns is proverbs. Asante proverbs are artistic expressions or products of the wisdom of the ancestors passed on from one generation to the other orally by the old indigenes in various local communities in the Ashanti region of Ghana. They were created from personal experiences, observations and information of the Asante forebears about natural phenomena (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2013). These wise maxims are embedded with rich and proactive values that are indispensable in human efforts to salvage our problems such as biodiversity depletion. The study was therefore conducted in three localities in the Ashanti region of Ghana where most of the biosphere areas and resources have been conserved using the ecological wisdom in the proverbs propounded by the Asante forebears. These areas are Kumawu, Akropong and Asante Bekwai where there are high taxas of the bio-resources in the areas conserved in their pristine forms using the Asante proverbs. It was realized that the wise maxims by the Asante forebears greatly regulated and impacted positively on the moral behaviours of the indigenes towards the biodiversity resources in their environments. The researcher purposively sampled the traditional authorities, traditional priests and priestesses, spokespersons in the traditional courts and elders who are the direct custodians of the traditional epistemologies and are very instrumental in its delivery as well as its interpretations. Also, the old indigenes and some youths were also randomly selected and interviewed. Descriptive and narrative research methods under the qualitative research approach were adopted for the study to vividly portray the significant roles these wise sayings play in Ghana's biodiversity. Direct observation and interviews (Focus Group Discussions and Personal) were the main instruments for soliciting for the data for the research. The interpretivist philosophical paradigm was implemented to help the researchers understand the philosophical underpinnings behind these proverbs to ascertain their conservational values to Ghana's biodiversity. The paper unveils the philosophical epistemologies behind twenty six (26) Asante proverbs and their ecological importance to biodiversity conservation in Ghana. The findings of the study revealed the weight and quintessential role that proverbs play in biodiversity conservation and the need for their revival, preservation and more importantly, their incorporation into modern biodiversity conservation strategies and policies to be implemented in Ghana. This would aid in conserving the biodiversity resources that are wantonly destroyed today in Ghana as a result of negative behavioural patterns.

Keywords: Asante Proverbs, Biodiversity, Conservation, Philosophy, ecology, epistemologies, cultural values, policies, strategies

1. Introduction

Proverbs are craftily developed short epigrammatic expressions created by our ingenious forebears enshrined with valuable epistemologies that ensure social cohesion in communities by regulating the moral values of the people handed down from one generation to another generation. Dogbevi (2011) opines that proverbs are the widely used form of traditional oral arts that express summarized and allusive phraseologies with the aim of giving moral instruction. Owing to the fact that proverbs were and are the powerful instrument through which the cultural and societal values of local communities are conveniently transmitted to the younger generations, they are highly esteemed among most Asante communities. Kquofi, Amante and Tabi-Agyei (2013) concur that proverbs are a cardinal figure in the cherished indigenous linguistics of the Akan people which the Asantes constitute a larger part. Proverbs, though are usually abridged, they express profound truths as well as common human experiences (Kaplan, 2002). The absolute truth or wisdom in proverbs offers various moral lessons that assist societal members to demonstrate good traits such as hospitality, goodness, peacefulness, stewardship and accountability while shunning negative attitudes such as stealing, chaos or disputes, selfishness etc. (Anderson, 2015). Unwarranted behaviours are deliberately ridiculed in most of the proverbs making it less enticing for societal members to mimic. Thus, the Asante forebears in their quest to maintain a high ethical code of living endorsed some social norms and behavior that were relayed to members of the general public through proverbs (Sanauddin, 2015). These relatively short but wise expressions were made known to societal members by the elders in the community. Old indigenes in the local communities who played dual roles as elders and fathers instructed their wards in their households for them to glean the import or admonishing embedded in the proverbs. Others were fortunate to have deeper comprehensions of these avenues of hegemony by the folk sages or elders at family gatherings, communal meetings and initiation rites where instructions concerning the accepted mode of

behavior were given (Adom, 2011). It is interesting to know the great impact that these maxims have on societal members! They were highly revered and reckoned by every member of the society due to the deep respect for the old sages or elders these wise sayings issued from. Also, since the elders were viewed as the custodians of the sayings of the deities and ancestors, proverbs were often accepted blindly by members of the society (Rasul, 2015). This explains why the moral behaviours and attitudinal manifestations of the old generations of Asantes were remarkably positive. It was abhorred as Boateng (1998) noticed, among the Asantes, to wantonly destroy the forest which is a haven for the high taxas of flora and fauna species-the biological diversities that supports life.

It is however sad that these wise sayings, considered by many ethnic societies of the world as 'the most ubiquitous genre of folklore', are gradually losing its grip and relevance in the Ghanaian community (Sanauddin, 2015). This is largely attributed to the influx and pervasiveness of foreign cultural practices. Gbolonyo (2009) posits that the curricula for instructing learners in most educational institutions have been raided with foreign ideologies and the wisdom enshrined in these proverbs have been relegated and even totally abandoned. Storytelling sessions and programs aired on televisions and radio stations in Ghana that were formerly used as mediums in relaying the good values in these proverbs such as 'By the Fireside', 'Kyekyekule' etc. have now been exchanged with Western fairytales (Gadzekpo, 2013). Proverbs still hold great wealth in the circles of biodiversity conservation because most of them admonishes on the need to conserve the biological resources in the environment that ensures our survival as humans. Statistics clearly shows a major decline in the biodiversity resources in Ghana which was not formerly the case. Due to the heinous destruction of Ghana's biodiversity resources, the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme (WBSP) reported that Ghana's economy loses over GH¢ 42 million every year (Ghana News Agency, 2012). The cause of this depletion of the Ghana's bio-resources is partly as a result of the weak moral values of her citizens. Attuquafio and Fobil (2005) agree that to curb the problem of Ghana's biodiversity depletion we need to look at changing the behavioural patterns of its citizens. It is true that if the moral fibres of Ghanaian citizens are strengthened, we will be able to salvage the ever deteriorating state of the country's biodiversity.

The multi-million question now is 'How can we change the behavioural patterns of Ghanaians as far as the destruction of Ghana's biodiversity is concerned?' The answer gleams in the words of Gadzekpo (2013) who advocated for a renaissance of the wise maxims of our forebears that contains powerful moral values to help regulate the attitudes of Ghanaians towards the biodiversity resources in the environment. The characters in most of the proverbs propounded by the Asante forebears are flora species and fauna species used metaphorically to instruct societal members on good moral habits. Imageries are often painted to illuminate the peaceful relationship that exists between humans, the environment and its rich resources.

Proverbs often highlights the interdependency relation between man and nature, insisting that humans and nature have also co-existed and depends on each other for survival. This has even given rise to theories like the Human Environment Relations Theory, Cultural Ecology Theory, Historical Ecology Theory etc. (Milton, 1996; Steward, 1955). Thus, if this peaceful relationship between man and the natural environment is perturbed by the activities of man it would end up affecting his own existence on the earth. Therefore, propagating the wisdom in the wise maxims of the Asante forebears which advocates for a peaceful relation between humans and the environment, frowning on negative attitudes and practices that destroys the biodiversity resources in nature while applauding best conservation practices is certainly a good course to pursue as scholars who are bent in saving our world of the wanton destruction of its biodiversity resources. Awuah-Nyamekye (2013) strongly believes that proverbs are powerful mediums for relaying ecological wisdom for the conservation of the biodiversity resources in the environment especially in Ghana where proverbs still have high currencies, permeating in every sphere of the lives of her citizens. This probably is what was on the mind of Gadzekpo (2013) who called for a rejuvenation of proverbs, elevating it in our search to correct the abysmal attitude of Ghanaians towards their biotic environment and its rich resources. Local and International agencies and institutions that campaign for the conservation of the biodiversity resources in nature have also recognized the worth of proverbs as an instrument for campaigning against the wanton destruction of the biodiversity resources in the environment. For instance, the United Nations have used the Kikuyu proverb from Kenya that says that 'Treat our earth well for it was not given to us by our parents; it is lent to us by our children' as the theme for its environmental and conservation programs. The philosophical content or imports of these proverbs have epistemologies that are laden with conservation values.

The purpose of the study was thus to unearth the philosophical epistemologies of some Asante proverbs and the significant roles that they play in the conservation of Ghana's biodiversity. The proverbs in this paper are all in the Asante-Twi dialect which was spoken by the respondents engaged in the study. However, for the consumption and enlightenment of people from other ethnic cultures, English transliterations of the proverbs have also been given. More importantly, the philosophical epistemologies embedded in each of the proverbs under study as well as their relation to biodiversity conservation have been outlined.

2. Methodology

The study employed the qualitative research approach. The qualitative research design answers questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participant's point of view through the use of interviews and observation as the main instrumentations (Creswell, 2009). Interpretative narratives and descriptions were developed from the data gathered to understand the philosophical epistemologies and conservation values enshrined in the proverbs (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The case study approach was also implemented for this study. Fraenkel et al. (2012, p.435) said of the case study approach that 'it seeks to understand a case in all its parts, including the inner workings because the researcher 'is primarily interested in understanding the specific situation in detail to shed more light on it'. The researcher realized that there was the need to carefully comprehend in detail, each of the proverbs narrated by respondents.

The study was conceptualized in the interpretivist philosophical paradigm. Interpretivists assume that knowledge and meanings comes from the interpretations of those who experience the phenomena with the aim of understanding it (Cranford, 2016). This philosophical paradigm looks at with how ethnic groups or individuals deduce meanings in their everyday practices and lived experiences (Hunter, 2005). The researcher had lengthy interview with the old indigenes and traditional authorities who are custodians of the wise maxims and who took part in their formulation in the study areas. This was to have deeper understanding of the philosophical epistemologies behind their establishment to enlighten readers of their conservation values to the biodiversity resources in Ghana, hence the selection of this paradigm of philosophy.

The population for the study consisted of three (3) chiefs, three (3) queen mothers, three (3) traditional priests/priestesses, three (3) spokesmen as well as twenty (20) elders from the three local communities selected for the study, fifteen (15) old indigenes and nine (9) youths were first purposively sampled after which they were randomly selected and interviewed. The chiefs, queen mothers, and traditional priest and priestesses were personally interviewed while the elders of the traditional councils as well as the old indigenes in the selected local communities were interviewed using the Focus Group Discussion for long hours and in different occasions to understand the philosophical imports of the proverbs and ascertain their conservation values.. Direct observation of how these proverbs were used for giving instruction on moral behaviors and accepted social norms in family gatherings, communal meetings and elders meetings in the local communities were studied. This heightened the comprehension of the researcher in the light of the philosophical epistemologies of these proverbs and their conservational values for the preservation of the biodiversity resources in the jurisdictions of the local communities studied. Also, the direct observations aided the researcher in knowing how the proverbs were implemented in real life settings to regulate the moral fibres of societal members for biodiversity conservation.

3. Results and Discussions

The presented discussions are the results from the personal interviews conducted with key personalities who are considered as repositories of the wisdom enshrined in proverbs namely the traditional authorities, traditional priests and priestesses, spokesmen in the traditional court as well as Focus Group Discussions with the elders and old indigenes in the study areas. Through the interview and discussions, the researcher helped the respondents to reason and shed their understanding of the proverbs to suit the biodiversity conservation discourse. The known meanings of these proverbs were rephrased or reinterpreted to accommodate admonishing to the Ghanaian citizenry as well as conservation bodies on the need to conserve the biodiversity resources in the environment since proverbs have that instructive characteristic (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2013).

Sometimes the researcher deliberately laid bare an Asante proverb and solicited for its philosophical underwriting that can help change the attitudinal patterns of individuals, advising the conservation bodies on how to develop their conservation strategies and policies while charging those in authority as well as members of the general public on how to conserve the biodiversity resources in the environment. It also advocates for the shunning of ill or negative behavioural patterns that are the prime causes of the biodiversity depletion in Ghana. A list of twenty-six (26) Asante proverbs and their philosophical epistemologies that can significantly impact positively on Ghana's biodiversity conservation have been compiled and vividly discussed based on the findings from the respondents in the three localities in Ghana adopted for the study.

1. *'Meye papa senea ebeye a makwantuom k) nananom h) beye dwoodwoo na wonsi me kwan'* (I am doing good things so that my journey to the world of the spirits will be safe and not blocked).

The Asantes believe that the moral life that they lead in the physical world would dictate how they will fare in the metaphysical world where they would transcend to after their demise. Therefore, negative activities that could harm the biodiversity resources in the environment were shunned and frowned upon. This value of accountability to the 'higher' spiritual forces who are believed to reside in the metaphysical world propelled communal members to respect the biodiversity resources in the environment.

2. *'Nyame nwu na mawu'* (Could God die, I will also die).

This maxim of the Asantes clearly illustrates their belief in the immortality of the soul which is closely associated with the eternal nature of God. Thus, after the physical demise, the deceased embarks on a spiritual

trek to the land of the dead to account for his/her deeds on earth. A good account will merit favour while a bad account will certainly attract severe, lasting punishment. Therefore, any action that could endanger the species in the environment whether plant or animal, are strictly avoided.

3. ***'Nyame mpe b)ne nti na wato obiara din'* (Because God does not like evil, He gave each person a name).**

This adage also paints an imagery of God's personality that He is full of goodness and dislikes evil. However, if someone commits any evil, the person alone is responsible for the aftermath of that vile action. Hence, it is the culprit's name that will be called, setting him apart from others. Though Asantes live in a cooperative environment undertaking activities in a communal fashion, the penalty for any evil undertaken rests on the shoulders of the culprit. The thought of carrying the heavy burden of evil served as a deterrent from such vile activities among Asantes. Thus, living in harmony with nature's biodiversity resources was a must while contrary actions were shunned.

4. ***'W)n a yentumi nkye w)n no, yegyae w)n hye onyame nsa'* (Those whom we cannot catch, we leave in the hands of God).**

After an evil deed is committed, such as an unwarranted felling down of a tree in the forest, it is possible the culprit might not be caught. It is in such cases that the concept behind this maxim comes to the fore. Though the evil doer may escape the sight of man, he/she cannot escape the vigil eye of the creator who will met out punishment to him or her. This belief of accounting for one's evil deed even when not caught, served as an invisible policing force barring the demonstration of negative activities that could harm the environment and diminish the biodiversity resources.

5. ***'Nyame na epra aboa a onni dua ho ma no'* (God drives away the insects from the tailless animal).**

This maxim explains the caring and merciful attitude of God even for the biodiversity resources like animals and plants. The creator of the biodiversity resources treats them gently and with respect. Therefore, humans who are stewards are expected to mimic the example of the Supreme Being by maintaining, sustaining and conserving the biodiversity resources.

6. ***'Se wope se woka biribi kyere nyame a, ka kyere mframa'* (If you want to say something to God, say it to the wind).**

This adage paints God as very near and accessible to humans. We can call on Him whenever we need Him since He is everywhere like the wind. However, to earn His favour, we need to live in accordance with His statues, one of which is to respect and live in harmony with nature and conserve biodiversity.

7. ***'Papaye ye Nyame su titiriw'* (Goodness is the prime characteristic of God).**

The merciful Being is ever ready to shower His goodness on mankind. He is ever ready to do it more for those who abide by His laws. Therefore, if humans engage in bio-friendly activities and shun all negative activities that harm the earth, they will be recipients of His goodness.

8. ***'J)man nkoguo ne ne see fi ase w) ne fie'* (The decline and fall of a nation begins in its home).**

Various homes in a country make up the nation. Therefore, the attitudes and behaviours of the residents in their home regions, whether good or bad directly affect the nation. If people in a particular household throw refuse in the streams in their vicinity, felling trees indiscriminately thereby wasting the biodiversity resources, the entire nation suffers. Thus, if the spirit of patriotism flourishes in the bosom of all societal members, they will collectively help conserve our rich biodiversity. A contrary attitude would gradually heap up destroying the rich biodiversity resources Ghana can boast of as a country.

9. ***'Asansa se nea onyame aye nyinaa ye'* (The hawk says all that God has created is good).**

The import of this maxim is that the animal, 'hawk' appreciates all the creations of God. Thus, it will be wrong for humans to wantonly extinct some species of plant or animal that God has creatively done. The counsel gleaned from this maxim is that since anything in nature is part of the handiwork of God and thus good, man must strive very hard to conserve them.

10. ***'Adidi daa ye sene adidi preko'* (It is not good to eat all you have in a day).**

This adage cautions against the depletion of the bio-resources in the environment. It stresses on the judicious or sustainable usage of the resources in the environment. Indiscriminate usage of these resources painted by the imagery 'in a day' without thinking of the future is disastrous. The effect will not be on only the present generation but will also extend to future progeny.

11. ***'Wo sum borode a sum kwadu'* (When you support the plantain plant against the wind, do same for the banana plant).**

It is wise to support the various plant species in the environment since all of them have the potential of helping humans in their everyday life activities. Therefore, the import of this proverb is that man must conserve the bio-resources in the environment for human survival.

12. ***'Kwae a agye wo no yenfre no kwaewa'* (Do not be ungrateful to the forest that has saved you).**

This adage calls on man to be grateful and appreciative to the good services the forest renders to them. Man relies on it for their sustenance-food, clothing, medicine etc. If they wantonly destroy this forest that has been beneficial to them, morally they are degraded. Therefore, they need to conserve all its resources for their own

benefit.

13. ‘Dua koro gye mframa a ebu’ (An isolated tree cannot stand the might of strong wind or storm).

This proverb warns of the dangers of destroying the patches of the forest wantonly. When the wind blows which is a natural phenomenon, can easily destroy the few or isolated trees in the forest resulting in untold situations like flooding, earthquakes etc. Therefore, having these biodiversity resources in abundance standing as a uniform team can help combat the negative effects of biodiversity depletion. This calls on us as a people to judiciously use the biodiversity resources in our environment.

14. ‘Obi nnim a, obi kyere’ (If someone does not know, someone teaches).

This proverb admonishes us that it is not wrong to learn from someone or allow them to teach us. Thus, we must be humble to accept other people’s views so that we can progress as a people. Conservation planners and conservation bodies must solicit for the views of diverse people especially the old folks or sages in the local communities who have single handedly conserved their biodiversity resources using traditional ecological knowledge. They must allow them to share their views on their traditional conservation strategies so that they can augment it with the scientific conservation strategies they are accustomed to.

The same sentiment expressed in this proverb is also seen in this Asante proverb: **Hu mani so ma me nti na atwe mmienu nante.** It means that two is always better than one. Therefore, it is better to solicit for views from others and even allow them to teach us things we do not know but are proactive in remedying problems of mankind such as biodiversity depletion.

15. ‘Anomaa anntu a, obua da’ (If a bird does not fly, it goes to bed hungry).

A bird is able to get a prey to eat and cater for its family if it flies or goes out in search for food. It takes great effort to achieve higher heights. Thus, to realize the change we earnestly dream as a country in our biodiversity resources, we must put in massive conservation efforts. For instance, various biodiversity conservation policies and strategies must be developed and tested. Also, the government must sponsor and fund biodiversity conservation projects to aid in addressing the biodiversity degradation problem in Ghana. These giant efforts put in by the government and its citizens would be like the bird that flies tirelessly to find prey to fend for itself and the family.

16. ‘Aninguase mfata Akanni ba’ (Disgrace does not befit an Akan descent).

Honour, which is the opposite of disgrace, is highly valued among the Akans particularly the Asantes. Thus, everything that can bring shame on the Asantes is frowned upon by the people. The Asantes prides themselves as a storehouse of high biodiversity taxa. Therefore, it is a dishonor or even disgrace to the Asantes if their biodiversity resources are deteriorated. This proverb is thus a reminder to the Asantes and Ghanaians in general on the need to conserve the biodiversity resources with the view of taking the past glory that it once had.

17. ‘Agoro beso a, efiri anopa’ (A carnival will be entertaining when it starts from the morning).

This proverb means that a successful undertaking, ‘agoro’ can be envisioned from its beginnings, ‘anopa’. Thus, if an undertaking or conservation strategy will be effective, one can tell from its early implementation. This wise saying carries an import to conservation planners and developers to abolish any conservation strategy or policy that does not yield fruits at its early stages rather than wasting years in trying its efficacy. The untold number of years for the experimentation of the developed conservation strategies would end up destroying a lot of the biodiversity resources in the environment.

18. ‘Se biribi ankoka papa a, anka anye gyerede’ (If something did not touch the dried palm fronds, it would not have made a sound)

The palm fronds when dried make a sound whenever something or someone touches it. The proverb means that there is always a cause for every effect. Therefore, if Ghana as a country is experiencing losses in the numbers of its biodiversity resources then it must find out the causes and certainly deal with it to avert the situation. The various institutions in charge of biodiversity conservation, traditional authorities wielding authority over local communities as well as individuals must put up measures in finding out the causes of the biodiversity menace. It is only when we unearth the causes that we can brainstorm ways of remedying them to aid conserve the biodiversity resources in Ghana.

19. ‘Okoto nwo anomaa’ (The crab does not give birth to a bird)

This proverb associates an object to its kind. Thus, a crab procreates a crab and not a bird. This means that as humans we always see the products of our behavior. If we exhibit bad moral behaviours we will have negative and even harsh conditions as products. Therefore, this proverb is admonishing on the need to demonstrate good behavioural patterns such as the values of conservation and judicious use of the biodiversity resources so that we will have them in great abundance to cater for our needs and that of future progeny. On the other hand, if we wantonly and greedily use the biodiversity resources in nature, we will certainly run at a lose and bear the sad consequences of our negative actions.

20. ‘Se wohu se wo yonko abodwese rehye a na wasa nsuo asi wo dee ho’ (If you see your neighbours beard burning, fetch water besides yours).

This proverb admonishes us to learn from the sad experiences of others so that we will not tread on their steps

and experience their pain. Various West African counterparts have wantonly destroyed the biodiversity resources in their environment. These countries are in a sorry state and are now at the mercy of other countries for biodiversity resources aid. Ghana should learn from the sad experiences of these countries by mapping out pragmatic conservation strategies to curb the biodiversity depletion to avoid the effects being suffered by other countries that stubbornly destroyed their bio-resources.

21. ***'Dua a enya wo a ebewo w'ani no, yetu asee, yensensene ano'* (One uproots the stick that can pierce the eye rather than sharpening it).**

This proverb is a word of caution that conditions that may pose threats must be arrested early before they escalate, making their prevention difficult. There are various causes of biodiversity depletion in Ghana such as over reliance on the biodiversity resources, wanton selling of these resources as a result of greed on the part of those in authority, weak legislation, blind implementations of only conventional scientific conservation strategies etc. These causes must be avoided now to save the remaining fauna and flora species in the environment. If we fail as a country to tackle and remedy these causes and other potentially known ones that are like sticks that can harm us, they would 'grow' or aggravate as it were to insurmountable situations that may be difficult to address. The time is now for conservation bodies and those in authority to 'uproot' these causes of the biodiversity menace.

22. ***'Panyin a)tena fie ma mm)fra we nanka no, yebu nankawefo) a)ka ho'* (If an elderly person stays in the house unconcerned for the children in the household to eat python, he will also be view as a python eater).**

Python eating is abhorred by the Asantes since they believe that it was the python that taught them conception (Adom, 2011). This proverb is shedding the knowledge that if the elderly or those in authority in the community sit on the fence, unconcerned about the depletion of the biodiversity resources in the environment by the younger generation, the blame will also be heaped on their heads. The dangers and negative effects will befall all with the elderly inclusive. This adage thus counsels the elderly and those in authority to take firm stand in defending the abuse of the biodiversity resources in their jurisdiction. If this feat is undertaken by elders and authorities in each of the communities in Ghana, it would help salvage the biodiversity degradation in Ghana.

23. ***'Obi mmfa ne nsa nnto obi anomu na)mmpae n'atifi'* (One does not put his hand in someone's mouth and strike the top of the head).**

This proverb means that it is cowardice to try to injure someone who renders assistance to you.

The biodiversity resources in nature ensure the survival of man. In fact, life sustenance would come to an end if all the biodiversity resources in the environment are depleted. Therefore, it would not be a wise course for humans to destroy these vital natural resources but rather conserve them for their own usage and that of posterity.

24. ***'Ak)kono de betebete na ewe abe'* (The bagworm slowly eats away the oil palm tree).**

The palm tree is a strong and giant tree yet the weak bagworm slowly with determination and consistency is able to entirely eat it. The philosophical underpinning of this proverb is that whatever task we want to undertake, no matter how heinous it may be, slowly with determination and consistency we can accomplish it. Fighting the menace of biodiversity depletion is a heinous task illustrated by the oil palm tree, yet with determination and well laid out conservation strategies we can slowly arrest this canker.

25. ***'Bere annuru annuru a, etra'* (Procrastination is the thief of time).**

This proverb warns us that anything that we intend to carry out have to be done now.

Thus, there is the urgency to protect the biodiversity resources in the environment because of its fast depletion. It's a reminder to the conservation bodies and as citizens of this country to stand out now to fight against the menace of the biodiversity depletion.

26. ***'Onipa ho anto no a na efi ne nneyee'* (If a person is unhappy or unsuccessful, it's as a result of his/her conduct)**

This proverb is a reminder to all the Ghanaian citizenry especially those who lead bad moral lives and thus wantonly destroys the biodiversity resources in the environment. The danger as a result of this depletion such as the ozone depletion, flooding, etc. is caused by their negative attitudes. We need to realize that the repercussions confronting mankind today are as a result of the scarcity of the biodiversity resources which in turn are due to our negative attitudes. Therefore, we need to change our behavior towards the biodiversity resources in nature to avert the untold repercussions.

5. Conclusion

This study pivoted on arguing that the proverbs of the Asantes carried rich philosophical epistemologies that can regulate and impact positively on the moral behaviours of the Ghanaian populace as a whole towards conserving the biodiversity resources in the environment. The results and discussions generated from the study has reaffirmed the assertion of the research and has shown the great potentials of using the philosophical underpinnings of the Asante proverbs in helping curb the biodiversity menace in Ghana. This approach in using Asante proverbs is result-oriented as it has tactfully regulated the attitudes of the citizens of some local communities toward the biodiversity resources in the environment. The huge impact of the Asante proverbs in

the areas under study have even cast a shadow on alien residents who also treat the biodiversity resources in the environment with great care as the local indigenes does.

It is quite distressing to know that the impact of Asante proverbs is waning or expunged in most local communities in Ashanti and Ghana as a whole due to the influx of Western cultural practices and media. Many youth don't even know these proverbs because there are not enough platforms for their exposé. In addition, the school's curriculum for the various levels of education has not factored in the instruction of the philosophical epistemologies in the Asante proverbs. The content of Literature books and Religious and Moral Education instructional books which used to contain Asante proverbs have been obliterated. The fate of this precious indigenous wisdom is now left in the faith of oral tradition on the lips of the elderly who will soon perish with these wise maxims at death. This is a big blow to realizing the significance of indigenous knowledge by Ghanaians though industrious countries like China, India, and Brazil etc. have placed it on a high pedestal in their developmental projects.

The researcher therefore has put forward these recommendations based on the views of respondents for the revival, preservation and factorization of the philosophical epistemologies in the Asante proverbs in the developmental agenda of Ghana especially in the field of biodiversity conservation and education.

1. Television and Radio stations in Ghana must air programs about the Asante proverbs that expose the philosophical epistemologies embedded in them to help regulate the moral behaviours of Ghanaian citizens especially toward conserving the biodiversity resources which are on the path of extinction.
2. The Ministry of Education must incorporate the epistemologies in the Asante proverbs in the curriculum for students especially at the lower levels of education. Subjects such as Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education studied by thousands of Junior High School students must be revamped with instructional books containing the wisdom in the Asante proverbs to instill in them positive moral behaviours that can help in developing the country in diverse fields such as biodiversity conservation.
3. Ghanaian authors who write non-fictitious books popularly referred to as 'story books' in Ghana must incorporate the practical wisdom of the Asante proverbs to educate the general public on the accepted moral behavior while shunning negative tendencies that stifles development.
4. Biodiversity conservation agencies in Ghana must factor the conservation values inherent in the Asante proverbs in their biodiversity conservation policies, strategies, programs, projects and campaigns to help curb the biodiversity menace in the country.
5. The Ministry of Information should be tasked to intensify the alertness of the Ghanaian populace on social vices such as the wanton destruction of the biodiversity resources in the environment via Asante proverbs.
6. Visual communication tools such as signboards and bill boards that play the cardinal role of way finding can be designed with an Asante proverb and its philosophical epistemology beneath the location on the visual communication tools hinged at vantage points in the Ghanaian communities. This will go a long way in popularizing and laying bare the philosophical epistemologies in the Asante proverb for biodiversity conservation and Ghana's development in general.

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