

TOURIST ART: A PRIME PHASE OF SIRIGU ART**Abraham Ekow Asmah¹, Millicent Mateko Mate² & Samuel Teye Daitey³**

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ABSTRACT

The nature of Sirigu's art and its reputation as a major artistic community in the upper east region of Ghana; its decorative murals, basketry and pottery have attracted global admiration through a sense of cultural amusement, distillation and imprint of memories derived from tourists. The study presents, in sections, the findings regarding the indigenous knowledge and the dexterity of the indigenes towards the viability of tourist art in Sirigu. It explores the current development of tourist art in Sirigu, where metaphoric mural images on the walls are being transferred onto a variety of pottery, basketry and fabric canvas used as tourist art products. Tourists who visit, invariably purchase lightweight miniature art products in addition to the education received through the wall paintings, exhibits and narrations of cultural mythologies. The exploratory methodology adopted, used primary data collected through field research, observations and interviews with stakeholders on the development of tourist art. These were recorded using note-taking, voice recordings and picture taking. The information derived were complemented with secondary data collected through literature search. The highest level of realisation for sustainability was that the raw materials used in Sirigu tourist art, were organic in nature, obtained from the environment and locally processed. The study indicates that the pursuit of tourist art has potential to yield economic derivative and set the path in promoting its cultural identity through the expression of the indigenous art. To maximise the economic benefits, the research indicates a further exploration of the dissimilar characters of art which requires further development to ensure active and sustainable tourism art. The study also suggests the incorporation of such indigenous crafts into formal training so as to encourage inquiry, diversity in the learning of indigenous artwork, design and engineering to provide employment avenues relevant to self, and the community.

Keywords: Tourist art; Sirigu; cultural tourism; metaphoric mural images.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the travel industry world-wide where arts and culture are the vital constituents (Richards, 2007). Tourist art is the immediate communicative object of formulation that has a definite impact on the artist social and the consumers' commercial exchanges (Jules-Rosette, 1984). It is a summation of the symbolic properties of the artist and the consumer's believe to their cultural and economic realities (Baudrillard, 1994). Tourist art, then, becomes the cultural classifications and creative ideas that the artist communicates to an external audience involving a circle of exchange among the artist, the middleman and the consumer. It makes a valuable contribution to cross-cultural exchange which forms a miniature copy of the processes of socioeconomic change; and influence many of the social and cultural transitions that takes place in a contemporary community where the art was purchased. Tourist art can, therefore, be defined as a kind of contemporary art created locally for use by outsiders (Shiner, 1994). It is more than a system of exchange between an artist who work for profit and a consumer who buy for pleasure. It is also a perceived emblem that represents a cultural experience which demonstrate the uniqueness and value of the art piece of the artist and its acceptance of the collectible art

piece to the consumer. This agreed system of exchange and its operations, associated with tourist art is understood by both the art producers and the modern tourists.

Empirical studies, shows that, lightweight collectible artefacts produced have assumed a central stage in Sirigu cultural tourism, however, its business is still in its infant stage. The collectible art of these creative and budding women, displayed in the *Sirigu Women Organisation for Pottery and Art (SWOPA)* sales outlet is a representation of the preserved indigenous motifs with strong *Sirigu* cultural significance worth translating into skilfully crafted substrates for tourists who indirectly support the cultural development of the community from revenue accrued. To Cohen, (1993), one of the modern prospects of cultural tourism is to actively contribute to the economic well-being of communities as well as the stakeholders involved.

Sirigu tourist art began in 2001, when the *Sirigu Women Organization for Pottery and Art (SWOPA)* caught the attention of the World Art Foundation who were impressed by the authenticity of the wall designs with their traditional architecture. In line with the aim of World Art Foundation to advance contemporary artistic creation with a cultural/ethical background, their representatives visited *Sirigu* in 2002 and shared ideas about further development of transferring their artistic expression and techniques on canvas (Cowhey, 1996). The experiences were built on an intensive training curriculum offered by Corrie Haverkort and July Leesberg (Cowhey, 1996). The Dutch NGO, ICCO, provided substantial funding in an attempt to revitalize symbolic painting on local architecture, pottery, canvas and for the promotion of eco-cultural tourism with the objectives of improving the society and economic status of adult females and their kinsmen (Manu, et al, 2012: Bonye, et al, 2013).

The artistic importance of this development gave birth to the translation of *Sirigu* metaphoric wall paintings into small sized portable canvasses, while retaining its authentic traditional values. In 2006 SWOPA and World Art Foundation agreed on a partnership to promote SWOPA art in Europe. This partnership resulted in the exhibition “WALL TO WALL” that took place in 2007 and 2008 at different locations in the Netherlands and possibly other European countries (Cowhey, 1996). This exhibition was as a result of five years’ experience in the changeover from traditional to contemporary or tourist art by women of *Sirigu* (Woets, 2014). It marked the beginning of a partnership that opened up the symbolic art of *Sirigu* to the international community and open up the flood gates for tourist to troop into *Sirigu*.

Background

Sirigu is a scenic village in the *Kassena-Nankana* district of the Upper East Region, about 30 kilometres from the Upper East Regional capital of Ghana, Bolgatanga. With *Paga* as its Administrative centre, *Sirigu* is reputed for its remarkable long established mural decorations, striking traditional Architecture and pottery. These artistic traditional mural decorations are the reflections of the cultural identity of *Sirigu* inhabitants (Asmah, et al, 2013). The community lies in a low land semi-arid savannah region, with scattered sparse shrubs, trees and pasture which are characteristic of the Guinea savannah geographic zone. *Sirigu*, a subsistence farming community is made up of five settlements: *Wungingo*, *Guwonkor*, *Nyangolgo*, *Busongor* and *Basengo*. The *Kassena-Nankana* ethnic group are the original inhabitants and chief custodians of the land (Asmah et al, 2013: Asante, et al, 2011). Their economic sustainability lies in the cultivation of perennial crops such as yam, guinea corn,

wild beans, millet and legumes with sheep, chickens, guinea fowls cattle, and goats as the domestic animals reared.

The Men traditionally are the heads of households that include brothers and sons with their wives and children (Perani and Smith, 1998), a reflection of the extended family system where elderly members are made part of the family. The cultural distinctiveness is their round and rectangular mud houses built by the men and decorated by their wives (Wemegah, 2014). *Sirigu* art is enjoying steady patronage with strong reinforcement from the local and tourist art collectors. The residents are now taking control of their own destiny by embracing tourism development as a means to enhance their livelihood. Many adult females are being employed in tourism related income generation activities.

In the past, *Sirigu* women operated individually as they walked long distances to transact business in the market place, fewer and fewer houses were being painted as the decoration of the village walls became too expensive as a result of loss of community cohesion, loss of time and more importantly, loss of traditional craft. To avert this trend, *Sirigu* needed a practicable missionary to promote tangible community development and to stimulate community cohesion and collective responsibility. Ended 50 years of development aid, strategies and efforts have obviously not succeeded in bettering the standard of living of the majority of the rural population (Briggs et. al., 1997). Attempts by Ghana government, the IMF and the World Bank, over the last three decades, to implement programs, policies and schemes designed to stop the declining trends of poor living standards of the *Sirigu* people and make a favourable atmosphere to sustained economic growth and prosperity was reached with minimum consequences.

Notwithstanding, *Sirigu* tourist art has the potential to enhance community development and serve as a means of making development practicable and possible among the rural community. Abloh and Ameyaw, (1997) suggest that the emergence of a traditional local leaders can contribute through superior knowledge and skills to village development. The Formation of women's cooperatives that depends on traditional techniques of self-help and mutual aids, to benefit individual and the community proved to be the way out. The formation of SWOPA in *Sirigu*, has been made possible through adult literacy promoted through the captured enthusiasm of 'educated few' in the villages – including teachers, clerks, and storekeepers who were persuaded to act as volunteer teachers. Such self-help project initiative, to promote local development with the involvement of these people influenced positively the living conditions and the aspects of *Sirigu* culture (Bonye, et al, 2013). The Human Development Report (Berg, 1993) also echoes the imperative of people participating in their own development, remarking that people's participation is becoming the central issue in the face of current challenges for development.

Thanks to Mrs. Madam Melanie Kasise, the founder of the *Sirigu* Women's Organization of Pottery and Art (SWOPA), the traditional craft of wall painting has now metamorphosed into decorating lightweight miniature pottery products, simulated wooden bowls and trays in addition to canvasses. Tourists now visit *Sirigu* not only to examine the symbolic mural houses, but also visit the gallery where miniature symbolic products are on sale. Tourists are also enjoying education on *Sirigu* culture as they are charged to tours decorated village houses, organization of workshops, guest house services, and the generous hospitality of the community. These symbolic paintings have now become a source of community pride and a source of revenue for the women in *Sirigu*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the qualitative research method to enable the researchers provide a vivid ethnographic account of the study field. It also proposed a systematic procedure of reporting, examining and understanding, insights exposure on the daily activities throughout the work period (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Obviously, primary data were gathered through fieldwork, direct observation and unstructured interviews with the *Sirigu* muralists, pottery and canvas decorators and secondary data were gained from literary authors. This enabled the researchers to observe critically the activities of the pottery workers, muralists, canvas painters and basket weavers at work. This was essential to comprehend the formulation of the various materials, processes, and procedures involved in the production of the tourist art. The study established that *Sirigu* tourist artists use very rudimentary tools and materials in their craft. Below are some of the most essential tools and materials used by the decorators.

Tools

Millet combs, feathers from guinea fowls, broken calabashes and chickens and twigs are conventionally used as tools, but imported bristle brushes, are now utilized. Some decorators also use their hands to apply pigments to these collectible products. Additionally, various sizes of metal bowls, pots, and buckets are used as receptacles by the artists for mixing their colours, and also serve as palettes for the paints.

Materials

The product materials displayed at tourist art are made of fabric, canvas, straw basket, calabash and clay pottery, but the products that bare the transfer of the metaphoric mural motifs are the canvas and the fired culinary clay pots, miniature vases, bowls and plates which are all objects believed to play a crucial role in domestic activities, traditional medicine, funerals, religious rites and cultural practices in *Sirigu* society. To produce pottery vessels, Moldable wet clay (Fig., 1C) is formed into hardened vases; the vessel becomes rock-hard then fired and decorated with organic earth colours found in nature.



Fig., 1A, B & C: moldable wet clay transformed into a bowl

Source: field work

Pottery, referred to locally as *yagbasa*, is largely practiced by women and are practiced using two different methods: coiling and moulding. The coiling method builds up the vessel from the bottom to the top in a series of long, connected coils of clay. The base may start out as one lump and then coils are added onto it in a series. Both the exterior and interior of the vessel are then worked to create smoother, more cohesive surfaces (Fig., 1A). The moulding vessels involve taking clay and pressing it over a concave shape or into a convex shape (Wemegah, 2009). They are then paddled by holding a flat stone on the inside of the vessel and hit the outer surface with a paddle. (Fig., 1A & B)

There are various surface decorations that apply to the vessel before it is fired, smoothing, paddling, incising, impressing, and punctuates but most *Sirigu* vessels are rather fired bare before it is decorated (Fig., 13A). Traditional pottery has temper added to the clay. Temper can be anything from sand to crush up shells. This was added to the clay to help withstand the firing process. Firing is the final stage in pottery production prior to surface decoration. Red oxide stone, traditionally called *gare*, gives the red colour used for the surface decorations. These stones are either mined along the roadsides of a village called *Jua* outside *Sirigu* Township; rarely picked from the *Sirigu* community, where there is a high deposit of laterite or purchased from the local market (Wemegah, 2009). These *Gare* are ground and mixed with cold water and cow dung to obtain its rich red colour paste.

The black earth referred to as *Kug sabla*, provides the black pigment colour for the surface decoration. The material is mined from a special mud pond in neighbouring Burkina Faso, and sold on the *Sirigu* market, in the form of a dry solid ball. Cow dung referred to as *nambeto* is a very important material in the *Sirigu* community copiously used as a binder when composing colours for surface decoration. The material collected from the cattle kraals, animal pens or from the open grazing field are mixed with water and applied to the substrate prior to burnishing.

The white-tailed stone referred to as *Kugupela* produces the white pigment paint used for surface decoration in *Sirigu*. These limestones imported from *Yelewongo*, a town along the Burkina Faso border, are normally rubbed against a laterite surface to obtain a chalk-like powder, which are then mixed with water to achieve the correct consistency (Wemegah, 2009). Complimentary materials such as Quartz pebbles referred to as *saase* are of different sizes and shapes employed by decorators to define embellished bas relief works or substrates when working in various colours.

Motif

Assorted motifs used by decorators are either figurative or geometric or a combination of the two. The figurative symbols depict stylized human beings and animals; the geometric designs comprise of crescents, rhombuses, triangles, hatchings, vertical and horizontal lines used for surface decorations (Asmah et al, 2013). Technically, the motifs employed in tourist arts are painted or incised on the substrate. These symbols are copiously coded with adages, morals, mythologies, virtues, and admonishing messages. *Sirigu* traditional mural iconographic symbols are translated into other substrates as interpreted below.

Metaphoric interpretations

Eight metaphoric designs identified were as follows:

Zaalinga

Two varieties of the designs used for the decoration of tourist art products were identified during the study; *Zaalin nyanga* refers to the female design, and *Zaalin daa* symbolizes the male essence. The *zaalin daa*, is usually depicted by vertical lines, whilst the *zaalin nyanga* refers to registered horizontal lines (Asmah et al, 2013).



Fig., 2: *Zaalin daa*

Source: Asmah et al, 2013

Metaphorically, the term *zaalinga* (Fig., 3) refers to a kenaf netted container used by *Sirigu* women to prevent their stocked calabashes from breaking. Its use, shows the importance of the fibre net and the calabashes it occupies.



Fig., 3: *Zaalinga*

Source: field work

Akun Nyanani

The motif *Akun nyanani*, meaning “*Kunyana’s* cows” drawn in the form of a cow with a triangle of black, white and brown or red is a symbol of wisdom and riches registered horizontally on the upper periphery of surface decorations. Legend has it that the cows of *Kunyana* always behaved in a wise and an orderly manner without straying off when grazing (Asmah et al, 2013). The design is most often as a tribute to the cattle owner known as *Kunyana*, whose cattle always followed each other in a single file. “*Kunyana’s* cows” is most often seen at the centre of the mural composition with triangles all over the animal.



Fig., 4B & C: Varieties of *Akun nyanani*,

Source: field work

Wanzagsi

The term *Wanzagsi* means broken calabash. The calabash, explained, is even useful when broken, and is of varied utilitarian value, especially when used for shaping pottery by the *Sirigu* women. Calabashes are physically broken together with some specific pottery wares during the death of a woman, to signify their physical alienation from the community and also makes it possible for the deceased to use the calabash in the spirit world (Asmah et al, 2013). *Wanzagsi*, painted at the upper parts of the surface substrate, therefore, has been designed and used to show the importance of the calabash.



Fig., 5: *Wanzagsi*

Source: field work

Agurinuuse

The word *Agurinuuse*, which means “linked hands” in the *Nankam* language is a design which has been inspired by school children moving to school with their hands held together. This motif, usually depicted on the main body of the substrate, was inspired by the unity expressed by the school kids (Source: Asmah, et al., 2013)



Fig., 6: *Agurinuuse*

Source: field work

Waagne/ Amizia Zuka

The *Waagne* or *Amizia Zuka* motif, a testimonial of the usefulness of the calabash is identified as an upturned calabash (*waagne*). The symbol was designed by an innovative mural decorator to mock her brother-in-law named *Amizia Zuyaka*, who was bald. The “hats” motif which looks like a crescent shaped designs or symbolizes the covering the bald head of her brother-in-law. The upturned calabash motif metaphorically signifies the covering of one’s nakedness normally used at the base of the design surface structure of the tourist art (Asmah et al, 2013).



Fig., 7: *Waagne* or *Amizia*

Source: field work

Taana Golima/ Sorogbelima

Taana golma or *sorogbelima* motifs are the representations of the footpaths that linked the various homesteads in the *Sirigu* community. Metaphorically signifies interconnection or relationship of ideas/families. The motifs seems to be one of the old traditional designs used on the main body of the substrate (Asmah et al, 2013). The *taana golima* is normally registered horizontally whilst the *sorogbelima* is illustrated in a vertical format.



Fig., 8: *Taana golma* or *sorogbelima*

Source: field work

Ligipelga

Cowries referred to as *Ligipelga*, were used in the olden days as dowry, during marriage ceremonies in the *Sirigu* society due to its capital value. Just as the motif is mostly seen in the main body of buildings in *Sirigu*, so it is with the tourist art products.

Saaba

A diamond shaped or rectangular motif that looks like a “leather talisman or amulet” is referred to as *Saaba* in the *Nankam* language. They are normally worn around the neck or stitched on traditional dresses for protection against evil forces (Asmah et al, 2013). Like the talisman or amulet, the *Saaba* designs used, are expected to protect the inhabitants of the building or the owner of the purchased tourist art from malevolent forces. The *Saaba* motif occupies the main bodies of the architectural structures or the tourist art.

Other motifs used for murals in relief are also used in tourist art. They are the *Waafo*, *Golima Golima*, *Naafo*, *Dogoma*, *Niila* and *Eegba*.

Waafo

The *waafo* or (python) motif is a mythological and totemic symbol, which is believed to protect families who pay homage to it. It is believed that the totemic pythons reveal themselves to those who were pure at heart. So it is believed that the pythons nursed crying babies left at home with their mothers, as they engage their babies by putting the tip of its tail into the baby’s mouths to suckle, in order to stop them from crying (Asmah et al, 2013). The *waafo* motif metaphorically stands for protection and is usually used on the trunk of the decorated substrate just as it is done for murals on buildings.



Fig., 9: *waafo*
Source: field work

Golima Golima

Another variety of the python termed *Golima Golima* constructed in relief, is either used completely or partly around a building, so it is with a substrate of tourist products. Though the straight or the undulating ridge like motif, is used to terminate the course of rain water on buildings, thereby protecting the structures from early ruin, its character is now being recognized in tourist art (Asmah et al, 2013).

Naafo

The symbol, *naafo* which means “cow”, is a symbolic representation which typifies the importance of cows and signifies wealth in the *Sirigu* culture. Cows are used for tilling farmlands or sold for money, aside being used as dowry. The stylized *naafo* motifs are illustrated on the main trunk of the building’s substrate or tourist products (Asmah et al, 2013).



Fig., 10: *naafo*
Source: field work

Dogona

The “curved sticks” or the walking stick, which literally means *Dogoma*, is used by elderly men for support when walking. Metaphorically, the curved stick, is associated with wisdom, knowledge and authority, which elderly people are noted for (Asmah et al, 2013). The design is either illustrated above entranceways or on the main body of the building’s substrate or translated on the edges of tourist art products.

Niila

The motif called *niila* refers to chickens or domesticated birds bred for their flesh or eggs. Used as food, the birds are used as accompaniment during traditional marriage rites. They are also used for sacrifices and presents and are therefore very central to the *Sirigu* culture. The *niila* motif is used above the front entrance of buildings and the edges of tourist art products.



Fig., 11: *niila*
Source: field work

Eegba

In the *Nankam* language, crocodiles called *Eegba* are seen as totemic symbols believed to be the temporary abodes of ancestral spirits, venerated by some kinsmen (Asmah et al, 2013; Cowhey, 1996). The relief crocodile motif is represented with two heads instead of one and are illustrated on the main chest of architectural structures or as the main motif used for tourist art products.

Fig., 12: *Eegba*Source: *field work***Decoration Procedures**

Prior to painting, the fired vases (Fig., 13A) are first marked out with a free-hand basic sketched pattern are registered with a brush dipped in black paint. (Fig., 2B)



Fig., 13A: Fired biscuit vase in wait to be marked

Fig., 13B: Fired biscuit vase being marked with black

Fig., 13C: Fired marked out biscuit vase being added

Source: *field work*

The use of black is a recognition of changes in life (Fig., 13C): death, reincarnation, ancestral power, tradition and memories. Black earth and red oxide stones are then ground into a fine powder, which is mixed in small pottery, plastic or metal bowls to form a paste for painting. As the work progresses, a white paste is added, (Fig., 13C) followed later with red paste. Fig., 14A & B



Fig., 14A & B: Fired biscuit vases, cups and bowls decorated with locally prepared organic paste colours

Source: *field work*

The white symbolize purity, virtue, joy and victory, and an indication of the spirits of the ancestors, followed by red symbolizing the negative aspects of life, such as loss through the death of a relationship, an act of war, national danger, sudden calamity, violence or discontentment (Sarpong, 1977). The interpretation of the meanings of colour in *Sirigu* seems to suggest that *Sirigu* women apply their own rules to colour symbolism used to portray the social-cultural identity of their community instead of the general meanings commonly ascribed universally.

The same decoration procedures are used on canvas. First the canvas surfaces are prepared for painting by the application of plaster mixture white primer before traditional colours, designs and motives are introduced onto the fabric substrate. The transition from group mural painting of the individual painting on small canvass with a brush and a paint paste was

impressive. However, the use of colours, the style, and metaphorical composition still remains an ancient tradition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One identifiable effect on the decoration of the tourist art products is the similarities of the symbolic motifs used for architectural murals as seen in Fig., 15.



Fig., 15: some symbolic motifs used for architectural murals



Fig., 16: some architectural mural motifs used in Fig., 4 translated on the two fired

Source: field work

The design *Akun-nyana-nii* or cows symbolizes wealth and prosperity used often, usually at the top of walls as seen in Fig., 15. The same design is also used at the top edge of the pottery vessels in Fig., 16. The next design directly underneath the cow designs are the *Zaalin-daa* which show a continuous vertical line and symbolizes the male characteristics of life. There are two types of the *Zaalinga*-design (continuous vertical line- *Zaalin-daa* a representation of the male characteristics and the continuous horizontal line- *Zaalin-nyanga* a representation of the female characteristics) according to the direction of the lines (Asmah et al, 2013; Haverkort, 2010; Cowhey, 1996). Metaphorically interpreted as safety and represents an access to sustenance.



Fig., 17A & 17B: collectible small size pottery vases and bowls displayed at the *Sirigu* sales outlet



Fig., 18: collectible baskets and straw maracas displayed at the *Sirigu* sales outlet

Another realization of the study was the sizes of the product found at SWOPA sales outlet. The items displayed are mostly collectible small size pottery vases and bowls, canvases and basketry for easy travelling (Fig., 17 & 18).

Early indications of *Sirigu* pottery production suggest that they were produced for domestic consumption (Fig., 19A & B) within the community and for sales in the market place.



Fig., 19A & B: Earlier large domestic pottery products of *Sirigu* women

Source: field work

These very large pots measuring about 45.70 cm in diameter and towering about 60.95 cm or more are used mainly for cooking, storing drinking water, beverages, dry meat, fish, millet, beans, groundnut or any other foodstuff. (Fig., 19A & B)



Fig., 20: Simulated wooden decorated pottery products on display at SWOPA sales outlet

Source: field work

Treated stimulated pottery that looks like wooden bowls with other metaphoric elements like the lizard (*Banga*) depicting contemplation are also invoked at the SWOPA sales outlet designed for tourists (Fig., 20). These bowls are used aesthetically as decorative displayed bowls meant for interior decorations in hotels and domestic homes.



Fig., 21A & B: Basket bowl which seem to have no bearing on *Sirigu* symbolism



Fig., 22: Basket woven with stylized *naafo Sirigu* symbol

Source: field work

Metaphoric designs can also be seen on basketry tourist art products displayed at the counter (Fig., 22), though others seem to have no bearing on *Sirigu* symbolism except being used as

containers for fruits. (Fig., 21A & B) The stylized *naafo* motif which literally means “cow” in the *Nankam* language is on display in Fig., 22; it is a representation of the aesthetic and social-cultural significance of a family, a symbol of reverence and wealth normally used as a form of dowry (Asmah et al, 2013).

The last item worth noting displayed is the metaphoric canvas paintings that contains almost all the symbolic element on *Sirigu* wall murals are used to produce a variety of canvas paintings. (Fig., 23A & B) The canvases below portray a lizard as an object of contemplation (Fig., 23B) and the cow which serve as a security and a “vital gists” that ensures continuity and prosperity of a family or a community (Fig., 23A), used as the central motifs, with the broken calabash, the *zaalin daa* which represents the continuous vertical lines, symbolizing the male characteristics of life depicted in the background (Asmah et al, 2013).



Fig., 23A & B: *Sirigu* mural motifs translated unto woven canvas sold at the SWOPA sales outlet

Source: field work

It has been argued that for an effective, sustainable growth to impoverish communities, tourist art development is bound to make a positive economic impacts on the people in the region justifying it as an increasingly important industry. The research makes it clear per the results that tourist art has wider prospects and increased acceptability among the rural dwellers and tourist for interior decorations especially in the hotel industry. In the SWOPA community centre to adopt an entrepreneurship approach towards this industry for new marketing and collectible production strategies, makes it competitive and increase the scope of consumer satisfaction. The call is for management to adopt a pragmatic approach to inform consumers online about marketable collectibles invoked in SWOPA and not just a database that demonstrate their activities. Auction items need to be uploaded to connect their collectibles to auction houses and bidders worldwide. A map of the *Sirigu* village made available to visitors on the internet will encourage and boost both domestic and international tourism. To achieve the needed development in rural areas in Ghana, the government should inspire and improve community wellbeing through implementation of developmental projects that promote active community participation.

CONCLUSION

Certainly, *Sirigu* decorative murals have attracted admiration globally, but it is also obvious that *Sirigu* women also produce a variety of miniature pottery, basketry and canvas paintings for both domestic and tourist consumption. The availability of organic raw materials in the immediate environment, gives an indication of their sustainability and the preservation of the tourist art industry with its indigenous touch. The study, therefore, concludes that tourist art has potential for improving the standard of living of the people, as well as foster intercultural trade in Ghana and beyond.

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