

**ROLE OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE PERFORMANCE OF  
*EBYEEVUGO* AMONG THE BANYANKOLE (SOUTH-WESTERN  
UGANDA)**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I, Mercy Nahurira, do hereby declare that this work is originally mine and has never been submitted anywhere in any institution or University for any academic award.

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## APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation, presented by Mercy Nahurira, was written under my supervision and I recommend it for presentation to the board of examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree of Makerere university.

Signature.....

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Supervisor.....

Date..... 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved parents, Mr. Nathan Kushaba and Mrs Medius Kushaba, for their tireless effort to educate and support me every step of the way. Their love and support have been the cushion on which my soul finds solace in the darkest of days.

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## ABSTRACT

This study was about *ebyeevugo* (music recitatives) among the Banyankole of South-Western Uganda and the roles women and men play during their performances. In this study, I examined the background, nature of the people, performance styles and the roles men and women play when *ebyeevugo* are performed. I also examined the nature of continuity and change that has occurred in these performances.

The findings in this study indicate that indeed *ebyeevugo* act as a platform for the Banyankole to portray the roles of men and women in their society. When these recitatives are performed, the roles of women and men are showcased. These roles are portrayed through song texts and costumes, among other items. My research has also shown that a number of things have changed in the context of what *ebyeevugo* are composed of and the perception of people about them. These changes are as a result of education, religion, and modernity as a whole. For example, in the twenty-first century, it is no longer only the men that are allowed to perform *ebyeevugo* as it was the case among traditional Banyankole, but also the women can do so in the contemporary society.



## 1.1 Introduction to the Study

This study is about the role of women and men during *ebyeevugo* (music recitatives) performances among the Banyankole people of South-Western Uganda. It demonstrates how *ebyeevugo* are occasions for society to portray the roles of men and women in this society.

*Ebyeevugo* are poem-like praise songs of the Banyankole. They were originally composed by the Banyankole men, and contained sacred messages in praise of their cattle, harvest, clans, elders, and the king (*omugabe*). They were also a form of leisure activity, giving people a platform to pass time, including during bear parties.

They were originally performed by only men while the women were expected to show their submissiveness and portray a calm demeanor by just sitting and watching what was going on. Women were only allowed to compose and perform another kind of music which was locally known as *ebyeeshongoro* (songs), and these included *ebiziniro* (lullabies). This practice was especially common among the *Bahima* who believed that a good woman should be quiet, calm and submissive to men. In this study, however, I specifically examined how *ebyeevugo* performances portray gender roles, that is to say, the roles of men and women among the Banyankole.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

As [www.ugandatourismcenter.com](http://www.ugandatourismcenter.com) puts it, Ankole, also referred to as Nkore, is one of the oldest traditional dynasties in Uganda. The Ankole kingdom is said to have been created way back in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Originally, Ankole was known as *Kaaro- Karungi* (beautiful/good village), and the word Nkore is said to have been adopted during the 17th century following the

devastating invasion of *Kaaro-Karungi* by Chawaali, the then Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara. The Ankole society was divided into two stratified groups namely, the Bahima (nobility and pastoralists) and the Bairu (agriculturalists/peasants). The people of Ankole Kingdom are called the Banyankole and they speak a language called Runyankole<sup>1</sup>. By the time I conducted this study, the Banyankole inhabited the districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi, Ntungamo, Kirihura, Ibanda, Isingiro, Buhweju, Mitooma, Sheema, Kazo, Rwampara, Rubirizi and Rukungiri.

Whenever livestock or plant produce flourished, Banyankole people composed and recited poem-like praise songs, called *ebyeevugo*, in jubilation. These songs were performed by people known as *abeevugi*. Other than just praising livestock and plant produce, Banyankole used *ebyeevugo* to praise their clans and fellow people who pleased them, for example, elders, clan heads, and kings, among others. (Samwiri Rubunda, interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022). These are the types of songs I investigate in this study to show how the Banyankole use their performances as situations where roles of women and men are portrayed.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

*Ebyeevugo* are performed by the Banyankole especially as a way of passing time during leisure, but with sacred messages in praise and adoration of certain things including cattle, good harvests, *omugabe* (the king) and fertile land. They form occasions where the Banyankole articulate a number of things in society, such as the roles women and men play in society.

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<sup>1</sup> The mother tongue of *Banyankore* people. It is comprised of two dialects, each of which is spoken by an individual group, that is, Bahima and Bairu. Though there are no specific terms that are officially used to name these different dialects, the Bahima call the dialect of the Bairu, *orwiiru* (with a common sound of “*si*”), while the former call the latter’ s *oruhima* (with a common sound of “*tsi*” on most words). It should be noted that none of these groups like their dialect to be named as this, because it triggers bad emotions of segregation and is therefore preferred that it is all officially named as Runyankole.

Despite this role, there is inadequate research on *ebyeevugo* among the Banyankole, specifically, on how they help us to understand the roles of men and women among the Banyankole. Therefore, there is need for research on *ebyeevugo* and how their performance act as settings where the Banyankole articulate roles of men and women, which this study set out to do.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1 Main Objective**

To examine how *ebyeevugo* are occasions for portraying roles of men and women among the Banyankole

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To trace the historical background of *ebyeevugo* among the Banyankore
2. To investigate the nature of people who perform *ebyeevugo*
3. To examine the occasions during which *ebyeevugo* are performed
4. To examine the roles played by women and men in the performance of *ebyeevugo*

### **1.5.1 Main Research Questions**

How do *ebyeevugo* act as occasions for portraying roles of men and women among the Banyankole?

### **1.5.2 Specific Research Questions**

1. What is the historical background of *ebyeevugo*?
2. Who are the people that perform *ebyeevugo*?
3. On which occasions are *ebyeevugo* performed?

4. What are the different roles played by men and women in the performance of *ebyeevugo*?

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Geographical Scope**

Although the Banyankole are found in other parts of Uganda, they specifically live in the districts of Mbarara, Kazo, Kiruhura, Bushenyi, Sheema, Mitooma, Rukungiri, Buhweju, Rwampara, Rubiriizi, Ibanda, Ntungamo, and Isingiro. Despite this dispersion, I specifically conducted research in Kashari-South County, which is located in Mbarara District, because of a number of reasons;

Firstly, I did fieldwork in this area because of the availability of contacts, especially the elderly people around my home place whom I could freely and easily talk to because they knew me and were very welcoming. I also met and interacted with several *ebyeevugo* performers through my father's friendship circle. For example, Edward Kaakiziba with whom we are related and Mable Muniaaba, a family friend, were contacts in Kashari, whom I knew would give me the necessary information about *ebyeevugo*.

In addition, people in Kashari-South speak Runyankore, which is my mother tongue. I chose to do fieldwork there because I would not face hardships communicating with my informants, such as having to spend money on interpreters, as would be the case if I were to do research in a place whose language I would not speak.

Furthermore, it was easier for me in Kashari-South to get free accommodation. I stayed at my family home in Rushozi village while conducting my fieldwork. Rushozi is just 25.2km to Igongo Cultural Centre, one of the places I went to meet *ebyeevugo* performers. My parent

catered for all the bills incurred, such as food, because I was staying with other family members at home.

Apart from that, I also conducted fieldwork in some areas of Kampala, that is, in Ntinda at Ndere Centre which is located at Plot 4505, Kampala, and Hotel Africana located at Plot 2,4 Wampewo Avenue, Kampala. I chose these places because there were occasional cultural performances where *ebyeevugo* would be performed. I saw this as a golden opportunity to meet and interact with Banyankole performing these recitatives, to fill up some of the gaps that existed in the data collected from Mbarara. I chose these Kampala areas because of their accessibility. Having been studying at Makerere University and at the same time working on my research study, I found it wiser to look for some of the nearest places in Kampala where I could get data to fill up these gaps.

### **1.6.2 Content Scope**

A number of scholars can approach this topic differently, for example, one can decide to tap into the continuity and change of *ebyeevugo*, or how these songs are composed. Another scholar can investigate how *ebyeevugo* are performed during school competitions, or their significance to the young generation by the start of the twenty first Century, and instrumentation of *ebyeevugo*, among others.

However, I concentrated on *ebyeevugo* in terms of gender. I aimed at demonstrating how *ebyeevugo* are a platform for the Banyankore to articulate gender roles, that is to say, the roles of men and women in this society.

## 1.7 Literature Review

Gender, according to the dictionary meaning, is either of the two sexes, that is, either male or female, especially with consideration of cultural differences other than biological ones. In her work on how children's songs help in performing adult gender among the Banyankore, Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare writes that, "Conventionally, gender is known as the differences between men and women. These differences can be biological or social leading to corresponding roles. The word gender is sometimes used to describe an individual's ascribed biological identity, that is, whether one is male or female" (2015:243). This statement is relevant to my study because it points to how man or woman gender is defined and how it helps prescribe roles for both genders, that is, male or female.

She points out that, "the family in Ankole becomes the center and ... starting point for gendering the lives of children, including the establishment of norms for behavior- hence social roles-for each gender..." (2015:236). Therefore, this study shows that in Ankole, it is not an individual that determines their roles in society but everybody plays a specific role according to what is fit for their gender. Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare also talks about male supremacy over the female gender among the *Banyankole* as follows;

In Ankole ... authority lies in the man who is regarded as the *head of the family*...will make important decisions, protect, defend, and provide for his household ... that is his role ... will not allow to be "ruled" by women. Even families without grown-up men will ... acquire a grown-up man from among the nearest of kin to oversee the affairs of the home. It does not matter if the borrowed man is younger or older than the mother in the home. He is still a man. Men are allowed to "discipline" women, even when the form of "discipline" translates into abuse or domestic violence (2015:264).

Linking the above statement to my study, it is evident that the relationship between males and females among the Banyankole is strained, something that is helpful for us to understand the roles men and women play in this society.

Relatedly, Benoni Turyahikayo-Rugyema, in his work on philosophy and traditional religion of the Bakiga<sup>2</sup> in South West Uganda, states that, “ .. Among the Bakiga [who live a life style and speak a language that largely shares similar characteristics as the Banyankole], it was the world of a man, and not that of a woman, that mattered most” (1983:82). This quote, therefore, confirms the high position a man held in this society as opposed to that of a woman. Although Turyahikayo-Rugyema does not discuss the roles of men and women among the Bakiga, his assertions throw some light on the nature of roles men and women play among the Banyankole, which is the subject of my study.

Related to the above, in her work on representation of gender roles in selected Ankole marriage songs, Lucky Ritah asserts that women are portrayed as men’ s property in Ankole marriage songs. As she writes, “ As noted in the Ankole marriage songs study, the women are viewed as men’ s property or belongings” (2019:12). Without doubt it is this male supremacy over females that explains the nature of music that each gender is required to perform in Ankole, that is, calm and slow *ebyeevugo* for the women due to their submissive nature, then fast and authoritative for the men because of their superiority. As such, Ritah’ s work provides a significant framework upon which the Banyankole base to allocate roles of men and women during musical performances as the case of *ebyeevugo* portrays through this study.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bakiga are a tribe that are descendant in Kigezi, in South-Western Uganda. They speak a language that is related to Runyankole, known as Rukiga. In most cases, the two languages are combined and referred to as a single language called Runyankore-Rukiga.

In his work, Patrick Kirindi (2008) highlights the question of how importance is put on certain children as opposed to others. As he observes, the Banyankole look at boy children as more important than girls. According to Kirindi, traditionally, among the patrilineal Banyankole, all parents - Bairu and Bahima alike – preferred to produce sons rather than daughters. The sons were born to carry the family lineage and clan into the next generation...daughters were destined to perpetuate other clans and lineages through marriage...a couple without at least two sons was regarded as “ childless” ...In some cases, a “ childless” couple adopted a son of the husband’ s brother...Adopted sons would inherit the property of the “ childless” couple (2008:116).

Nonetheless, more roles of both the female and male genders are articulated by the above statement, that is, females being responsible for multiplying the clan through reproduction, and the males for carrying on the lineage and keeping the legacy of the clan, a view that informs my study in terms of how the emphasis society puts on certain children also informs the roles they allocate men and women during the performance of *ebyeevugo*.

Ntangaare has also shown how names and naming are part and parcel of gardening among the Banyankole. To this, she writes that “ Names and naming rituals play important roles in establishing gendered identities in Ankole ...Boys will most likely take on “ heavier” names- in syllable patterning, pronunciation and meaning- than those of girls, since boys are naturally physically stronger” (2015:249). Ntangaare’ s statement above is also manifested through *ka nemwe ka nibiri*<sup>3</sup> (it is one, it is two), one of the children’ s songs in this society, something that shows how songs (music) plays a role in articulating roles for women and men among the Banyankole. This song is also one of the points of reference in Ntangaare’ s writing. Although

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<sup>3</sup> This is a children’ s game of chance and destiny which is played in a line or circle. It consists of counting and singing. It is also the title of the song since it is named after the game.



Ntangaare also shows how gender is reflected through the songs people perform, my study demonstrates how the men and women roles among the Banyankole are portrayed through music recitatives thus filling the gaps left by Ntangaare in her work.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

In this study, I employed a qualitative research methodology to collect data. Through this methodology, I shared people' s experiences and views about *ebyeevugo* to understand the roles men and women perform in these music recitatives. Under the qualitative research methodology, I used an ethnographic approach that demanded that I interact with people in their day today activities to learn and inquire from them how they perform these music recitatives.

### **1.8.1 Sampling Techniques**

From all of the Banyankole community, I selected a smaller and particular group of people that I engaged with in my research study through adoption of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Regarding purposive sampling, I looked for people who are directly involved with *ebyeevugo*. I specifically interacted with traditional Banyankole men and women of old age, as well as *ebyeevugo* performers, because these would provide me with necessary information since they have lived through many generations and are directly involved, therefore experienced. These included Pison Nyinomujuni (a retired music teacher), Samwiri Rubunda (a church leader), Ham Beegiza, Patrick Bariseene, Mable Muniaaba, Ruth Rwabaryongo, Edward Kaakiziba, and Fred Arineitwe, also known as Rwankunionio, because they were directly involved with *ebyeevugo* either as performers or had relevant information about this form of music.

With snowball sampling technique, I inquired from my informants, especially according to how I had gauged the validity of their information to me, to refer me to other people they knew and were sure would provide me with more data that would enable me answer my research questions. This was majorly because among traditional Banyankole, it becomes hard for a young person to directly get into an inquiry dialogue with an old person since the young ones are expected to be listeners and never question the old ones at all. It becomes worse if the person questioning is a girl or woman because society defines them as the weak gender. Therefore, the process became easier for me because I had recommendation from my previous contacts before meeting with the next.

## **1.8.2 Research Tools**

While collecting data, I used the following tools interviewing, participant observation, audio-visual recording, note-taking and library research (document analysis) and in the subsections that follow, I discuss how I used them.

### **1.8.2.1 Interviewing**

During field work, I interviewed and interacted with people, males and females alike, of old age (about sixty years), and performers of *ebyevugo* because these had experience since they had lived through generations and are directly involved, respectively, and these were able to provide me with information. In doing this, I employed unstructured interviews where I did not write down questions, but just themes of my research, to guide me in asking questions. I used open-ended questions during formal and informal contexts.

### **1.8.2.2 Participant Observation**

I used observer-participation, especially for *ebyeevugo* performances where women were the reciters because they would gladly accept that I take up some roles since they would not under look me, as would likely be the case with the men performers because they look at children and women as the weak. For example, during the interviews I had with Jaires Bintugire and Mrs Mable Muniaaba, I took up a role of the respondent (*omwiikirizi*) during the recitative, whereby I was taught the chorus (*enturitsyo*) for each song during the interview.

### **1.8.2.3 Audio-visual Recording and Note-taking**

I used the phone recorder and camera to record interviews and performances, plus audios of songs as well as capture pictures of *ebyeevugo* performances. These materials did not only help in showing evidence that I did fieldwork, but also became my references in data analysis and thematization. I also bought a specific book for fieldwork where I regularly noted down information or interesting facts about my study that I encountered in the field, and this helped to keep a record of what transpired during fieldwork.

### **1.8.2.4 Library Research (Document Analysis)**

In order to boost my literature review and widen my understanding of the research topic I studied, I continuously visited the Makerere University library in search of literature that other scholars have written about the same study or related topics, even if they approached it from different angles. It caused my mind to think critically and analyze data when I got to do fieldwork.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

It is inevitable that gender activists all over the globe will develop interest in this research study since there is an element of gender inequality portrayed by some actions of the Banyankole, like in most African societies, towards women, by the way society defines and relates with them, and the roles they are expected to play.

Apart from that, my study is relevant for most cultural organizations and institutions. In particular, cultural institutions, those dealing in matters of Ankole, will benefit more because my study speaks directly to them. Some of these institutions include Igongo Cultural Centre located in Biharwe division, Mbarara district.

Academicians, especially the researchers, will review my study to expand their knowledge and research about similar or related topics by reading it for their literature review.

## **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

I faced a challenge of sexual harassment. Some men, among those I set out to interview, suggested that I engage in love affairs with them in exchange for the information they would provide to me for my study. This was mainly because most traditional Banyankole tend to look at women as people who could satisfy them sexually any time they want it, whether one is married to them or not, since culture allows them to marry as many wives as they can. As Ntangaare puts it, “ ..women’ s primary roles in the home [is to sexually satisfy] men and reproduce[e] children” (2015:273). However, I overcame this by moving on to other available and potential informants since I had sampled out as many contact groups as possible so that I had other options to explore as soon as one of them proved troublesome.

Secondly, the issue of time was a big challenge during the course of my study. This is because there was not so much time for me to move freely to the field to collect enough data, considering that most of my research was conducted in Mbarara district, which is a far distance from Kampala (where Makerere University is located). This problem became more pronounced since I had to conduct fieldwork as I also attended lectures and other university programs. Nevertheless, I did some interviews with my respondents through phone calls, and took up every available opportunity to do research in most of the cultural performances that took place around Kampala, where *ebyeevugo* were also performed, especially giveaway ceremonies -*okuhingira*<sup>4</sup>, and cultural shows, which helped me save a lot of time.

In addition, some of my respondents, specifically some traditional Ankole men, were not free to share all the information they knew about the topic since most of them under looked me for being young and female and expecting that I should be the quiet, unquestioning and submissive person as culture demands. In spite of this fact, I moved with a written recommendation from a previous contact to the next, especially those I anticipated were quite rigid and could not easily tolerate a young woman ‘questioning’ them.

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<sup>4</sup> *Okuhingira* (give away) is the traditional marriage ceremony of the Banyankole that happens after the negotiation and payment of bride price by the family of the groom. The major role of *okuhingira* is for the bride’s family to officially hand her over to her husband’s family.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE BANYANKOLE AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the contextual background of the Banyankole people, discussing their political, social, and economic life. I discuss all these issues because I want to provide a basis under which these people perform their gender ideologies, especially roles of men and women. The chapter also investigates the meaning of gender among the Banyankole, in other words, who is a man and who is a woman, plus the roles they are expected to perform in society.

#### 2.2 The Banyankole People

The Banyankole are a Bantu group of people that occupy Ankole, which was a traditional Kingdom in Uganda, located in the south-Western region, east of lake Edward, and neighboring Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It had a centralized system of government and existed till 1967 when it was abolished by the government of the then President, Milton Obote, although the Ankole kingdom was not restored<sup>5</sup> by the time I conducted this study.

At the top political ladder was the King (*Omugabe*) who was the overall decision maker and (commander-in-chief) of the army. Below him was the Prime Minister (*enganzi*), provincial chiefs (*abakuru bebyanga*), and chiefs who took charge of the local affairs at the parish and sub-parish levels ( <http://www.ugandatragelguide.com/ankole-culture.html>). However, an individual family was the base of this organization with each household having a head (father)

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<sup>5</sup> There are a lot of what one would regard conspiracy theories about why the Kingdom of Ankole was not restored. Among these is one that suggests that during the time when the Kingdom was active, the Bairu were unfairly treated by the Kings (were always Bahima), causing insecurities and hatred among these two subgroups.

who took decisions on their behalf. In cases where the father is deceased, his brother took control over the family including adoption of the late brother's wife, especially if the elder son was still young or if he produced only girls. A son who was eighteen years and above was allowed to take responsibility of his late father's family because by this age he was considered mature.

The position of Kingship was hereditary and the king had to come from the Bahinda royal clan who claimed descendant from *Ruhanga* (creator). Whenever the king died, there were always hereditary conflicts of who would succeed the throne, especially if one did not have children. However, if he produced children, among whom were sons, the eldest one would be crowned during an elaborate ceremony to install the new king. Whenever he died, some of his wives and royal servants would commit suicide, plus some members of the Basingo clan, to accompany him in the after world. His death and body were given special terms, including being regarded as *omugabe ataahize* (the king migrated to another place) to draw a distinction between him and other ordinary persons.

The expansion of Ankole depended on wars and capturing of property in form of land, women and animals from her neighboring kingdoms. Ankole was usually involved in war with other kingdoms, especially Bunyoro. Most notable of these wars was one during which Ankole fought against Bunyoro, during the time when the latter was under the leadership of Omukama I Walimi and the former Ntare IV Kitabanyoro.

As already mentioned, the Banyankole are composed of two social classes, that is, the Bairu and Bahima. The Bairu were identified as the agriculturalists and the Bahima as pastoralists. This was as a result of the belief that what made each of these groups who they were was the hoe and cattle, respectively. However, as time went on, Bahima could own plantations

and Bairu could own cattle. The Bahima who owned few cattle were termed as *abarasi*. Bairu who owned cattle were regarded as *abambari*.

The Bahima, however, established dominion over the Bairu making the latter socially inferior and developing a timid attitude. Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire (1971:2) captures this relationship by noting that “the late 1940s and the early 1950s were the years when political antagonism between the Bairu and the Bahima ... was at its highest, [with the Bahima dominating their Bairu counterparts]” . This kind of relationship was largely influenced by one legend that holds that the first occupant of Ankole was Ruhanga (creator) who is believed to have come from heaven and had three sons, namely, Kakama, Kairu, and Kahima.

To these children, he gave a test to determine who the heir would be, which was holding a pot filled with milk on their laps throughout the night without pouring any drop of it. The test was said to have been passed by the youngest son Kakama, followed by Kahima and lastly Kairu, from where he judged their positions making Kakama their leader, and decreed that Kairu was to be a servant of his brother Kahima, before he went back to heaven. In other words, Kakama became their leader, Kahima followed as an assistant and Kairu made a servant of the two.

Considering their primary occupations, the Bahima and Bairu had a daily full-time routine that depended on whether it was a dry or wet season, that is, late December to February and late May to August for the dry season, then late March to May and September to December for the wet season. Drought and hunger plus less or no milk (*ente okuhweisa*) during the dry season was expected. The Bairu's routine was planting (*okubyaara*), weeding (*okwombera*), harvesting (*okushaaruura*), mulching (*okwaarira*), among other gardening chores, while the



Bahima were always engaged in milking (*okukama*), cleaning the kraal (*okweeya*), taking cattle to drink water (*okweeshera*), setting the cattle to feed (*okuseetura*), among many other pastoral activities.

For the Bahima, beautiful and healthy cattle in big numbers owned by one person meant wealth. Bahima minded more about beauty and numbers than milk production, which always led them to do selective breeding to keep the beauty present. It should be noted that the Bahima reared the long-horned type of cattle. The following excerpt from Lukyn- Williams (1938:17-18) writing summarizes the value the Bahima bestowed on their cattle, "The Muhima's [singular for Bahima] cattle...are his friends and he treats them as such. They know his voice and he knows theirs, their life is his life, what they like he likes...he will undergo any hardship to ensure their safety and if overtaken by death, he will mourn their death as for that of a friend."

However, besides cattle keeping and agriculture, the Banyankole carried out other economic activities including carpentry, hunting, pottery, and iron smelting. Through these activities, they assigned items for daily usage, for example, spears, arrows, bows, pots, knives, pangas, milk-pots, shoes, to mention but a few, which were exclusively practiced by the Bairu. On the other hand, animal products such as meat, milk, butter, hides, skins, among others, were produced exclusively by the Bahima, hence an internal barter trade, whereby the Bairu and the Bahima each exchanged the goods they produced with those that they did not have

There existed blood 'pacts' among the Banyankole. Two people of different clans, since people from the same clan were regarded as brothers, would choose to be united by a blood covenant in a ceremony known as *okukora omukago* (making friendship). During this ceremony, the two men would sit closely on a mat, facing each other with their legs overlapping, and

holding each other' s hand. Each of these held sprouts of *ejubwe* (type of grass) and *omurinzi* (type of tree) for the Bahima, and an additional sprout of *omutooma* (a type of tree) for the Bairu. They would then be instructed by the master of ceremonies to each make a slight cut to the right of their naval, dip the end of the sprout in their blood and add a little millet flour (for the Bairu) or milk (for the Bahima), The two men would swallow the mixture, marking the seal of the brotherhood covenant, and from then onwards, they must treat each other as real brothers in every aspect and not separate, lest the victim of the offense dies.

Banyankore's religion was centered on their traditional god *Ruhanga* (creator) whom they believed lived in heaven, slightly above the clouds. They, however, had other gods expressed in the cult of *emandwa*, which were more easily approachable than *Ruhanga*. Each family had its own shrine where family members always gathered to worship, and if they had a meal to share among themselves, they would dedicate a certain share for the gods as well.

As <http://www.ugandatragelguide.com/ankole-culture.html> puts it, birth among the Banyankole was (is) highly valued as it meant continuation of the family and clan. Women would (still) give birth on their own, often with the help of their biological mothers because they believed a woman that can push the baby on her own without difficulty is a strong and brave one. On the other hand, a woman that was not able to give birth on her own, to the extent that she needed an operation, was perceived by society as a lazy one.

Child naming was done immediately at birth, and it was the role of the father, mother, and paternal grandfather to find the newly born a suitable name. This name was influenced by the situation, year, time, day of the week, month and health condition in which the baby has been born. The baby's grandfather's say about his/her name was given first priority. If the baby failed

to come out quickly during birth, herbs were administered and if the normal procedure failed, the woman' s husband would climb the top of the house, raise an alarm and roll a pot down from the top as a way of calling the baby out of the womb.

Marriage among the Banyankore was always conducted in a way that the parents of the boy or girl were the ones to find the right suitor for their child, and it had to be between two opposite sex persons who are not related by blood or of the same clan. It was also prohibited for a Muhima to intermarry with a Mwiru because of the tense relationship between the two groups.

If a girl refused to marry a certain boy that liked her, the latter would force her to marry him, without her consent in a practice known as *okuteera oruhoko*. I was told that among the Bairu, this was done in a way that the boy would get a cock, throw it in the girl' s compound, then run away. Arrangements for the girl to get married to him would then be done immediately without hesitation by her family, because it was believed that if the cock crowed before the girl followed the boy, she or somebody in the house would die. Among the Bahima, however, the boy would put a tethering rope around the girl' s neck and announced it publicly that he was interested in marrying her or one would sprinkle milk on the girl' s face while milking, and immediate arrangements for a marriage procedure followed. Regardless of this, the boy would pay double bride price as fine for this act. In other cases, a girl was forcefully carried away if found alone, then bride price would be negotiated between the two families later. This practice was known as *okukiriza*.

At marriage, the girl was escorted to her new home by her paternal aunt (*ishenkazi*) whose role was to determine the girl's sexual potential by either watching or listening to the girl and boy have sexual intercourse or prove that her daughter is a virgin since sex before marriage

was taboo among the Banyankole. In cases where the girl's family knew that their daughter was not a virgin, information was sent to the husband prior to the official marriage in form of a hollow coin or object among other gifts, or the girl's aunt administered droplets of aloe Vera juice in the girl's vagina to make it tight again before she gets to have sex with the husband. The administration of aloe Vera juice was to confuse her husband that the girl is a virgin hence avoiding humiliation. Finding that the girl was a virgin earned respect for the girl's family and more gifts were given to the latter.

A barren woman, among the Banyankole was considered useless in society. If a woman got married into a family and failed to produce, she was chased away and her bride price refunded by her family, and if a man was barren, his brothers would have intercourse with his wife and the children produced as a result would be considered his. In addition, if someone had committed suicide in the community, it was the role of such barren women or those that had reached menopause to cut the rope from the tree where the deceased had hung himself/herself so that the body falls in the pit that was dug directly under the tree since the body was not to be touched. This was because suicide was prohibited, and it was believed that the person that cut the rope would also die soon. The reason for having a barren woman or one that has reached menopause to cut down the body is because society believed she was no longer of any use to society.

Death among the Banyankole was considered unnatural. They believed it was as a result of magical intentions of evil people and sorcerers. Whenever a person died, nobody was allowed to go to their gardens to dig or do any work since everybody had to gather at the home of the deceased to comfort the latter's family. If anyone defied this rule and went on with their usual

work routine, he or she was suspected to be the cause of the deceased' s death. It was believed that he or she had bewitched the deceased, causing him or her to die.

The Banyankole believed in life after death. Whenever a spinster or bachelor died, it was believed they died unsatisfied and therefore, there was a specific way such people were buried. Before the body of the spinster was buried, one of her brothers would lie next to her and pretend as if he was making love to her so as to avert the evil intentions of her spirit from coming back to haunt anyone. Likewise, for a bachelor who had died, his body would be buried with a banana stem to fill the gap of who should have been his wife while he was alive (<http://www.ugandatragelguide.com/ankole-culture.html>). Their bodies were moved out of the house through the rear door and this act was called *okugyeza empango*.

### **2.3 Gender among the Banyankole**

Gender refers to the determination of whether a person is male or female by consideration of their physical appearance or how society grants it. Among the Banyankole, a person's gender is determined at birth by their physical appearance and later as they grow, society prescribes for them who they are, how to behave and what they ought to do in the community, that is, their feminine or masculine roles.

The man, among the Banyankole, is considered to be more superior than the woman in a family, the head was the man and he made every decision for the good of it, whether the woman and children supported it or not. Although boys construct their houses and stay in their houses and stay in their father' s compound when they become adolescents, girls who would attain puberty were expected to get married and the Banyankole would consider this wastage because then they did not contribute to the family lineage. As Ntangaare has argued, “ To the families,

they are born into, women are looked at generally as “ losses” ... since they will leave their natal homes to live with their husband’ s family” (2015:247).

There were specific roles for men and women among the Banyankole. On the one hand, women’ s traditional roles include keeping the family and doing home chores (cooking, gardening, washing, churning milk, receiving and feeding visitors and grooming the children). On the other hand, the man's roles were majorly looking after animals, providing for the family, and protecting it against harm.

#### **2.4 Ebyeevugo (Music Recitatives)**

As mentioned earlier, *ebyeevugo* are poem-like heroic recitations which were a medium of expression of life style among the Banyankole. These recitatives were a medium through which historical events and wisdom were passed on from generation one generation to another, that is, during *okutarama*<sup>6</sup> where items such as *ebyeevugo*, *ebiito/ebishaakuzo* (riddles), *ebigano* (folktales), *enfumu* (proverbs), and *ebyeeshongoro* (songs), were told to the young to teach them values and their roles. "...a gathering of relatives and guests might be entertained [by] folk tales - ebigano...which served to explain the origins of things and social norms...*ebiito* or riddles and proverbs...'fire-side story'..." (1971:6).

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<sup>6</sup> *Okutarama* was a practice done by the banyankole especially in the evening after the day’ s work, where words of wisdom were told to the young by their elders especially through games, *ebiito/ebishaakuzo*, *enfumu*, *ebigano*, *ebyeevugo*, *ebyeeshongoro*, to mention but a few. It is during this period when every child’ s strength was tested, girls and boys alike. For the boys, every one of them was expected to present at least three or four phrases of a recitative to prove they are man enough, while girls were tested with *ebigano* (folk tales), *ebiito/ebishaakuzo* (riddles), or *ebyeeshongoro*(songs). If anyone failed to meet the expectations, he or she would not be allowed to sleep no matter how sleepy they felt The elders would say, “ *Twaataho akakooko. Haza murekye akatambuukye!*” (“ We have put an animal. Let’ s see how you go past it!” ). The act of one’ s knowledge of one of the above, saving them from staying awake till very late was known as *okwiiha ahamahaga*.

Recitation of *ebyeevugo* was majorly a practice for Bahima, and was originally practiced by only men. “ *Okweevuga kukaba kuba okw'abasheija bonka* (Reciting was for only men)” Steven Kamuhanda (2019:154). Girls and women participated more in singing, riddles, folk tales, to mention but a few, and they never mixed with the men during recitation of *ebyeevugo* because culture demands that girls spend more time with their mothers and boys with their fathers, so that they learn the appropriate roles and skills for their gender each, hence avoiding situations where boys behave like women or girls like men.

#### **2.4.1 Background of *Ebyeevugo***

*Ebyeevugo* are *kinyankole* poem-like recitals mostly with hidden messages, which are a representation of the lifestyle of the Banyankole, that is, what they see, do, live or experience throughout their lives. It is one way they get to express what they feel or think about objects, fellow people, or even certain situations in life. “ One would just like something and recite about it. It was a creation by people for the things they see and know” , explained Fred Kaakiziba, one of the performers of *ebyeevugo* during an interview.

Apart from that, *ebyeevugo* are grouped in two categories, and these are, *ebyeevugo* (a recitative about anything apart from cows) and *okugamba ente*<sup>7</sup> (directly translated as ‘ talking about cows’ ), and were originally performed by only men and young boys. Youthful boys were expected to *okuhimba* (to compose) a certain length of *ekyeevugo* (singular form of *ebyeevugo*) of at least three to four phrases (*enkome*), even if not so long, (to last between three to four phrases), as a way of proving that they are man enough. This

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<sup>7</sup>*Okugamba ente* was a form of *ebyeevugo* which was specifically and specially composed and performed in praise of cows. It was said that cows are not “ recited” (*okweevugwa*), but rather “ talked about” (*okugambwa*). This is because of the exclusive respect and love that the banyankore have for cows. *Okugamba ente* was originally done by the Bahima, being cattle keepers, but with time, even the Bairu who were basically cultivators in the beginning, have adopted the same because they also rear cattle. However, the above mentioned term is only in the Bahima vocabulary. The Bairu refer to every form of recitation as *ebyeevugo*.

was especially done to test every boy at home during *okutarama* (Keeping awake for a longer period of time on purpose). “In case you did not know how to recite and you are a boy, you were seen as *ekifeera* (useless incapable person)” asserted Patrick Bariseene (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022). On the other hand, the men would compose and recite *ebyeevugo*, but even then, only few of them had the art and talent that was considered satisfying because reciting was a talent.

*Ebyeevugo*, however much it was a practice among both the Bairu and Bahima, was common among the Bahima. The Banyankole believe that the Bahima did more of singing and reciting, while the Bairu did more of dancing and singing, especially for *ekitaaguriro* dance. This idea was shared by Ham Beegiza who noted that, “ the Bahima would recite and the Bairu would dance” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022). Similarly, Ruth Rwabaryongo re-echoed this issue by pointing out that, “ but [*okweevuga*]..was done especially by Bahima” (interview Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup>, September, 2022).

Furthermore, *ebyeevugo*, just as all the other leisure activities including *ebiito/ebishaakuzo* (riddles), *enfumu* (proverbs), *ebyeeshongoro* (songs), and *ebigano* (folk tales), among others, was a cultural institution where values were learnt and an individual’ s behavior tamed by the rest of the community. “ ..were a cultural institution...” Rubunda stressed. Muniaaba too, confirmed this and said that “ Whenever they did this, it would open their children’ s ears to learn” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022).

Similarly, *ebyeevugo* are music made by the Banyankole people that is passed on from talented and interested persons of one generation to the next through oral and aural tradition. The wisdom within these recitatives and ability to compose meaningful and appealing music such as this, took an interested but mostly talented mind to grasp. Young boys and girls



would sit and listen to their parents, grandparents and other seniors recite, and from this did they adopt the art, hence preserving the culture. “ they have been passed on from generation to generation” observed Nyinomujuni and continued to point out that, “ boy and girl...were following into the footsteps of the ancestors, long time ago” (Interview Sunday 17th, July, 2022).

#### **2.4.2 Origin of *Ebyeevugo***

The origin of *ebyeevugo* is a myth. By whom, where, when and how they started remains unknown to most Banyankole. Nevertheless, the Banyankole I interacted with during fieldwork believed that *ebyeevugo* is cultural music that represents the lifestyle of the Banyankole and was therefore born in Ankole. According to Rubunda, *ebyeevugo* “ are as old as the culture itself” (interview Friday 12<sup>th</sup>, August, 2022). Similarly, Nyinomujuni told me that these recitatives “ are as old as man in Ankole..they have been living for many years” (interview Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>, July, 2022).

## CHAPTER THREE

### ROLE OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE PERFORMANCE OF EBYEEVUGO

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to present the research study data, its interpretation and analysis as derived from fieldwork notes, interviews, observations, audio-visual recordings, and library research, among others. The study focuses on the definition of Banyankole gender roles by *ebyeevugo* performances, the nature of people and occasions during which *ebyeevugo* are performed, and the style of performance and composition of *ebyeevugo*.

#### 3.2 Structure of *Ebyeevugo* and Style of Performance

*Ebyeevugo* are rhythmic dialogic poem-like recitations composed and performed in the Banyankole' s native language, that is, Runyankole, with long phrases and an element of storytelling, that usually have hidden meaning. Nyinomujuni describes these songs as being, “ Poetic, and with meaning that is sometimes hidden..They are not straight forward..sweetness in them is the language used, ..the rhythm” (interview Sunday 17th, July, 2022).

The composition procedure of *ebyeevugo*, like is with most other kinds of music, is that one is required to free their mind of anything else and think critically about what they will include in the recitative - something that has the potential to capture people' s attention and be entertaining or even comic to the listener' s ear. Some of the things a composer of a recitative might use to spice it up include riddles, proverbs, tongue twisters, rhyming phrases, to mention but a few. Drawing on his experience as someone who had composed and performed *ebyeevugo*, Edward Kaakiziba had this to say, “ when I was composing about

Museveni<sup>8</sup>'s war, there are some proverbs I quote, especially when my message relates to it ...the way I arrange my words, they rhyme ...people understand better and clap their hands because of such” (interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022). The length of *ekyeevugo* is about ten to twelve minutes, which explains why each performer performs only the recitatives that he has composed himself because one may not manage to fully learn a recitative that he has not composed and be able to perform it to the audience’ s satisfaction.

One of the ways that the performer may know the audience’ s appreciation of his performance is when they clap their hands (*okuha engaro*). In cases where the audience does not clap, then they have been bored. Therefore, the performer is made to repeat several times either reciting the same recitative or others until the audience claps, confirming the view that the audience has to be satisfied with one’ s recitative before clapping. Ham Beegiza asserted that, “ After reciting and they have not appreciated, he goes back and does it for the second time until they clap for him and then he would know that he has won their approval..you keep repeating and they later forgive you” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022).

Needless to say, *ebyeevugo* are unaccompanied, that is, they are performed without playing any musical instruments and have two different textures and rhythms according to the mood and gender of the performer. *Ebyeevugo* for men usually run at a fast tempo, with many different words joined together in a single sentence to form one very long phrase, and these usually sound in a strong authoritative manly tone. “ You could forget the words if you go slow” said Kaakiziba. *Ebyeevugo* for women, on the other hand, run at a relatively slow pace and sound with a light womanly tone. These do not have very long phrases.

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<sup>8</sup> Full name Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Tibahaburwa, his excellency the president of the republic of Uganda from 1986 and still was by 2022, the time I conducted this research study.

Similarly, *ebyeevugo* are made of two parts, that is, *enkome* (phrase/call) and *enkwaatiro/enturitsyo* (chorus/response). These are in form of call and response, which explain in detail the dialogic element of *ebyeevugo*. One person recites, or two, each at their own pace and alone as if in an argument (*okutonganisa*), while a different person (*omwiikirizi*) responds or if it is more than one (*abeikirizi*) responding, they should respond in the same tone to sound as one. “ They can be many, only they should be sure they have the same tone..sound the same, one voice” (Kaakiziba, interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022).

The respondents in the *ebyeevugo* of women usually say the same words as are in the first line of the recitative, which is considered the chorus. These words are repeated to put emphasis on the theme of the recitative. The men’ s response is usually a strong “ *eehhh*” (Yes), which is a response in agreement of what the person reciting is saying. “ *ekyeevugo* without that bit of backing [*okwiikiriza*], *ekyeevugo* will sound to be a dry one” (Nyinomujuni, interview Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>, July, 2022).

*Ebyeevugo* are performed while standing, for the men, whereas the women (Bahima) sit during recitation. This basically goes hand in hand with the constructed differences in the strength men and women are believed to have. While the men are expected to have the ability to move around in expression while reciting and pointing and moving their stick or spear (*okuteera kibirigi*), the women are expected to only sit and recite calmly, with a relatively slow pace to portray their calm and submissive nature expected of them. It is important to note that women among the Bairu recite while standing and the pace of their recitatives is relatively faster than the Bahima women’ s and the structure is like that of the men. However, the scope of my study does not investigate these details.

### 3.3 Costuming

According to Nyinomujuni, “ Your dress for the day would be the costume for the recital at the time you are going to recite” (interview Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>, July, 2022). However, as I will demonstrate later, the original costume was animal skin (*empu*), that is, cow skin for Bahima and any goat skin or other skins acquired from hunting for the Bairu. This clothing was designed in such a way that one skin would be tied around the waist and the other wrapped around the shoulders, to cover the body up to the ankle for women (*enkindi*) and slightly below the knee for men, and the pelvis, respectively, plus rattles (*enjebajebe*) worn on the legs, especially for male performers who had the skill of jumping high with corresponding action while reciting (*okuteera kibirigi*<sup>9</sup>).

Bariseene explained to me that the “ cow skin ... they would smear it with fresh cow butter to make it smooth and light” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022) Bahima women had an additional veiling cloth on their heads, to cover the whole head and hanging forward down below the face, leaving only a slight space for one to see outside the veil (*okweetweekyerira*). However, with the coming of Europeans, animal skin was replaced with wide scarf-like cloths (*ekibaraaho/omutanda*), worn in a similar manner, until they were replaced with dresses, trousers and shirts.

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<sup>9</sup> *Okuteera kibirigi* is a style of performance of *ebyeevugo* done by male performers of Ankole recitatives, where one recites while holding his spear/stick up as if aiming it at something, releases it throwing it straight at a certain spot at the ground, then jumps up high while pointing at his upright standing spear and uproots it while his feet touch the ground. This was a common practice that was majorly done for entertainment because the audience would look on with mixed feelings of anxiety, excitement and fear that one could hurt himself. The beauty about it was that only few performers could do it, and even then, those that had mastered the art had learnt it while still teenagers. The late Ishebukooreere is remembered in the history of *ebyeevugo* to have been the best in this.

Props held by *ebyeevugo* performers included *icumu* (spear) for men and *omutashara* (a spear-like stick for the women). These acted as a symbol of bravery for the performers because the spear, especially was every man's weapon that he had to have to be "counted among men" because he would need it at all times to defend himself from devouring wild animals while grazing and protecting his family. It should be noted though, that *omutashara* was a prop for only the Bairu women, since it is only them that were allowed to stand while reciting. Nonetheless, as Nyinomujuni told me, the spear and *omutashara*<sup>10</sup> were later replaced with *enkoni* (grazing stick) due to the fear of harming people in the audience. "Accompanying that...would be *enkoni*-a stick" (interview Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>, July, 2022).

### 3.4 Nature of People and Occasions of *Ebyeevugo*

In Ankole, *ebyeevugo* performance was originally a practice of the males, young and old. Women were always expected to keep calm and quite, and could only sing songs within their houses and among fellow women and children. If a woman wanted to pass on a message to a man, she would not talk to him directly because that would be looked at as disrespect, but pass it on indirectly through singing lullabies to her children, then the man would get it. Beegiza captured this scenario well when he noted that:

Their chores are at home. Where would they sing? Except they would speak through singing to their children..and she would say, *ebya mabanga tibigira ihimba, kwookwaata enturisyobyereeta* (Mabanga's issues are not hard to compose about, just a chorus and they will come by themselves) [meaning that whatever you do will bring itself to light] (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September 2022).

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<sup>10</sup> *Omutashara* was a type of spear for the women which was made without the pointed sharp end and used by women, especially those of old age as a walking stick to support them.

However, with modernity and women emancipation, women also got the platform to come out and recite *ebyeevugo* like the men, though it was still in a soft tone. It should be noted here that only the old women of about thirty to fifty years had the confidence to perform *ebyeevugo* in public because for them they are already used to the people in the community by that age. Nevertheless, if a woman became very old, past the age of about fifty-five years, usually she would have to leave performance for young women because the community then started laughing at her hoarse voice that comes with old age.

*Ebyeevugo* were composed according to the situation or event at hand. In cases where a visitor visited a home, during *okutarama* (staying up through the night), when a very talented reciter is around, while welcoming and congratulating heroes after war, traditional marriages (*okweevugira omunyaafu*<sup>11</sup> and *omugamba*<sup>12</sup>, entertaining the king (*omugabe*), natural calamities like floods, too much wind, rain or drought, epidemics, or pests. *Abeevugi* (*ebyeevugo* performers) always had a cause for composition and performance, be it times of happiness or pain.

According to events...with drought...they would compose a poem...when...there is abundance. Life has re-stated...vegetation has come good...animals have produced...there

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<sup>11</sup> *Okweevugira omunyaafu* which is directly translated as “reciting for the stick” was a practice among the bahima whereby there was a special *ekyeevugo* specifically composed and performed at the ceremony of bringing bride price to the family of the bride (*okujuga*). The stick talked about here was the grazing stick that they had used to lead the cows home (*okufunya ente*). After the performance of the recitative, the stick would then be hung in the ceiling (*orubazi*) of the bride’s father’s house (usually grass thatched). It was always a requirement and would be performed by one of the men from the groom’s side, to prove their bravery as a family.

<sup>12</sup> *Omugamba* is a package of materials for use in a girl’s marital home, especially those to use for serving, keeping and preserving milk, which are gathered and chosen carefully, then gifted to her by her mother. These hang beautifully on two ornamented sticks of their own special make which are held side by side each by four brothers to the bride and carried for presentation to the family of the groom during the giveaway ceremony (*okuhingira*). After the presentation of *omugamba* to the family, it is handed to the sisters-in-law of the bride, then a specially prepared *ekyeevugo* is recited in honor and appreciation of *omugamba* by a reciter from the groom’s family.

is war and people have shed blood..an epidemic..calamities..still they would. (Rubunda during an interview).

### **3.5 Roles of Men and Women in *Ebyeevugo* Performances**

*Okugamba ente* as a type of *ebyeevugo* defines the role of a munyankole man as a cattle keeper. Basing on the fact that this type of *ekyeevugo* required the reciter to own a herd of cattle before qualifying to perform it proves the role of a munyankole man as rearing cattle. Kaakiziba confirmed this when he told me, “ it used to be that you speak of your own herd of cattle” (interview Sunday 25th, September, 2022)

*Ebyeevugo* portray the role of a women as a listener in a home and the entire community. “ ..their role is to listen and appreciate” (Nyinomujuni interview Sunday 17th, July, 2022). During *ebyeevugo* performances, the women sit still and listen to the reciter, and they are not supposed to contribute anything, be it, responding to the performer, if he is a man because culture dictates that they should at all times listen and do as told, never to question the man’ s authority, as a gesture of respect. The women can only speak the *ekyeevugo* is being performed by a fellow woman.

*Ebyeevugo* performances articulate the fact that there are no shared roles in Ankole between men and women, as is prescribed by culture, that is, what men do, women should not attempt, and vice versa. This is proven through *ebyeevugo* performances where when it is a performance headed by a man, no woman is allowed to join in the response/backing (*okwiikiriza*). This is basically because the tone of a female voice is weaker and lighter than the male one, making it impossible for them to blend in the same performance. Therefore, *ebyeevugo* performances prescribe different roles for men and women since by nature the latter are weaker in physical strength than the former and are expected to do only the roles that fit their nature.



*Ebyeevugo* taught young girls and boys their defined roles prescribed by culture. *Okutarama*, where *ebyeevugo* recitation would take place, girls would sit in the same space with their mothers, aunties, and grandmothers, where they would be taught their responsibilities and how they should conduct themselves in society, same applying to the boys who would sit together with their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. Therefore, such times were a platform for prescription of gender roles. As such, Bariseene says, “ those times..*ekyeevugo* would be your savior..and it would help the young to learn their culture and its values.” (interview Thursday 22nd, September, 2022)

*Ebyeevugo* performances portray the men’ s role as protectors and overseers of other family members evidenced by the props they handle while performing, that is, spear, or stick, to prove their might and authority as men of substance in society. It was considered that if you are a male and you did not know how to recite, you are as good as nothing, by the elders and the entire community. “ They may block you from taking their daughter if you have failed to recite *ekyeevugo*..sign of showing your in-laws that you are brave people..the clan” Nyinomujuni told me. (interview Sunday 17th, July, 2022) “ ..in case you didn’ t know how to recite and you are a boy, you were seen *nk’ ekifeera mbweenu* [like a useless being]” Bariseene commented (interview Thursday 22nd, September, 2022).

Because of their humble and down to earth nature, Banyankole women’ s style of *ebyeevugo* performance is calm, with a light texture and must be performed while seated. As such, it is portrayed that women are supposed to sit back at home and do chores that do not require them to

make a lot of movements from place to place, for example, cooking, churning milk, washing, teaching the children morals, among others. “ because of their humility. The culture would not allow them to jump over” (Rubunda, interview Friday 12th, August, 2022). “ someone’ s wife cannot *kweemamarika ahagati y’ abantu* [moving about unnecessarily amidst people]” (Beegiza, interview Thursday 22nd, September, 2022).

### **3.6 Continuity and Change in *Ebyeevugo***

Over the years, the way *ebyeevugo* are composed and performed, their perception of them in public, costuming, the nature of people that perform them, and occasions on which they are performed, among other aspects, have changed due to certain circumstances in life.

Despite the fact that *ebyeevugo* were originally sacred and very treasured by the Banyankole, this has taken a huge turn to them being looked at as backward by most Christians and educated Banyankole. To capture this issue, Patrick Bariseene told me that “ with the coming of western religion and education, very few people are left that can do it. Most people think that it is a waste of time” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022). *Ebyeevugo* have also been commercialized, despite the fact that traditionally they were performances for leisure time and cultural identity. In this respect, every capable person always looked forward anxiously to showcase his skill and entertain people.

By the time I conducted fieldwork, because there were only few people that had the skill of performing these songs (and due to the fact that people were looking for ways of earning a living), *ebyeevugo* were commercialized and had become a source of livelihood. Muniaaba confirmed this to me when she noted that “ I first saw such in this Museveni regime. I think around the 2000s, but the first hired reciter I saw was Kaakiziba when my son was getting

married in 1988” (interview Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022). This interview was also shared by Bariseene who explained that “ those that know ..are scarce. One must pay a price to have them” (interview Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup>, September, 2022).

In addition, *okugamba ente* which used to be a thing done by only people that owned cattle and could only recite about their cattle, not anyone else’ s, was something that everyone with the talent could do with permission from the owner. Such a person could first study a certain herd of cattle and understand it well so that he could compose a recitative praising it, in order to get money. Kaakiziba captured this point by noting that “ it used to be that you speak of your own herd of cattle. But these days one hires a person to recite about their herd of cattle. But this is a new creative development” (interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022).

The props and costumes of *ebyeevugo* have undergone transformation due to modernity and creativity. It used to be animal skin first, which was replaced by scarf-like cloths, and eventually suits as costume. Also, the spear which was the traditional prop has been replaced with a stick because of, at times, unavoidable circumstances such as the abolition of the possession of weapons by unauthorized persons in public by the government. “ today we put on suits, but it is not good-it is wrong” Kaakiziba told me.

Apart from that, *ekyeevugo* for the *omugamba* has over the time been replaced with a religious praise song popularly known as *ekitenderezo* (an adopted Luganda word to mean something for praise). This type of song is common among Christian families and they perform it during *okuhingira* (giveaway) marriage ceremonies hosted by them, instead of *ekyeevugo*. Kaakiziba informed me that “ they told us to eliminate it yet its sole purpose stayed-*omugamba*” (interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022).

Similarly, the style of performance for *ebyeevugo* has undergone some changes, for, example, *okuteera kibirigi* (entertaining body movement done during *ekyeevugo* performance that involves jumping), is not being done by most performers because of modernity, and cultural decay. “ But as a result of modernity, microphones hinder the performers from expressing themselves with the spear or stick as earlier was-*okuteera kibirigi*” (Kaakiziba, interview Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, September, 2022).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Summary

This study is about the different roles played by man and women in the performances of *ebyeevugo*. These roles are portrayed through the song texts of these recitatives, costumes, props, occasions where they are performed, among others. This chapter contains a summary of the issues discussed, a thoughtful conclusion derived from the researcher's analysis of the findings presented, and suggestions to serve as reference for future researchers, resulting from the gaps that this research study was unable to fill.

#### 4.2 Conclusions

Since time in memorial, *ebyeevugo* were, and still are the backbone of cultural identity in Ankole as a Kingdom. They are so divine and a very precious treasure to the Banyankole people since they are a medium of expression for the things they see, own, experience, live with, or feel, in their life. It is, however, important to note that the origin of these recitatives is not clear, which leaves many questions unanswered as to whether they are originally music of the banyankore or if it was adopted from somewhere else. A case in point, there is a kind of music with similar characteristics made by the Tutsi of Rwanda, which is known as *ibyvugo*, a Rwandese word that means the same thing as *ebyeevugo* in Runyankore.

Nevertheless, *ebyeevugo* are inseparable with a lot more other Ankole cultural sets of items known as *ebizaano*, which every munyankore elder agrees played a major role in their right upbringing as children, resulting into the definition of their roles as the responsible and influential men and women they have become in society. Majorly, these were *ebiito/ebishaakuzo*

(riddles), *ebigano* (folk tales), *enfumu* (proverbs), and *ebyeeshongoro*(songs). These were filled with wisdom that was passed on to every child orally during *okutarama*, and this helped build their character right from childhood, and prescribed roles, to them as young men and women.

An interesting factor to note is that regardless of the complexity of the structure of *ebyeevugo*, that is, the fast pace at which they are recited, the long phrases that need an incredible breath control ability, the necessity of logical statements that will capture the audience's attention and cause one to be hailed, most of the performers of these recitatives are illiterate but able to compose, memorize, and perform correctly every single word of these long poems without recording or writing down anything. It is incredible how each of these performers has composed quite a number of *ebyeevugo* that he or she can easily remember and recite from the first to the last composition without referring anywhere for remembrance.

Apart from that, as a result of continuity and change, *ebyeevugo* which were originally accompanied performances are now, in the early 21st Century, sometimes accompanied by either the flute or whistling by use of mouth, especially if it is an introductory section of the *ekitaaguriro* traditional dance of the banyankore. It is important to note, however, that the recitatives of this kind are usually short, that is, about one-minute length or less.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

The researcher noted with keen interest, the structure of *ebyeevugo*, that seems more of poetry than music because of the absence of melody in most of these recitatives, except for very few which are done by specific reciters who at times tend to sing short melodies of about one to two bars at specific times in their recitation, especially where they are bringing out a certain rhyme in words, or accenting higher pitched syllables that they would like to emphasize. This is,

however, a very rare practice. The researcher therefore recommends that future researchers take interest in building a concept out of the poetry in *ebyeevugo*.

Equally, the researcher noted with concern, the improper archiving system of the *ebyeevugo* in Ankole, where there are very little and unavailable archives of this great and rich heritage, whereby, most of the exceptionally talented reciters of these recitatives have died and those that are still alive have no record of their wisdom anywhere in audio, paper, or any way of archiving data that is easily accessible by the public. It is very sad that in the near future, if nothing is done to change this, the wisdom of these people that should be learning material for those interested will all be forgotten. The researcher, therefore, recommends that future scholars take notice of the archiving of these recitatives and build ideas on it.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: List of informants

NAME	PROFESSION	DATE	VENUE
Mr. Edward Kaakiziba	Farmer and renown composer and performer of ebyeevugo	25th Sept. 2022	Ssanga trading center
Mr. Pison Nyinomujuni	Farmer, retired music teacher and elder in the community.	17th July. 2022	His home in Ntinda Kampala.
Rev. Canon. Dr. Samwiri Rubunda	One of the top clergies in the Anglican church senior presidential advisor, Doctor of theology, farmer and elder in the community.	12th Aug. 2022	His home in Ntinda Kampala.
Mr. Ham Beegiza	Village Local Council Chairperson, Farmer, and elder in the community.	22nd Sept. 2022	Rubaya sub-county headquarters
Mr. Patrick Bariseene	Farmer, elder in the community.	22nd Sept.	His home in Rushozi -Rubaya



			2022	subcounty
Mrs. Mable Muniaaba	Civilian performer of ebyeevugo, farmer and elder in the community.		22nd Sept. 2022	Her home in Rushozi -Rubaya subcounty
Mrs. Ruth Rwabaryongo	Farmer and elder in the community.		23rd Sept. 2022	Her home in Rwantsinga - Rubaya sub-county
Mrs. Jaires Bitungire Kitente	Civilian performer of ebyeevugo, farmer, and elder in the community.		23rd Sept. 2022	Her home in Rushozi -Rubaya subcounty
Mr. Fred Arineitwe aka Rwankunionio	a cultural troupe CEO, renown performer of ebyeevugo and all kinds of cultural music and dance and Farmer.		27th Sept. 2022	Comfort Inn- Mbarara city

## Appendix II: List of events attended

EVENT	VENUE	DATE
Itaramiro Family Cultural show	Hotel Africana	5th March 2022

Giveaway ceremony	Kembabazi catering services Naguru.	30th Oct. 2021
Giveaway ceremony	Ndere centre	18th Jul. 2022
Giveaway ceremony	Nyabushozi Kiruhura	27th Dec. 2022
Ekitaramo cultural show	Buremeezi	30 <sup>th</sup> . Nov. 2021
Giveaway ceremony	Igongo Cultural Centre-Mbarara	29th Sep. 2022
Giveaway ceremony	Rubaare-Ntungamo district.	25th Aug. 2022

### **Appendix III: List of sample questions for interviews**

#### **ELDERS**

1. What is your name?
2. Briefly tell me about yourself.
3. What do you know about ebyeevugo?
4. When did they begin?
5. Who began them?
6. Where were they started?
7. Why were they started?
8. How were the performers of ebyeevugo expected to appear on stage?
9. What costumes and props are they expected to use?

10. Why those specific costumes and props?
11. What do they signify?
12. Who were the performers of ebyeevugo?
13. When did they eventually get to be performances on stage?
14. What were men' s roles in these performances?
15. Why do they do those specific roles?
16. What were the roles of women in the performances?
17. Why do they do those specific roles?
18. Are there any shared roles during performance?
19. Why is it like that?
20. What was the importance of ebyeevugo?
21. What is your view about Banyankole women reciting ebyeevugo?
22. Why are there less women than men in the ebyeevugo performance?

## **PERFORMERS**

1. What is your name?
2. Briefly tell me about yourself.
3. What do you know about ebyeevugo?
4. Why did you choose to be a performer of this kind of music?
5. When did they begin?
6. Who began them?
7. Where were they started?
8. Why were they started?
9. How were the performers of ebyeevugo expected to appear on stage?

10. What costumes and props are they expected to use?
11. Why those specific costumes and props?
12. What do they signify?
13. Who were the performers of ebyeevugo?
14. When did they eventually get to be performances on stage?
15. What were men' s roles in these performances?
16. Why do they do those roles?
17. What were the roles of women in the performances?
18. Why do they do that?
19. Are there any shared roles during performance?
20. Why is it like that?
21. What was the importance of ebyeevugo?
22. What is your view about Banyankole women reciting ebyeevugo?
23. Why are there less women than men in the ebyeevugo performance?

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