

SECTION

5

ART, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY IN
PRE-COLONIAL
GHANA



STATES AND KINGDOMS IN PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

Emergence of Complex States

Introduction

The section discusses the unique scientific methods in the areas of medicine, arts and technology. This section will help you to demonstrate an understanding of how scientific, artistic and technological systems in pre-colonial Ghana contributed to the growth and development of states and kingdoms. By the end of this section, you will be able to utilise historical sources in the environment to reconstruct the unique scientific systems of selected indigenous Ghanaian states and kingdoms and compare them with contemporary Ghanaian society.

By the end of the section, you will be able to:

- Explain the unique methods of providing health care in pre-colonial Ghana
- Analyse the history of arts and technology in pre-colonial Ghana

Key Ideas

- **Indigenous healthcare** refers to the healthcare that began in Ghana and which met the social, cultural, and medical needs of Ghanaians before the country was exposed to Colonialism.
- **Brass casting** as a metalwork involves an alloy of copper and zinc to create a specific brass shape or object after melting and pouring it into a mould.
- **Leatherworking** is a craft that involves creating, shaping and designing items from leather.
- **Wood carving** is an art that involves shaping and sculpting wood into decorative or functional objects through the use of tools such as knives, chisel, mallets and gouges.
- **Cloth weaving** is the of creating fabric by interlacing two sets of threads (warp and weft) in a systematic pattern.
- **Bead making** is the process of creating beads as a small decorative object with a hole for threading or stringing usually from glass, clay, wood or metal.

TRADITIONAL LEADERS WHO BECAME GREAT AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS THEY MADE TO THE GROWTH OF THEIR KINGDOMS

In pre-colonial Ghana, there were numerous traditional leaders who played significant roles in the growth and development of their kingdoms. These leaders exhibited exceptional leadership skills, strategic thinking and cultural preservation, leaving lasting legacies that continue to be celebrated today. Some notable ones included:



Fig. 5.1: Traditional leaders who played significant roles in the growth and development of their kingdoms

Togbe [Togbui] Sri I of the Anlo-Ewe

Togbe Sri I led the second Anlo migrants to first settle in the open grassland area between the lagoon and the mouth of the Volta. He, together with Amega Wenya and their followers, founded the Anlo state with its capital at Anloga. He established a political structure within the Anlo state to ensure effective governance and administration among clans. He played a crucial role in conflict resolution within the Anlo state and with neighbouring groups, hence the promotion of peace and stability. Togbe Sri I encouraged the practice of agriculture and trade which contributed to the economic prosperity of the people of Anlo. For instance, the Anlo flourished as crop farmers and producers of salt and dried and salted fish for export into the interior states. He supported the preservation of Anlo traditions, customs, and practices. He left behind what the Anlo called “Togbi Sri fe nuxlormenyawo” which are words of advice and admonishing to all Anlo citizens to be morally upright.

Okai Koi of the Ga

The power of the Ga kingdom reached its peak during the reign of King Okai Koi. According to oral tradition, King Okai Koi ruled with the support of his mother, Dode

Okaibi. During their reign, the Ga were subjected to arbitrary and tyrannical rule. Okai Koi was feared and respected by the Europeans on the coast. Ga Kingdom under Okai Koi, like other coastal states did not allow European traders to trade directly with the inland people such as Akyem, the Akwamu and Kwahu. For this reason, He established a market at Abonse, a few miles north-east of Great Accra where in three days, the Ga met the inland people and traded in European goods, salt, dried and salted fish, for gold, ivory and slaves. Okai Koi appointed a ‘chief’ or captain at Abonse who supervised the activities of the traders and saw to the collection of market tolls. These activities were intensely disliked by the inland people and so in 1659, the Akwamu in alliance with the Agona attacked the Ga. The decisive battle known as the Battle of Nyantrabi was fought in 1667, which saw the Ga King, Okai Koi, himself leading his troops against Akwamu. He was defeated and killed.

Otara Firal I of the Guan

Otara Firal was the founder of the strong Guan kingdom around Gonjaland. The Guan tradition claims that Atara Firal I established a huge empire stretching from Gonja across the Volta (Firaw) to the coastal districts. The traditional ruler of the Guan state was Atara Firal, whose title, Firaw, was used by the Asante to identify the Volta River. Otara Firal had his capital at Gyanebofo, in the Afram plains to the far east of the current Ashanti Region and the northeast of the present Kwahu (Kwahu) traditional area.

Naa Gbewa of Mole-Dagbani

Naa Gbewa was Tohajie’s grandson, who set up a settlement that developed into the Mole-Dagbani kingdom. Naa Gbewa with the advantage of superior military, political and cultural institutions, was able to impose his rule over the aboriginal or indigenous people of the land. He maintained the office of the Tengdana, the spiritual head and the custodian of land to which they maintained a religious cult. He is said to have built many structures including the palace in the capital city of Yendi. Naa Gbewa built a dam at Vea. He also introduced the cultivation of new crops, such as tobacco and maize, to the people of Dagbon.

Osei Tutu I of Asante

Osei Tutu I was the first Asantehene from around 1699-1777. He was assisted by his priest-friend and advisor, Okomfo Anokye to contribute to the growth of Asante kingdom. The ability, diplomatic skill and martial ardour of Osei Tutu contributed significantly to founding Asante. Osei Tutu played some important roles leading to the formation of Asante which included:

1. Founding of a lasting union: By playing on the common fear and hatred all the pre-Asante states had for Denkyira, he and Okomfo Anokye were able to bring all of them together. Osei Tutu, I united states such as Juaben, Kokofu, Bekwai, Amakom, Nsuta, Asumengya, Mampon to form the Asante Union. Asante is corrupted form of two Akan words “Esa Nti” meaning “Because of War”.

2. Okomfo Anokye and Osei Tutu created the Golden Stool around September 1698. To endow the union with a perpetual binding force and spiritual symbol of unity, Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye created the Golden Stool of Asante, which, to this day, has remained an object of reverence among the Asante people. It served as the spirit and soul of Asante, which needs to be protected by all Asante.
3. Establishment of Kumasi as the capital of the Asante kingdom: To strengthen the kingdom by the use of diplomacy, Osei Tutu I got the members of the Asante Union to agree that Kumasi was to be recognised as the capital of the Asante Union and that once every year, all members of the Union were to attend the Odwira festival there. At this festival, prayers were said for the entire nation, disputes or quarrels among chiefs were settled and plans for the following year were made. This festival was to unite the various people of Asante.
4. Introduction of a constitution for the Union: The constitution spelt out the roles, functions and positions of chiefs and the Asantehene in the Asante Kingdom. At its head was the Asantehene who was also the head of Kumasi state or division. Below him were the kings or *Amanhen* of the other component of states or *Oman*, all of whom were to recognize the court of the Union as the supreme court, attend the annual Odwira festival, contribute a contingent and pay tribute in cases of war and national emergency, seek recognition from Asantehene by swearing the oath of allegiance to him and give up the right of declaring war upon a member Omanhen at their pleasure. These Amanhene were sovereign and independent in all other spheres.
5. Military organisation: Osei Tutu paid particular attention to the military organisation of the Union. He introduced into Asante the Akwamu military formation consisting of the Vanguard (adonten), the rear (kyidom), the left (benkum) and the right (nifa) wings. Each member state was assigned a place in one of the wings and each wing was placed under a commander who was at the same time the king of one of the member states of the Union. The result of this military organisation was Osei Tutu's defeat of Denkyira in the War of Feyiase (1699-1701).
6. Embarked on wars of expansion: Osei Tutu started his wars of conquest by first avenging the death of his predecessor, Obiri Yeboah by inflicting a decisive defeat on the Dormaa, emigrated north-westward and founded the kingdom of Gyaaman. He then conquered Amako and Tafo. He defeated Denkyira between 1699 and 1701 at Feyiase. This victory brought Asante to the attention of the Europeans on the coast for the first time. Next, Osei Tutu conquered Akyem, but he was killed around CE 1717, in the campaign to suppress a revolt in Akyem.

Ndewura Jakpa Lanta of the Gonja

Gonja kingdom became famous, particularly under the most famous of its kings, Ndewura Jakpa (1623-4-1666-7). He extended the frontiers of Gonja not only in the area of the confluence of the White and Black Volta, but further eastwards as far as the borders of Nanumba, thereby pushing the Dagomba further north and east. Indeed, it was as a result of the pressure being exerted on them by the Gonja that the Dagomba

moved their ancient capital from Yendi-Dabari in western Dagomba to the present site of Yendi in eastern Dagomba. Ndwura Jakpa defeated Bono which was a threat to Gonja's survival in 1639. He led Mande warriors against Dagomba and ruled them for many years. He established many other towns and villages including Salaga as a market centre for the Gonja kingdom. He also captured an important salt producing centre of Daboya from Dagomba. He appointed his sons and relatives as chiefs of the conquered districts for effective administration. In order to keep his kingdom united, he instituted a law which forbade the conquered from making any reference to their past independent status and history or faced death.

Activity 5.1

1. In this lesson, you and your classmates were exposed to some Ghanaian Kings who contributed to the rise and growth of kingdoms and states in Ghana. With this understanding, make a list of some traditional leaders who became great in pre-colonial Ghana and give qualities that those traditional leaders might have possessed to be considered "great." Use the table below to present your responses after visiting the library or the internet if you are capable.

Table 5.1: Some traditional leaders who became great in pre-colonial Ghana and the qualities they might have possessed to be considered "great"

Name of King	Qualities Possessed by the Leader to be Considered 'Great'
Example: Osei Tutu I	Diplomatic, brave, clever strategist and highly skilled at various things.

2. Select one of the traditional leaders discussed and complete the following tasks:
 - a. Create a detailed profile including:
 - Full title and kingdom
 - Time period of rule
 - Major achievements
 - Leadership qualities
 - Lasting impact on their kingdom

- b. Compare your chosen leader with a modern-day traditional ruler.
Consider:
 - How their roles differ
 - Which practices continue today
 - What changes have occurred in traditional leadership
3. Now that you have succeeded in identifying the leader and highlighting his or her biography and major achievements, analyse the impact of the chosen traditional leader's decisions on various aspects of their kingdom (e.g. social, political and economic).

Activity 5.2 Map Work

Using the outline map of Ghana below:



1. Mark and label:
 - a. The locations of major states that existed in pre-colonial Ghana and their capitals
 - b. Important trade routes
 - c. Key battle sites
 - d. Major settlements established by leaders of the identified states
2. Create a key to the map showing:
 - a. Kingdom boundaries
 - b. Trade centres
 - c. Battle locations
 - d. Modern administrative regions these states fall under today

Activity 5.3: Timeline Creation

Create a detailed timeline showing:

1. When each leader ruled
2. Major events during their reign
3. Key achievements
4. Significant battles or conflicts
5. Important developments in their kingdoms

ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANAIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

In pre-colonial Ghana, women played crucial roles in the political systems of various kingdoms. The extent of women's involvement in political systems varied across different kingdoms and communities. While some societies provided more opportunities for women to participate in governance and diplomacy, others had more restrictive gender roles. However, the overall contribution of women in pre-colonial Ghanaian political systems cannot be overlooked.

In Akan societies for instance, there were some women who held political positions of power. These women were called the Queen Mothers. In every community, town or division, there were Queen mothers who served as traditional authorities. Queen mothers in Akan states had their own stools, linguists and linguist staff, as well as a court which symbolised their power and authority. A Queen mother's duties reflected her relationship with the chief or king. She catered for the welfare of women in her domain. She was an embodiment of motherhood and considered to be the mother of her clan and consequently the chief or king. She possessed the knowledge and wisdom of the clan and she was expected to impart that wisdom to the chief or king on a regular basis. This knowledge and wisdom legitimised her authority including the genealogy of the royal family and political wisdom. She nominated a chief or king when the chief's or king's stool became vacant. She nominated from among the most qualified royals and submitted the name of the nominee to the elders of the royal family and the king-makers. The Queen mother sat on the left of the chief or king and advised the chief or king regularly during adjudication of justice. In the Asante kingdom, there were some women who held political positions of power. Some of these women were Ama Sewa, Afrakuma Panyin and Ama Saponmma of Dwaben, as well as Yaa Asantewaa, the queen mother of Edweso.

Similarly, among the Dagbon of northern Ghana, women were able to share the privilege of nobility and aristocracy. They did this by being chiefs of Gundogo, Kpalaga, Kukulogo and Sasegele.

Some general roles of women in pre-colonial Ghanaian political systems are shown in Figure 5.2.

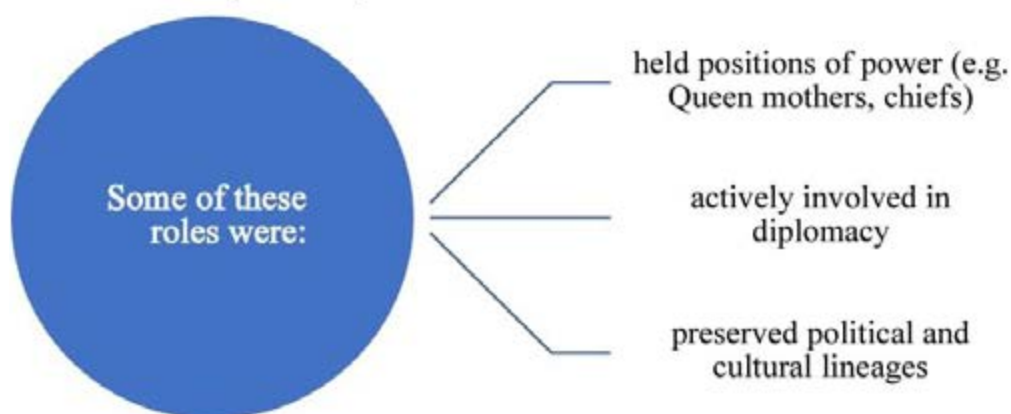


Fig. 5.2: Roles played by Ghanaian women in pre-colonial Ghanaian system

Activity 5.4

1. Women played very critical roles in the pre-colonial Ghanaian political structure. Some were traditional rulers while others were war leaders. Others also served as advisors the kings. In some kingdoms, women nominated qualified candidates for vacant stools. With this understanding in mind, act as one of these women leaders. Highlight the contributions of your chosen woman-leader to pre-colonial Ghanaian political structure
2. Now that you have completed the role-play and after observing those of your classmates, you and your elbow partner should create a picture slide on the role of women to support the role-play, including Queen mothers in the political organisation of different ethnic groups. You may need the support of your friends who have knowledge in ICT to do this activity. You may also contact an ICT Teacher in your school for support.
3. Before the advent of colonialism, Ghana boasted of numerous Kingdoms. With your knowledge of these kingdoms so far, choose any one of these kingdoms: Demonstrate in clear terms the specific roles played by women in your chosen kingdom. Present your response in this table.

Table 5.2: Roles played by women in a chosen kingdom

Kingdom	Specific Roles Played by Women

4. You have been introduced to the concept of the matrilineal system in this lesson. With that experience, explain the meaning of the matrilineal System. Show how it impacted the political power of women. You may visit the library or the internet for more research on this activity. You can also contact your teacher or others in your school for their suggestions.

Activity 5.5

Study carefully the following sources (A, B and C) to examine women's roles and contributions in pre-colonial Ghanaian political systems:

Source A:

Extract from: Tei, R. D. (2021). Women in review: The role of women on the history of Ghana, 1874-1992. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 2(12), 151-154.

“The Asante of the Akan ethnic group in pre-colonial Ghana came to be regarded as a dominant force to reckon with. At the height of the Asante dominance, the queen mother (Asantehemmaa) was considered the epitome of womanhood and authority. The roles performed by the Asantehemmaa included the resolution of conflict, mainly cases involving women or issues of commerce, ritual duties, the nomination of a new king, and her officiating at initiation ceremonies. Women in the Dagbon areas of northern Ghana were also accorded nobility and good social status. For instance, the paramount chief (Yagbonwura) of Dagbon delegated his authority to women to perform rituals and initiation rites during annual festivals.”

Source B:

Extract from: Abass, U., & Döşkaya, F. Ç. (2017). The position of women in the social and political history of Ghana. *Journal of Turkish World Studies*, 17(2), 141-162.

“Within the Akan groups, for instance, the political office was occupied by both men and women. Agnes Aidoo postulated that in the Akan politics, women held an important post; the office of the ohemaa, literally female ruler. The female leader derived her position from the matrilineal social organisation and had the power to confer political status on the male chief. The ohemaa occupies the senior of two stools, which serve jointly as the source of political authority in the state. She was required to hear all legal cases involving the sacred oath of the state and entitled to her separate court, where she was assisted by male and female counsellors and functionaries.”

Source C:

Extract from: Aidoo, A. A. (2022). Women in the history and culture of Ghana. Contemporary Journal of African Studies, 9(2), 187-213.

“In societies like the Ga, Dagomba, Nzima and Aowin where women controlled certain ritual practices and medicines as well as land, stool property, and regalia, the political role of women could be considerable. These women might not be seen debating issues with men in the chief’s council meeting but they could influence the decisions from behind the scenes. Among the Ga of south-eastern Ghana, descent is traced patrilineally and inheritance and succession pass mainly through the male line. The basis of social organisation was the patrilineage of ‘house’ called ‘we’. A number of these ‘houses’ confederated and formed a ‘town’. The patrilineal element in Ga society was, however, considerably modified by the fact that women held certain important ritual offices, succession to which passed only through the female line. Also women could trade independently and own land and other property which were inherited by their own children, with the daughters having controlling share.”

Now, answer the following questions. Remember to support all answers with specific references and quotations from the sources. Consider both explicit statements and implicit evidence in your analysis.

1. How do the sources differ in their description of women’s political roles in Akan society?
2. Compare the political authority of women in the Akan system with that of the Ga, Dagomba, Nzima and Aowin societies.
3. What common themes emerge across all three sources regarding women’s political power in pre-colonial Ghana?
4. Based on these sources, analyse how political authority was shared between men and women in pre-colonial Ghana.
5. How did inheritance systems (matrilineal vs patrilineal) affect women’s political power in different societies?
6. What evidence do the sources provide about women’s influence in decision-making processes?

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN GHANAIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

There have been aspects of Ghana's political system that have continued or changed over time. Table 5.3 below shows some the continuity and change in Ghanaian political systems

Table 5.3: Continuity or changes in Ghanaian political systems

Continuity	Changes
The presence of traditional leadership structures	T Transition from pre-colonial kingdoms to a modern nation-state
	G Gazetting of chiefs
	P Presence of the national house of chiefs
	T The role and participation of women

Continuity and Change in Ghanaian Political Systems

- The transition from pre-colonial kingdoms to a modern nation-state: Ghanaians ruled themselves before the advent of colonial rule, and during the colonial rule, there were traditional rulers who assisted colonial officials in administering Ghana. Today, Ghanaians still have traditional rulers assisting state government to govern the people. Some of these rulers include Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu I, Ya-Na Abukari Mahama II, etc.
- **Gazetting of chiefs:** the registration of chiefs or kings at the national house of chiefs to show legitimacy and prevent chieftaincy disputes.
- **The role and participation of women:** queen mothers are still recognised in traditional political structure. They nominate chiefs or kings to king-makers and cater for the welfare of women in their domain. Even some patrilineal kingdoms have adopted the office of the queen mother which did not exist in their territories example the Ga state.

Activity 5.6

1. With the knowledge you have acquired in the continuity and change in the Ghanaian political system, create a simple two-column chart with headings "Before" and "After." List two or three key features of the pre-colonial political system in Ghana (e.g. role of chiefs, importance of lineage) in the "Before" column. In the "After" column, list two or three key features of the modern Ghanaian political system (e.g. president, parliament). Present your response in this format.

Table 5.4: A two-column chart

'Before'	'After'
Example: Chiefs exercised executive power	President exercises executive power

2. We have found out that Pre-colonial leaders often had both political and religious power. Do you think modern traditional leaders have the same kind of authority? Why or why not? Based on your chosen stance, present your response in the chart below.
3. Working in groups of four, conduct a case study research on any one traditional political institution (e.g., Asante kingdom, Ga state) and:
 - a. Research its pre-colonial structure
 - b. Document how it has evolved
 - c. Identify what elements remain unchanged
 - d. Present findings to class

Hint: Interview Questions to Guide Research:

- How were leaders chosen then versus now?
 - What roles did women play then and now?
 - How has decision-making changed?
4. The role of traditional leaders can be controversial today. Some see them as a bridge between communities and the government, while others argue their power is outdated. Do you think there are ways for traditional leadership to adapt and remain relevant in the modern world? Why or why not?

FEATURES OF PRE-COLONIAL MEDICAL AND HEALTH PRACTICES IN GHANA

Before the arrival of Europeans and modern medical facilities, Ghanaians had developed sophisticated systems of healthcare that served their communities well. These traditional medical practices were deeply rooted in the cultural beliefs and natural resources available to different ethnic groups across the country. Healers, herbalists and traditional birth attendants played vital roles in maintaining the health and well-being of their communities through knowledge passed down through generations. The following are some key features of pre-colonial medical and health practices in Ghana.

Use of Herbs

The pre-colonial Ghanaians made use of specific herbs to cure diseases and ailments. Some herbs are edible whilst others are not edible. The availability of herbs was dependent on the vegetation zone of the people. This means that while some herbs were common in all parts of the country, other herbs were peculiar to specific areas. Herbs were boiled and drunk to cure some diseases. Other times, herbs were ground and applied to specific parts of the body that had boils or pains. Herbs were also squeezed into the nostrils of people for the cure of some diseases. Edible herbs were also chewed.

Diagnosis of ailments

The diagnosis of diseases formed a critical part of pre-colonial medical and health practices in Ghana. Traditional herbalists, diviners and spiritualists who were involved in healing used various diagnostic strategies. In the first place, some of them diagnosed diseases through observation. They looked at and examined the specific physical symptoms that were exhibited by the patient to tell what kind of diseases the person suffered. These symptoms may include fever, changes in skin colour, pain and swelling. With their years of practice and experience, they were able to diagnose the diseases. Other times, the healers also asked the patients to tell their stories about how they felt and when their disease began. After listening to the patient, the healers were able to diagnose what was wrong with the patient. Other healers resorted to divination and consultation with the spiritual realm to determine the cause of diseases and the cure for the disease. They used objects such as bones, cowrie shells and sacred objects to interpret the cause of certain diseases. Among the Ewe, this practice was called '*afakaka*.'

Holistic Treatment

Pre-colonial medical practices and healing were holistic. This means that rather than focusing on specific symptoms, the healers considered the whole being of the patient. The healers looked at the mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the patient. They sometimes used a combination of spiritual and physical treatments. The idea was to achieve the complete and total well-being of the patient.

Delivery of babies by traditional birth attendants

How do you think babies were delivered in Ghana when there were no hospitals, clinics or polyclinics? That was no problem at all. Do you know why? There were traditional birth attendants in every village and town. The traditional birth attendants (TBAs) were responsible for the delivery of babies. They were mostly women who were experienced in their profession. Most of them acquired the skill of delivering babies from their parents and grandparents. It was a female-dominated area even though there were some male practitioners, too. Some of these TBAs were herbalists themselves. The pregnant women normally stayed in their own home during the period of the pregnancy. They, however, visited the TBA occasionally for examinations or to obtain critical herbal medicine that relieved them of some pain and discomforts. Pregnant women who had difficulty in giving birth were confined to the home of the TBA for regular observation and treatment. The TBA usually applied some herbs on the stomach of the pregnant woman to ease her delivery. When the pregnant woman finally delivered the baby, the TBA helped to cut the umbilical cord of the baby. This ensured that the mother did not retain the placenta. If the mother were to retain the placenta, it could lead to her death. After this process, the TBA bathed the baby and applied some sweet-scented herbs to the baby. The TBAs also taught new and inexperienced mothers the skills and techniques of bathing babies and rubbing herbs on them. The TBA also taught the new mother how to handle the baby. The mother was then asked to go home with her baby or babies, but on the condition that she was healthy.

Nature as a source of healing

Pre-colonial Ghanaians also regarded nature as a source of healing. They valued green vegetation. They walked about, visiting forests and groves to admire nature. Others engaged in gardening and farming. Others hunted for small game. Nature as a source of healing helped them reflect and meditate.

Practitioners received payment in kind

In the pre-colonial period, the barter system was common. The exchange economy was introduced later. Do you understand the barter system? When you give out garri to your friend and she or he gives you shitor in return, you have both done the barter system. Health practitioners in the pre-colonial Ghana did not charge for their services. They regarded God, ancestors and the gods as the source of their power, knowledge and skills. For that matter, they did not deem it fit to charge patients to pay them anything. Instead, patients and their families normally appreciated the work of these practitioners with agricultural produce, gold, cloth, salt, animals, fowls and even human beings. In some areas, the healed person's family offered a young lady to the practitioner for marriage in appreciation of the healing. Other times, the healer married the healed woman as a wife.

Medical Practices were rooted in culture

Pre-colonial medical practices and healing were strongly rooted in the culture of the people. Their beliefs, values and practices informed their medical practices. Diseases were mostly thought to be punishment for disobedience of the gods or ancestors. Sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis and chlamydia were thought of as being punishments from the gods. Boils, especially on the leg, elephantiasis and even infertility, were said to be attacks by one's enemies. This meant that scientific causes of diseases were not particularly stressed. Still births and miscarriages were attributed to spiritual causes. It is these beliefs that informed the kinds of names they gave to some children. Names such as Abagyina, Donkor (Akan), Adukpo (Ewe), Dery (Dagaari) and Alemya (Nankari) were given to such children as a way of scaring death from killing them. These beliefs meant that infant and child mortality cases were common in the period. In most parts of Ghana, it is believed that mothers/ fathers of twins or twins were more competent in bone-related issues; hence, whenever someone had a dislocation, twins or their parents became the first port of call. The issue was then referred to a professional healer when it went beyond the twin or their parent.

Treatment of contagious diseases on the outskirts of the town or village

Pre-colonial Ghanaians classified diseases as contagious and non-contagious. The contagious ones were those diseases that could spread from one affected person to another person.

Discussion Task

Do you remember the outbreak of the Covid-19 in Ghana? Share your experience with your elbow partner. How did the government react? What about local communities? Would this have been the same in pre-colonial Ghana?

Activity 5.7

1. Based on your understanding so far, create a web diagram that shows the key features of pre-colonial medical practices in Ghana.
2. Based on the web diagram you have created, you and your elbow partners should discuss the key features of pre-colonial medical and healthcare practices in Ghana.
3. Plants played a significant role in traditional Ghanaian medicine. Suppose you were explaining this fact to a friend, describe how herbs and other plant materials were used to treat various health conditions and promote healing in pre-colonial Ghana.
4. We have seen that traditional healers used herbal remedies in the treatment of diseases. What other approaches might traditional healers have used to

treat illnesses in the pre-colonial period? You may contact your parents, teacher, library or the internet for some responses. We have seen that traditional Ghanaians made use of emotional and psychological practices in the treatment of diseases. Based on this understanding and your further research at the school library or the internet, demonstrate how the pre-colonial Ghanaian healers incorporated emotional and psychological practices into treatment.

INDIGENOUS HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

In Pre-colonial Ghana, traditional medical practitioners played a critical role in healthcare provision. These practitioners were highly respected in their communities and were sought after for their healing powers and knowledge of traditional medicine. While some of them acquired their skills and knowledge through dreams, others also acquired them from their elders. Other people acquired them out of observation and experimentation. There were those who acquired their skills through apprenticeship under experienced herbalists. Another group of practitioners acquired the skills through cultural transmission. In almost every village or town in Ghana, some families are noted for the treatment of certain diseases especially bone setting. Some of the groups of traditional medical practitioners in Pre-colonial Ghana included:

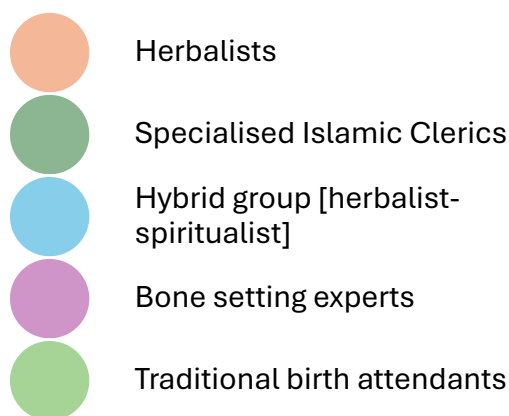


Fig. 5.3: Indigenous healthcare providers

Discussion Task:

Herbal medicine is still common in our country. They come in the form of ointments, syrups, soap, and tablets. What was your experience with the use of herbs, leaves and ointments during the Covid-19 period? Did you or anyone you know turn to herbal medicines to help with illness during the pandemic? Discuss with your elbow partner.

Activity 5.8

1. Based on your knowledge of the role of traditional healthcare providers, create a poster on any one of the indigenous healthcare providers (e.g. herbalist, TBA, etc.) detailing how they treated diseases. Show your poster to your classmates for their comments. Those of you who have access to the internet may post yours there. Others may also post them on the school notice board.
2. Now that you are aware that healthcare provision has changed from the pre-colonial period to the modern era, you and your elbow partner should try and compare the work of healthcare providers in Pre-colonial Ghana to the work of health workers in Ghana today. You may look at the following as guides:
 - Mode of training or acquisition of skills
 - Gender roles
 - Medicine types
 - Equipment used
 - Types of buildings used
 - Use of uniform
 - Regulation
 - Compensation or rewards

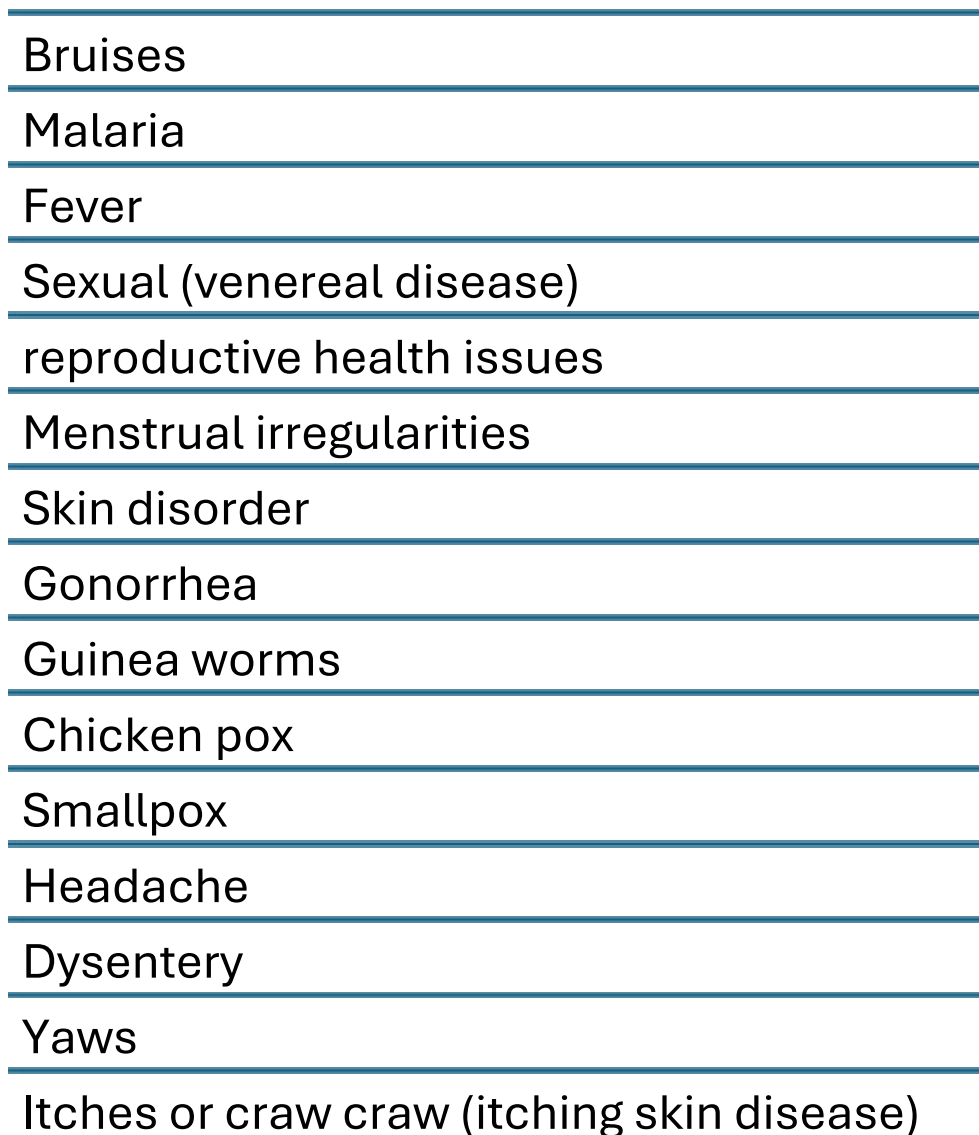
Table 5.5: comparing the work of healthcare providers in Pre-colonial Ghana to the work of health workers in Ghana today

Areas of Comparison	Healthcare Providers in Pre-Colonial Ghana	Health Workers in Ghana Today
Mode of training or skill acquisition		
Gender roles in healthcare provision		
Types of medicines used		
Where was/is healthcare provided?		
Use of uniforms		
Regulation and registration of practitioners and facilities		
Compensation or reward of practitioners		
Length of practice		
Patient care		
Ethical issues		

DISEASES AND MEDICINAL PLANTS USED TO CURE THESE DISEASES IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Diseases that were prevalent in pre-colonial Ghana

In pre-colonial times, herbal medicine was used to treat all kinds of ailments and diseases. These ailments and diseases included:



Bruises
Malaria
Fever
Sexual (venereal disease)
reproductive health issues
Menstrual irregularities
Skin disorder
Gonorrhoea
Guinea worms
Chicken pox
Smallpox
Headache
Dysentery
Yaws
Itches or craw craw (itching skin disease)

Fig. 5.4: Diseases that were prevalent in pre-colonial Ghana

Medicinal plants used in the pre-colonial era to provide health care

Sarcaparilla	• For the treatment of pox and venereal diseases.
Pawpaw leaves and seeds	• Used to treat typhoid fever and as a dewormer for both animals and humans.
Nim tree	• For the cure of fever.
Prekese	• Used for high blood pressure.
Orange peels	• The peels of oranges were burned and used as a mosquito coil.
Inner bark of the wawa tree	• To cure colic and other pains in the stomach.
Mint leaves (Nunum)	• For an upset stomach, mouthwash odour.

Fig. 5.5: Medicinal plants used in the pre-colonial era to provide health care

Activity 5.9 Disease Treatment Chart Project

1. Working in groups of 4-5, create an informative chart about pre-colonial diseases and treatments. Include the following information in your chart:
 - a. Disease descriptions
 - b. Detailed symptoms
 - c. Treatment methods
 - d. Herbal medicines used
 - e. Prevention methods

Activity 5.10 Historical Analysis

- Using the sources below and your knowledge, answer the following questions by comparing pre-colonial treatments with modern medical approaches:

Source A: Pre-colonial Plant-Based Treatments

Extract from interview with Sarah Affoah, 2017. Adu-Gyamfi, S. (2023). A discourse on individuals value for herbal medicine in Asante since the pre-colonial era. UJAH Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, 24(1), 83-115.

“Some herbs were sometimes freshly plucked, ground or beaten and directly applied on a wound and swellings. Examples of such herbs include ‘acheampon’ and ‘nunum’. Others were heated for a while before application; these included ‘nkaseenkasee’ leaves. In a similar manner, others were boiled and drunk like tea, ‘awonwono’ and ‘ntontini’ for treating malaria. ‘Nunum’ was for stomach upset whiles ‘akafem’ was for curing rashes. Akafem was also taken by pregnant women to ensure a healthy delivery.”

Source B: Modern Processing Methods

Extract from interview with Dr. Nti, 2017. Adu-Gyamfi, S. (2023). A discourse on individuals value for herbal medicine in Asante since the pre-colonial era. UJAH Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, 24(1), 83-115.

“Before any herb is used to produce a drug, the herb goes through various testing and processing to ascertain its pharmacopoeias. After the herbal preparations have been passed to possess medicinal properties, they are sent to the Food and Drugs Authority for authentication and approval. Practitioners make determinations concerning the right dosage; something which was a critical challenge within the indigenous medical milieu. Due to these developments including the emergence of herbal clinics, herbal medicines are prescribed for patients with specifics on the amount of dosage that is required for the treatment of specific diseases.”

- Analysis of the process of preparing medicine
 - How did the preparation methods of herbal medicine differ between pre-colonial and modern times?
 - What new elements have been introduced in modern herbal medicine processing?
 - Why were these changes necessary?
- Analysis of knowledge systems
 - What evidence suggests continuity in herbal medical knowledge?
 - How has traditional knowledge been adapted to meet modern standards?
 - What role do traditional preparation methods still play in modern practice?

4. Analysis of quality control measures
 - a. How were quality and effectiveness ensured in pre-colonial treatments?
 - b. What modern systems have been introduced to ensure drug safety?
 - c. Why was a standardisation of dosage important?

Activity 5.11: Herb Garden Project

- Choose a suitable location in your school compound with good sunlight and fertile soil for your medicinal herb garden.
 - Research common medicinal plants in your area and make a list of those you will grow, considering their traditional uses and growing requirements.
 - Prepare the garden bed by clearing weeds, turning the soil, and adding organic matter like compost or manure.
 - Create permanent labels showing each plant's local name, English name, and traditional medicinal uses.
 - Start a garden journal to document planting dates, growth progress, and care routines.
 - Photograph the plants at different growth stages and record their development.
1. Certain plants are grown in the house where you live or in your family house in your hometown. Think about some of these plants. List at least two of these plants that people might use for medicine. What ailments did these plants cure in the pre-colonial era? Present your answer in the table below:

Table 5.6: Plants people used for medicine and the type of ailment they cured

Plant	Type of ailment it cured in the pre-colonial era

2. With your knowledge in herbal plants so far, create a chart that shows different plants that were used to cure diseases in pre-colonial Ghana. How do you think people might have discovered which plants could be used as medicine.

METHODS OF PROVIDING HEALTH CARE IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

In the traditional medical system, methods involving the use of herbs and other natural materials, together with the application of spiritual and psychic abilities, were employed to treat ailments. The following were some of the methods used:

1. **Isolation of patients:** In traditional medical practices, patients were often isolated based on cultural beliefs that certain illnesses were caused by spiritual or supernatural forces. This isolation also helped to prevent the spread of contagious disease within the community, example of such contagious diseases were chickenpox, smallpox, measles and leprosy. By isolating patients, they could go through specific rituals or treatments without distractions from the outside world. Additionally, patients faced isolation due to the social stigma linked to certain diseases, especially those thought to be caused by witchcraft or curses. Some indigenous healers preferred to isolate patients because they believed that illnesses could worsen if someone with an “evil eye” saw them. Furthermore, conditions like medical health issues were seen as a disgrace to the family, so those patients were also isolated during their treatment.
2. **Prevention from spiritual afflictions:** These illnesses were thought to be caused by supernatural forces. As a result, patients participated in rituals to cleanse themselves. Water was commonly used in these cleansing rituals, representing purification. Traditional healers often gave charms or amulets that were believed to protect people from spiritual attacks or misfortunes
3. **Healing by proxy:** Healing by proxy involves a healer treating a patient indirectly through rituals, prayers or the use of objects that represent the patient. Thus, traditional healers may have invoked ancestors or spiritual entities to facilitate healing, believing that these forces can influence a patient’s health from a distance.
4. **Cutting open the skin:** This practice served different cultural and medical purposes. In some instances, skin was cut open to mark a person transition to adulthood or other social statuses. Medicines were sometimes inserted into the skin to protect such people from harm or attacks. Medically, some traditional healers made cuts to draw bad blood, believing that this could help treat certain diseases by removing impurities from the body.
5. **Drinking of medicine (concoction):** The practice of drinking herbal concoctions in traditional African healing practice were often rooted in cultural beliefs and practices. In traditional medical practice, drinking medicines (concoctions) were often used to treat a wide range of conditions, including fevers, infections, digestive issues and chronic illness. Thus, various ingredients such as herbs, roots, barks, parts of animals and other materials were used depending on their medicinal properties. Here herbs and other materials might have been boiled or steeped in water to extract their medical values. Some concoctions involved some fermentation process to enhance efficacy. Again, in some communities, concoctions were prepared and collectively consumed to reinforce societal bonds. The preparation

and consumption of concoctions often took place during significant cultural rituals or ceremonies.

6. **Psychological methods:** Traditional African healers were not only concerned about the treating physical illness, they also treated psychological illnesses which often had a spiritual dimension. Here the sick were made to believe that unless the spirits were satisfied, the afflicted person might not recover as expected. Thus, the healer divined and applied efficacious herbs to treat the patient, and this set the minds of the patient and his/her relatives at ease.
7. **Application of snuff:** This is a mixture of powdered tobacco and other herbs. It was sometimes used to treat nasal congestion and headaches. The nicotine in the tobacco can be a stimulant and it is often addictive.
8. **Rubbing of herbs:** This method involves using various herbs and plants to treat a range of ailments and promote overall wellbeing. Herbal rubs were often used to alleviate pain from arthritis, sprains and muscle strains. Rubbing of herbs was sometimes used in spiritual rituals, believed to cleanse the body and spirit.
9. **Smearing method:** This was a common practice in traditional African medicine. It involved applying herbal paste, oils or ointments to the skin for therapeutic and healing purposes. This method was mostly used to treat physical and spiritual ailments. Shea butter was often used as a base for such herbal mixtures.
10. **Enema:** This involved introducing liquids into the rectum for medical purposes. It was often administered to alleviate constipation, diarrhoea, fever and other illnesses. Women often used this practice to treat their children for various illnesses.
11. **Spiritual consultation:** This is an essential aspect of African traditional medical practice. Here the healers and practitioners assessed the spiritual well-being of individuals as part of their overall health. Methods used in this practice include divination, such as throwing of cowrie shells, using kola nuts or consulting oracles to receive messages or insight. Healers sometimes engaged in prayers, offerings and rituals to seek guidance from the ancestors.
12. **The use of charms and talismans:** These are used for various reasons such as protection and healing. They were mostly worn around the waist, arms, neck and some were woven into clothes. Charms and talismans were often associated with attracting good health, wealth and success. There are various names for charms used in treating ailments in Ghana; the Ewe refer to it as *dzoka*, the Akan refer to it as *suman*, and in Mampruli it is called *sabri*.

Activity 5.12

1. With your readings on the isolation method of healthcare provision in the pre-colonial era, explain the isolation method of healthcare delivery in pre-colonial Ghana.

2. We have observed that pre-colonial Ghanaians were particular about the spread of diseases especially the contagious ones. Based on your readings and further research, explain how illnesses spread in pre-colonial Ghana.
3. Consider the social and cultural reasons why isolation might have been practised in pre-colonial Ghana. Research traditional beliefs about illness and how they might have influenced isolation practices.
4. Herbs are common in the treatment of malaria in many parts of Ghana. With your knowledge of herbs such as Neem leaves in the treatment of Malaria, explain why the use of herbs as a method might be effective in treating malaria symptoms.

Activity 5.13: Source Analysis

1. Analyse the two sources carefully to compare medical practices in Northern and Southern Ghana during the pre-colonial period, showing similarities and differences in approaches to healing. Support your answers with specific evidence from the sources.

Source A: Southern Ghana Medical Practices

Extract from Pieter de Marees' Observations

“In Asante, according to Pieter de Marees, headache was treated with a kind of pap made out of green leaves with which they smeared the affected part or the place which hurt. Boils which could not open up after applying various medicines were opened by making three or four long cuts in them with a sharp knife, the pus allowed to ooze out, after which herbal medicine was applied to let the wounds cure and close up.”

Source B: Northern Ghana Medical Practices

Extract from document

“In northern Ghana, the traditional medical practitioners, especially those in the Muslim States, applied charms and talismans besides the use of herbs, roots and bark of trees. It was believed that the users of the charms or talismans were protected from contracting certain kinds of diseases. The charms or talismans also prevented the people from being hit by the enemy’s bullet.”

- a. What different medical practices are described in each region?
- b. What materials were used for treatment in each area?
- c. How were medical practices different in the North and South?
- d. Why do you think these differences existed?
- e. What does Source A tell us about surgical knowledge in the South?
- f. What role did spiritual beliefs play in Northern medical practices?

2. Study Source C below and answer the questions that follow:

Source C:

Extract from Pieter de Marees' botanical illustrations, 1602



Plants illustrated include:

- A. Sugar cane
- B. Corn (Maize)
- C. Rice
- D. Millet (used for bread)
- E. Herb with small red and black peas
- F. "Peterselie de maet"
- G. Ginger (used medicinally)
- H. Bean tree
- I. Aframomum melegueta (related to cardamom)

1. What medical plants are identified in Source C?
2. How do these plants connect to the treatments described in Sources A and B?
3. How does Source C help us understand the written accounts in Sources A and B?
4. What additional information does the illustration provide about pre-colonial medicine?
5. What types of plants were available for medical treatment?
6. How were different parts of plants used in healing?
7. Why were these particular plants important?

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRE-COLONIAL HEALTHCARE DELIVERY AND PRACTICES IN GHANA

1. **Traditional Birth Attendants:** Women played an important role in maternal care and child health. They were often members of the local communities; thus they were often accessible to pregnant women. Traditional birth attendants often gained their knowledge through apprenticeship with experienced practitioners. Some also acquired their knowledge because it was practiced in the family. They were knowledgeable to the extent that they could manage all pregnancy complications. For example, they ensured that the woman's placenta was not retained in the course of childbirth. This was because a retention of the placenta could lead to the death of the mother. Traditional birth attendants were referred to as *vixelawo* in Ewe, in Akan as *gye awoɔ*, and in Hausa as *suuna*.
2. **Herbalists and Healers:** Women healers effectively used herbs and other materials for healing. They treated not only physical problems but also spiritual issues. They often relied on local beliefs and practices in their diagnosis and healing methods. Being women, they have special knowledge and skills for treating illnesses related to women and children
3. **Caregivers:** Women played a vital role as caregivers in their communities, greatly contributing to the health and well-being of their members. In local areas, women were mostly seen as the ones who cared for sick family members. They usually held traditional knowledge, including healing practices. Women passed this knowledge about health to younger generations, ensuring that traditional medicine continued.
4. **Health Educators:** Women played an important role as health educators; they offered their rich knowledge on health to younger generations. The younger generations were taught medical practices such as how to care for sick babies and treat minor wounds. They also taught the younger generation common medicinal herbs which they could use to treat medical emergencies. For example, pawpaw seeds and leaves were used to treat stomach ailments and fever, *chromolaena odorata* (*acheampong* leaves) were used to treat fresh wounds, cassava leaves were also used to stop the flow of blood when a person was wounded. Again, in cases where a person accidentally consumed poison they were educated to drink palm oil to cure the situation.
5. **Spiritual Healers:** The spiritual healer was a person who had successfully undergone training under a reputable shrine and possessed a keen knowledge of the healing and mystical powers in herbs. The spiritual healer was attached to a shrine and with her knowledge of plant or material medicine and spiritual matters dealt with physical or spiritual ailments.
6. **Guardians of Traditional Knowledge:** The contribution of women was essential in maintaining cultural heritage and ensuring the continuation of traditional healing practices. Thus, women acted as custodians of oral tradition by handing down their rich knowledge of indigenous medical practice.

Activity 5.14

1. Using what you have learned about the role of women in pre-colonial healthcare, as well as your knowledge of the role of traditional medicine in pre-colonial Ghana, compose a praise-poem for women health-care givers.
2. Make a small group with your classmates and discuss the different roles that women played in healthcare. Which do you think was the most important in pre-colonial Ghana and why? Rank them on the table below with justifications.

Table 5.7: The different roles women played in healthcare

	Traditional Role	Explanation of your ranking
Most Important		
Least Important		

3. Next, in your groups, discuss the similarities and differences between the roles that women and men played in healthcare in pre-colonial Ghana. Make sure you explain your answers and support them with details.

Activity 5.15 Healthcare Roles Mapping

1. In small groups, create a visual map showing different roles of women in healthcare:
 - a. Place “Women in Healthcare” in the centre
 - b. Create branches for each role:
 - Traditional Birth Attendants
 - Herbalists and Healers
 - Caregivers
 - Health Educators
 - Spiritual Healers
 - Knowledge Guardians

- c. Under each branch, add:
- Key responsibilities
 - Skills needed
 - Tools/materials used
 - Local names in different languages

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF INDIGENOUS MEDICAL PRACTICES IN GHANA

Benefits of Indigenous Medical Practices in Pre-Colonial Ghana

Indigenous medical practices provided the people with many benefits. Some of the benefits included:

1. **Holistic approach in treating diseases:** Traditional healers typically considered physical and spiritual dimensions in providing a holistic approach to healthcare. Hence, most indigenous medical practitioners employed a variety of methods to treat their patients effectively. Indigenous medical practitioners were conversant in the treatment of ailments such as fractured or sprained bones, psychological issues, asthma and treatment of wounds.
2. **Easily accessible:** Indigenous medical practitioners lived in the communities, making them easily accessible. This proximity contributed to the affordability of traditional medicine, as patients did not need to travel long distances to obtain medical care. Additionally, the herbs and other materials used in indigenous medical practice were readily available, being sourced from the local environment.
3. **Deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture and traditions:** Indigenous medical practitioners held the belief that illnesses resulted from the displeasure of gods and the spirits of ancestors. They also recognised that physical factors could contribute to health issues. African traditional medical practices incorporated rituals, prayers and community involvement. These practices were familiar to those seeking medical treatment, making it easier for them to engage in the healing process.
4. **Relied on natural resources:** African traditional medicine heavily depended on resources readily available in the environment. Practitioners made use of herbs and other materials readily found in the local environment. Thus, plant-based medicine and parts of animals (bones, fats and organs) were used in providing the healthcare needs of the community. Indigenous healers in northern Ghana used herbs and other resources from their surroundings to treat people, while those in the southern part also used materials available in their environment for healing. These would be different based on the flora and fauna in each of the different environments.

Challenges associated with indigenous medical practices in pre-colonial Ghana included:

1. **Limited Scientific Validation:** Preventive measures played a significant role in indigenous medical practice. However, these preventive methods were often inadequate and unscientific. In some instances, practices such as wearing charms, amulets and talismans along with observing certain religious customs, were believed to help avoid specific ailments. These forms of prevention could not effectively stop various illnesses. Additionally, the dosages of indigenous medicine were frequently not measured, which could result in overdoses, potentially complicating the patient's condition further.
2. **Inadequate Documentation:** Indigenous medical practices have traditionally been passed down orally. Therefore, if a practitioner dies without teaching someone else his or her knowledge, that valuable information is lost. Again, because Africans had not developed the art of documentation, most medical knowledge was passed down by word of mouth. As a result, there was a high chance that important steps in preparing herbal medicine could be forgotten through memory loss or other factors.
3. **Unnecessary Competition:** Due to competition amongst indigenous medical practitioners, they are unable to cooperate with each to learn the vast knowledge that they have gathered over time. Furthermore, due to the spiritual nature associated with indigenous medical practice, there were often rivalry amongst practitioners to reduce the efficacy of their medicines.
4. **Limited Resources:** Although the materials used by indigenous medical practitioners was found in the environment some of these materials could only be acquired by performing certain rituals. These rituals often came at a cost to the sick person and his family. Again, in some instances the sick person and his family had to pay in cash or in kind in order to seek healthcare. This limited access to healthcare acquisition.
5. **Stigmatisation from Western medical systems:** Indigenous medical practices often faced negative perception when compared to Western medical practices. There is a tendency of seeing western medical practices as superior, thereby leading to the marginalisation of indigenous medical practice. With the adoption of western education, religion and cultural practices by most Ghanaians, patients may often choose western medicine over indigenous medicine due to the superstitions attached to indigenous medical practitioners. The packaging of indigenous medicine is also often not attractive as compared to western medicine.

Activity 5.16

1. Indigenous medical practices have proven beneficial to Ghanaians. Despite their importance, some people also have reservations about them. With the understanding that indigenous medical practices have both positive aspects and negative aspects, complete the table below.

Table 5.8: Positive and negative aspects of indigenous medical practices

“Good things” about indigenous medical practices	“Not-so-good things” about indigenous medical practices

2. There are many forms of indigenous medical practices in Ghana. Let this understanding inform you to investigate two specific examples of indigenous medical practices. Your investigation should include what the treatment is for and how it works. What are the potential limitations of this practice? Present your response in the chart below.

Table 5.9: Indigenous medical practices, treatments and limitations

Indigenous Medical practices	What the treatment is for	How the treatment works	Limitations of this practice

3. While some people prefer indigenous medical practices, other people also prefer modern medical practices. With this understanding, hold a debate with your peers on the motion that “Indigenous medical practices should not be discontinued.”
4. Why do you think some people are hesitant to use herbal remedies? Present your answer as a poster or web diagram.
5. New medications are being developed every now and then, but why might indigenous knowledge of plants be valuable for developing new medications? Prepare a PowerPoint presentation/ poster on the benefits and challenges of indigenous medical practices. You may ask for help from your classmates or friends.

Activity 5.17

Now that you are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of traditional medicine and Western medicine, go ahead to explain two advantages and two disadvantages of using traditional medicine together with Western medicine. Consider factors such as cost, effectiveness and cultural significance as your prompts. Your answers may be presented in the format below:

Table 5.10: Comparison of Traditional medicine and western medicine in terms of advantages and disadvantages

Prompts	Traditional medicine		Western medicine	
	Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cost				
Effectiveness				
Cultural significance				

IRON-WORKING TECHNOLOGY IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Pre-colonial Ghana demonstrated remarkable sophistication in arts and technology. Long before European contact, various communities had developed advanced technological processes and artistic traditions that served both practical and cultural purposes. The art and technological industries included iron smelting in areas like Tantum and Akpafu, brass casting traditions, and sophisticated cloth weaving centres in places like Bonwire and Agortime-Kpetoe. In this lesson, we will focus on ironworking technology in pre-colonial Ghana.

Sources of Iron

Iron was obtained from two main sources: local iron ore and iron brought in by European traders. Laterite (soil containing iron-bearing rocks) was found in different parts of the country. Archaeologists discovered sites that contained rich deposits of surface iron ore, enabling the local people to develop the craft. Coastal populations, especially from Tantum (Otuam) to Fete in the Central Region and also Akpafu and Santrokofi in the Oti Region, Pusu and Navrongo in the Upper East Region Ghana, were areas where the industry was widely practised.

The chart below shows some of the materials used in producing iron tools:

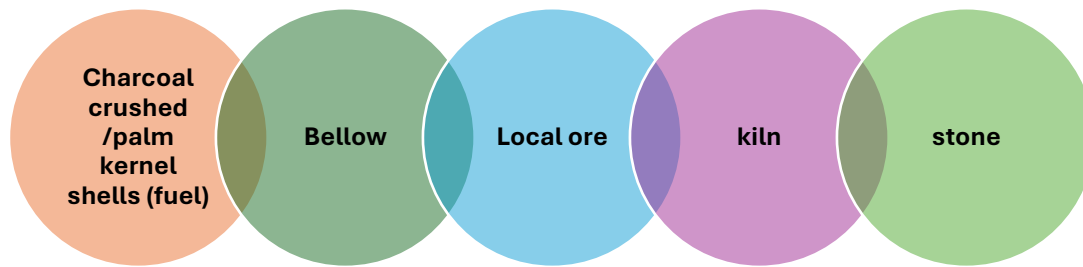


Fig. 5.6: Some materials used in producing iron tools

Methods of traditional iron-working in pre-colonial Ghana

Let us now discuss the various processes involved in Iron-working in Ghana.

1. **The Collection of Iron Ore:** The first stage is collecting iron ore from laterite or soil containing iron-bearing rocks. Ironworkers collected the laterite from rich stones, sometimes digging them. They then collected Iron ore modules from shallow pits, which were sunk into laterite and smelted in simple furnaces.
2. **Smelting furnace:** The second stage of the process is the smelting furnace. In this stage, the Iron workers produced smelting furnaces. The furnace was a circular clay oven structure raised to a high level with a trench dug below the ground. Other people also used stones to construct the furnace. The furnace was also fitted with bellows. The local blacksmiths manufactured the furnaces themselves. This was to ensure that it was suitable to them.
3. **Bellowing and fuelling:** The third stage was bellowing and fuelling. In this stage, stones were arranged in special ovens. They were fitted with bellows and with a space created to collect molten iron. The blacksmiths used varieties of fuel sources including charcoal, firewood, palm shells. The process required a high temperature of fire. A high temperature was needed to melt metals or to bring them to a stage where they could be forged or shaped. As a result, the blacksmith used the bellows to fan the fire aggressively. The bellows pumped air into the furnace. This increases the oxygen supply which increased the process of combustion. Bellows also helped to control the temperature of the furnace. Bellows also ensured that the blacksmith did not use too much fuel. Bellows allowed the blacksmith or metallurgist to control the intensity and focus of the heat precisely.
4. **Collection of the Iron:** This marked the last stage of the process. The high heat temperature caused the iron to melt. The melting process took away the impurities. After this process, the blacksmith allowed the molten iron to cool off for a while. This made it become solidified. Later, the blacksmith collected the hardened iron from the bottom of the blast furnace. The molten iron is also called 'hot iron.' The blacksmith then made tools and weapons of his liking out of the hardened iron.

Activity 5.18

1. Following the discussions we have had so far in this lesson, breakdown the processes involved in iron technology including the tools used for production. Present your responses in a chart of your liking.
2. Based on the lesson which includes iron tools, investigate a specific type of iron tool or weapon used in pre-colonial Ghana. Consider the following questions as prompts to guide you:

Table 5.11

Question	Response
What was the tool used for?	
How did its design and function relate to the ironworking techniques of the time?	
Are there any cultural symbols or designs incorporated into the tool?	

3. There is evidence to the effect that pre-colonial Ghanaians were advanced in technology. How did the environmental features help pre-colonial Ghanaians to advance technologically?

Activity 5.19: Iron Production Flow Chart

Create a detailed flow chart showing the iron production process:

- a. Draw boxes for each stage:
 - Collection of Iron Ore
 - Smelting Furnace
 - Bellowing and Fuelling
 - Collection of Iron
- b. Under each stage, include:
 - Materials needed
 - Tools used
 - Process description
 - Time required (estimate)

Activity 5.20: Iron Production Sites Mapping

On the map of Ghana below



- a. Mark and label the following iron production centres:
 - Tantom (Otuam) to Fete
 - Akpafu and Santrokofi
 - Pusu and Navrongo
- b. Create a key showing:
 - Iron ore deposits
 - Production centres
 - Trade routes

BRASS CASTING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Brass Casting

Brass casting was another important craft in pre-colonial Ghana. Brass, an alloy made from copper and zinc, was highly valued for its durability and aesthetic appeal. The process of brass casting in pre-colonial era involved several steps. First, craftsmen/women would create a clay mould in the shape of the desired object. They would then heat the mould and pour molten brass into it. Once the brass had cooled and solidified, the mould would be broken to reveal the finished product. Brass casting was used to produce a wide range of items, including jewellery, ornaments, ceremonial objects and household utensils. These objects held cultural and symbolic significance, often representing wealth, status or religious beliefs. Brass is a durable and corrosion-resistant metal. Brass items last longer and do not easily suffer wear and tear. Brass items were also valuable in trade. Brass was also used to make daily items such as bells, weights and tools.

Discussion Activity

Do you have a bell in your school? Take a look at it to identify the metal used in making it. Brass casting demonstrated the technological innovation of pre-colonial Ghanaians. Skilled brass casters were highly respected within the community for their ability to create intricate and beautiful pieces.



Fig. 5.7: Kudoku, casted from Brass

Methods of Brass Casting

Lost-Wax Casting: The lost wax technique was the primary technique used in brass casting. The brass casters made a model of the item in wax. They then covered it with clay after which they heated it. The heat made the wax melt away. It left behind a mold into which molten brass was poured.

Mould Reuse: Another method used was called mould reuse. This was less common. In some cases, moulds were reused to create multiple items. This reflected the efficiency of craft and the skills of the artisans.



Fig. 5.8: An image of indigenous brass works

Activity 5.21

1. Design a chronological chart to represent the steps involved in brass casting. You may use your hand or computer to draw it.
 - a. We have mentioned the lost wax method as one of the methods in brass casting. What is this method about?
 - b. In simple but clear sentences, state the steps involved in this process using simple sketch or diagram to illustrate your steps.
2. Heat is an important requirement in brass casting. Why do you think it was important to heat the mould before pouring in the molten brass?
3. With the aid of a library or internet search, use the map below to locate and mark the major brass casting centres in pre-colonial Ghana. You may also use the computer to generate your own map and mark the major brass casting centres in pre-colonial Ghana on it.



Fig. 5.9: Major brass casting centres in pre-colonial Ghana

4. Finishing is an important stage in product manufacturing. This is what makes the product look attractive and appealing to customers. What steps would you follow to ensure that your finished brass product is smooth and free of defects? Present your responses in either a computer-generated chart or a hand-designed chart.

LEATHERWORKING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Leatherwork

Leatherwork was a significant craft in pre-colonial Ghana which provided essential items such as clothing, footwear, bags, knife-sheaths, sword-sheaths, mats, drum covers, hats, saddles for horses etc. The process of leatherworking began with the preparation of animal hides. The hides were soaked, cleaned and treated with various substances to remove hair, soften the leather and prevent decay. Skilled craftsmen/women then cut and sewed the leather pieces together, often using decorative stitching techniques. Leatherworkers also employed techniques such as embossing, dyeing and tooling to create intricate patterns and designs on the leather. Leatherworking in pre-colonial Ghana required a deep understanding of the properties of different animal hides and the ability to work with precision and attention to detail. For people who engaged in leather works, it provided them with a source of employment and revenue. It was also an item of trade. In Northern Ghana, leather was and is still used for the enskinment of chiefs.



Fig. 5.10: An image of animal skin being prepared for leather works



Fig. 5.11: An image of finished leather works

Activity 5.22

1. Describe at least one critical stage in the production of any leatherwork.
2. Describe the stages in the production of leather objects. Use this chart for the description.

Table 5.12

Stages in leather production	Description

3. Assume yourself as a leatherworker in pre-colonial Ghana. What different types of objects might you create using leather? List your objects in this table and explain your ideas.

Table 5.13

Leather objects	Explanation

4. Discuss the processes of leatherwork production in pre-colonial Ghana with your elbow partner. Consider these questions as a guide to your discussion:
- What kind of animal skins were used?
 - How were the skins prepared?
 - What tools were used for processing the leather?
5. Investigate a specific step in leatherwork production with your elbow partner and share your findings with other groups. Remember to explain the process in detail.
6. We have seen how important leather production was to the pre-colonial Ghanaians. Why do you think leather was a useful material for people in pre-colonial Ghana?

CLOTH WEAVING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Before Cloth Weaving

Before the development of cloth weaving, the first forms of cloth were produced either from the skin of large animals or from the bark of the tree known in Akan as 'Kyenkyen'. *Kyenkyen* was the raw material used for the production of cloth.

Producing Skin Cloth

Some of the first forms of cloth produced in Ghana were from the skins of large animals. The local people hunted and killed animals, the skin of the animal was dried and used in making clothing items such as footwear, talisman and cloths. Cloth was not just functional; it held symbolic meanings, representing social status, identity, and cultural heritage. Figure below shows the processes involved in producing skin cloth.

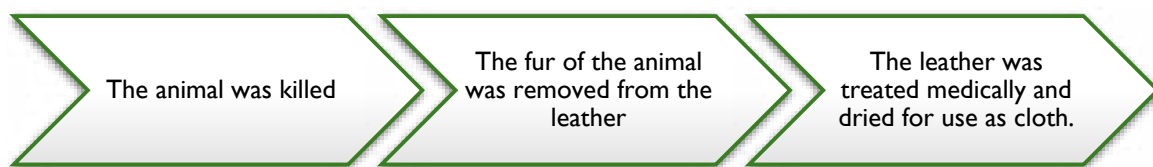


Fig. 5.12: Processes of producing skin cloth

Producing cloth from the bark of trees

Clothes were also produced from tree bark. Long, narrow strips of bark were removed, soaked in water and then beaten until they were soft enough to be used for clothing. Figure 5.8 shows the processes involved in producing cloth from the bark of trees.

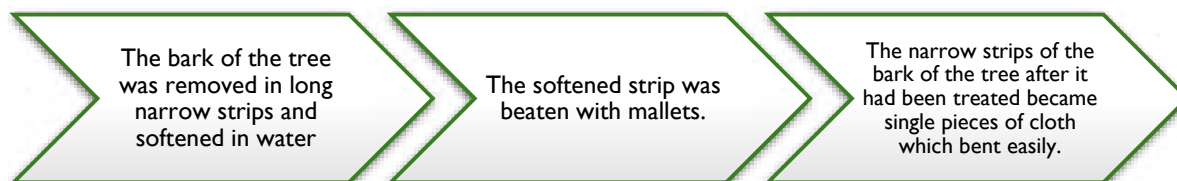


Fig. 5.13: Producing cloth from the bark of trees

Cloth Weaving

Cloth weaving was highly developed in the savannah as well as the forest belt of Ghana before the coming of the Europeans. The weaving of clothes was a very laborious process. The arts of spinning and weaving became important with the introduction of cotton as the raw material for the production of clothes. After the threads had been fitted into the loom, the hands and feet were used to operate the traditional looms. The cloths were initially woven in long strips. After the weaving had been completed, they were sewn together with needles to produce larger cloths. Having finished the clothes,

they were often dyed in many colours. Sometimes, some were painted with beautiful designs.

Weaving of cloth became the occupation of men and women who possessed the gift of weaving. Through apprenticeship with skilled weavers, many people acquired the skill. It then became a money-making business in many areas in Ghana, particularly in Northern territories, Asante (Bonwire / Adanwomase) and Eweland (Agbozume/ Agortime-Kpetoe)

Traditional cloths like the *Kente* and *Adinkra* were exported to neighbouring states and kingdoms. The cloth was used as a medium of exchange in the pre-colonial period. Traditional cloth was bartered for commodities from other states. Chiefs and other important personalities often wore very rich products, like the *Kente* and *fugu*. Many people wore them for social gatherings. The traditional cloth-weaving industry also brought a boom to local cotton cultivation. Cotton farmers were provided with ready markets for their produce.

Dyeing of clothes

Traditionally, dyes were prepared from barks, roots and leaves of trees which were boiled with the material. For example, the bark of the mango tree produced yellow dyes.

Tie-Dyeing

In this process, cloth was folded and tied or bunched around stones and ties before dyeing. When this was done, the dye covered the cloth in an uneven pattern. It might even have sections of the cloth undyed.

Resist Dyeing

In this technique, the cloth was covered with a paste made out of starch. Patterns could be drawn through the starch so that at the dyeing stage, the dye would only affect the parts of the cloth that were not covered with starch. Sometimes, a metal stencil in which shapes had been cut could be used instead of starch.

Batik

This was an art of textile designing which was produced by a negative dyeing method. It was marked out in wax (resist dyeing) before the fabric was dipped so that the waxed portions did not absorb the dye and stood out in the original colour of the fabric. Originally, hot wax was applied to the fabric by a shaped strip of bamboo.

Dyeing played an interesting role in the history of customs in most Ghanaian indigenous societies. For instance, the yellow colour in the traditional dyeing industry stood for honour, royalty and wealth. They were, therefore, used mainly by traditional rulers. Red meant bravery, courage, strength and endurance. This colour was sometimes used for war dresses. Black stood for grief and sorrow and was used for mourning cloths.

Blue was for peace, piety and sincerity. Green stood for youth, hope and fertility or growth. It was mostly used for puberty rites.

Dyes were important in the cane and straw basket and mat industries. Such crafts were decorated with dyes. Traditional dyeing was a very profitable business for many people. The commonest one was the dyeing of *koben* which was a popular mourning cloth in the Akan traditional society. The traditional dyeing industry served as employment avenues for the youth. The manufacturing of Adinkra and Kente cloths at Bonwire in Asante, for instance, attracted many young boys and girls to the area to look for employment.

The dyeing industry also produced items which came to serve as substitutes for the imported foreign dyes. Many of the traditional dyes were also exported to neighbouring states. The industry was also important for the fact that old and new clothes were often re-dyed. This usually gave old clothes some new appearances.

Activity 5.23

Click on this link to watch a documentary on the celebration of the Agbamevor (Kente) Festival of the chiefs and people of the Agortime-Kpetoe in the Volta Region.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJQ1qOgK5po>

Fill out the table below after watching the video and discuss it with your classmates.

Table 5.14: Comments on a video on Agbamavor Festival of the chiefs and people of Agortime-Kpetoe

Colour of the Kente cloth	Design patterns	Machine used for weaving	Use of the Kente cloth
Your comments on the video:			

Activity 5.24

1. Cloth weaving involved different tools and techniques. Discuss the tools and techniques involved in cloth weaving in the pre-colonial era.
2. Cloth weaving offered important opportunities for people. Investigate the social and economic significance of cloth weaving in pre-colonial Ghana.
3. With the aid of the map of Ghana below, locate the following cloth-producing areas: *Agbozume*, *Bonwire*, *Tamale* and *Agortime-Kpetoe*.



Fig. 5.14: Places in pre-colonial Ghana where cloth weaving were predominant

4. What materials were used for weaving cloth in pre-colonial Ghana and why?
5. What were two steps involved in the process of weaving cloth in pre-colonial Ghana?
6. We have so far learnt that in Ghana, cloth weaving was predominantly done in Bonwire, Agbozume/Agortime-Kpetoe and Northern Ghana in the pre-colonial times. Though all these areas were noted for cloth weaving, techniques differed among them. How did cloth weaving techniques differ across different ethnic groups of pre-colonial Ghana? Use these prompts for your response.
 - Design patterns
 - Colour combinations
 - Techniques used
 - Yarn (thread type)

Table 5.15: How cloth weaving techniques differ across different ethnic groups of pre-colonial Ghana

Areas of difference	Bonwire	Agbozume/Agortime -Kpetoe	Northern Ghana
Design patterns			
Colour combinations			
Techniques used			
Yarn (Thread type)			

Extended Activity

It would be excellent if you could have a real feel for the reality of cloth weaving. If you can, you and your classmates should go on a on a field trip/ virtual field trip to a cloth weaving industry in or around your community. Following the trip, write and present a report on the processes of making art and craft works.

Table 5.16: Report on a field/virtual trip to a cloth weaving centre

What was the setup of the place?	
Which tools are used for the weaving?	
Which materials are used for the weaving?	
Are men, women, and children involved in the weaving?	
What techniques are used in cloth weaving?	
What are the colour combinations like?	
What are the design patterns used	
What is the meaning of the symbols used?	
Present your field trip/virtual trip report here	

GOLD MINING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA



Fig. 5.15: Gold

Gold is a valuable metal that shines brightly when refined. For many years, it was the richest mineral with which Ghana was associated. Modern Ghana was formerly called the Gold Coast because of the abundant gold that the Portuguese explorers and traders obtained from the coast.

Gold was obtained from rocks that contained the ore. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the metal was extracted from alluvial material deposited on river terraces. Rocks on riverbanks which contained gold were also broken up by the process of weathering. The gold was then deposited in rivers and streams.

Gold was mined in different areas across the country. These areas included: Ashanti, Bono, Ahafo, Eastern, Western, Central and Northern Regions.

Methods of Gold Extraction



Fig. 5.16: Gold mining regions in Ghana

Panning

This was the most common method for extracting alluvial gold from riverbeds. The process of mining gold with panning was that the miner would use shallow pans and scoop up sediments from the riverbanks. By spinning the pan, lighter materials would be washed away, leaving behind denser gold particles.

Digging

This process began by breaking through the earth's crust. The next step involved using simple hand tools to dig into the compact alluvial layer below. A wooden container was then employed to extract water or the sand containing the gold deposits. Bowls or baskets were used to wash the sand from the gold. Additionally, rocks were sometimes broken into smaller pieces and then crushed to separate the gold from the rock.

Activity 5.25

- Concerns are being raised about the destruction that mining activities are causing to the environment. Based on these concerns, compare the level of destruction between pre-colonial gold mining and modern gold mining times in Ghana. Use these points for prompts:
 - Deforestation
 - Water pollution
 - Land degradation

Table 5.17: Comparison of gold mining practices between pre-colonial times and modern times in Ghana.

Areas of concern	Pre-colonial gold mining practices in Ghana	Modern gold mining practices in Ghana
Deforestation		
water pollution		
Land degradation		

- Poems convey special messages especially on social issues. Based on the environmental issues we are faced with now with regard to gold mining, compose a poem on how knowledge of gold mining activities in the pre-colonial era can be used to ensure the sustainability of natural resources in Ghana today.
- With the aid of your school library, textbooks, or the internet (if you can have access), investigate panning and digging as methods of gold mining. Create a detailed poster that includes not only the steps involved in the method but also the tools used and potential challenges faced by miners

4. Now that you are familiar with gold mining in pre-colonial times and gold mining in modern times, compare and contrast the effectiveness and limitations of panning and digging methods in pre-colonial gold mining.
5. With your level of awareness about the environmental effects of mining, compare pre-colonial gold mining methods to modern techniques, considering advancements and environmental regulations.
6. Gold was an important and valuable item to people and states in the period before Colonialism. With this insight, how will you explain the importance of gold in the life of pre-colonial people?

WOOD CARVING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Wood carving was a significant craft in pre-colonial Ghana. Carved wooden objects serving both functional and decorative purposes. Wood carving was carried out in the forest areas. In Ghana, wood carving was done in areas such as Bono, Ahafo, Bono East, Western and Ashanti Regions.

Traditional wood carvers depended on tools such as, axe (adze), cutlass, chisel, metal scrapers, knife, etc. The wood carvers used hard woods such as wawa, sese, Nyamedua, odum and Ofram.



Fig. 5.17: An image of a wood carver

Methods or Processes Involved in Wood Carving

Wood carving is a significant traditional art form in Ghana, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of the indigenous people. Below are the key steps involved in the wood carving process:

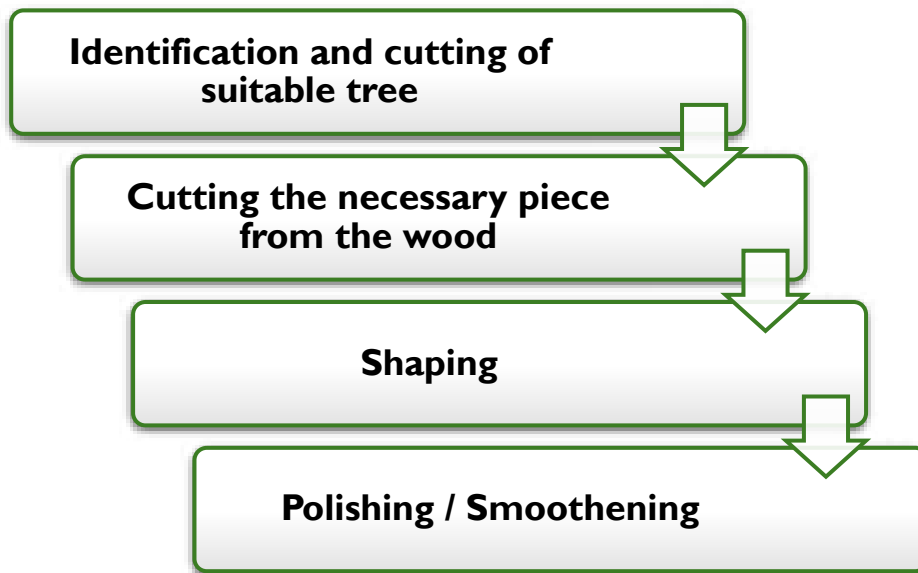


Fig. 5.18: Types of tools and woods used in carving

1. **Identification and cutting of suitable trees:** The trees were identified, and rituals were performed for some trees, such as Odum. Carvers chose durable and suitable types of wood, such as mahogany, teak, or ebony, based on the desired outcome of the craft they wanted to create. The bark of the tree was removed, leaving the hardwood to be used.
2. **Cutting the necessary piece from the wood:** The selected wood is cut into manageable sizes, removing any unwanted sections. The tree was mostly cut, depending on the objects that the carver wanted to produce.
3. **Shaping:** The wood is cut into rough blocks or planks, ensuring they are manageable for carving. Carvers often sketch designs directly on the wood surface or use templates to outline the desired shapes and patterns. To achieve the final product, larger tools like knives and chisels were used in order to remove excess wood to create the rough shape of the piece. Carvers later switched to the use of smaller tools to bring out intricate designs in the final product. If the piece consisted of multiple parts, they were assembled to form the final product. Many shapes reflected cultural symbols, mythological figures or everyday life items.
4. **Polishing/Smoothing:** Natural oils or waxes may have been applied to protect the wood and highlight its natural beauty. After achieving the desired shape, the surface was smoothed using sandpaper or other abrasive materials. The final carved product was smoothed, decorated and sometimes polished to protect the items from termites or other insects. They were also polished to prevent them from cracking

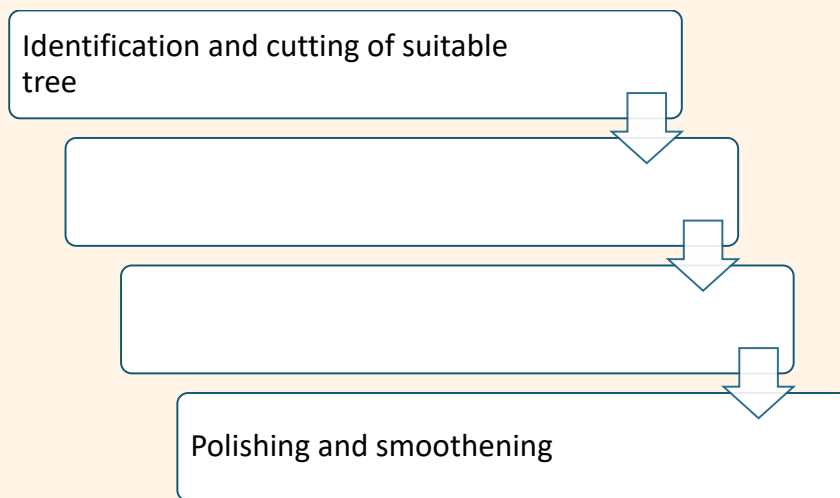
and to beautify them. Furthermore, the carved objects were polished to prevent them from getting rotten.

Activity 5.26

1. Watch the documentary on wood carving and discuss with a classmate your observations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrjlq7LGhIg>

2. Complete the flowchart below with the processes involved in wood carving.



3. Discuss the processes involved in wood carving in the pre-colonial era within a small group. Be guided by these questions in your discussion:
 - What type of wood was used?
 - How did carvers choose their tools?
 - What were some common objects carved from wood?
4. With the lessons so far in wood carving, visit your school library, textbook or the internet to investigate and explain how wood carving techniques or styles might have differed across various regions of pre-colonial Ghana. Provide a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of wood carving in pre-colonial Ghanaian societies. Use the following as prompts:
 - Types of woods available
 - Types of tools used
 - Purposes of the wood carving (drums, canoe, religious items)
 - The spiritual value of craft

Present your responses in this table.

Table 5.18: How wood carving techniques or styles might have differed across various regions of pre-colonial Ghana

	Southern Ghana	Northern Ghana
Types of woods available		
Types of tools used		
Purposes of the wood carving (drums, canoe, religious items)		
The spiritual value of craft		
How will you explain the cultural significance of wood carving in pre-colonial Ghanaian societies?		

5. What were the tools used in woodcarving and what were some of the objects that were made? State your points in this table.

Table 5.19: Tools and objects of wood carving

Tools for wood carving	Objects of wood carving
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

6. Some people believe that preserving traditional crafts such as woodcarving is important. Why do you think this might be the case? Can you think of any challenges to preserving such crafts? Consider the following as prompts

BEAD MAKING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Bead making was highly valued in the pre-colonial period. Precious beads were worn by the ruling classes and nobles as ornaments. Beads were also generally worn on special occasions such as festivals, naming ceremonies and marriage ceremonies. Among the notable beads which were produced, according to the Akan were: Amakwatia, Abodom, Atia, Bota [aggrey beads], Dowu, Nyankyereman.

Process of bead making

Beads were manufactured from special clay or granite stones. The special clay was moulded into the required shape through the process known as *cire perdue* or 'lost wax'. The object was then heated by fire, and after it had cooled down, it was polished. In the early seventeenth century, the coastal peoples, especially the people of Elmina, were engaged in polishing and cleaning beads brought into the country by the Europeans. The chart below summarises the processes of bead making in pre-colonial times.

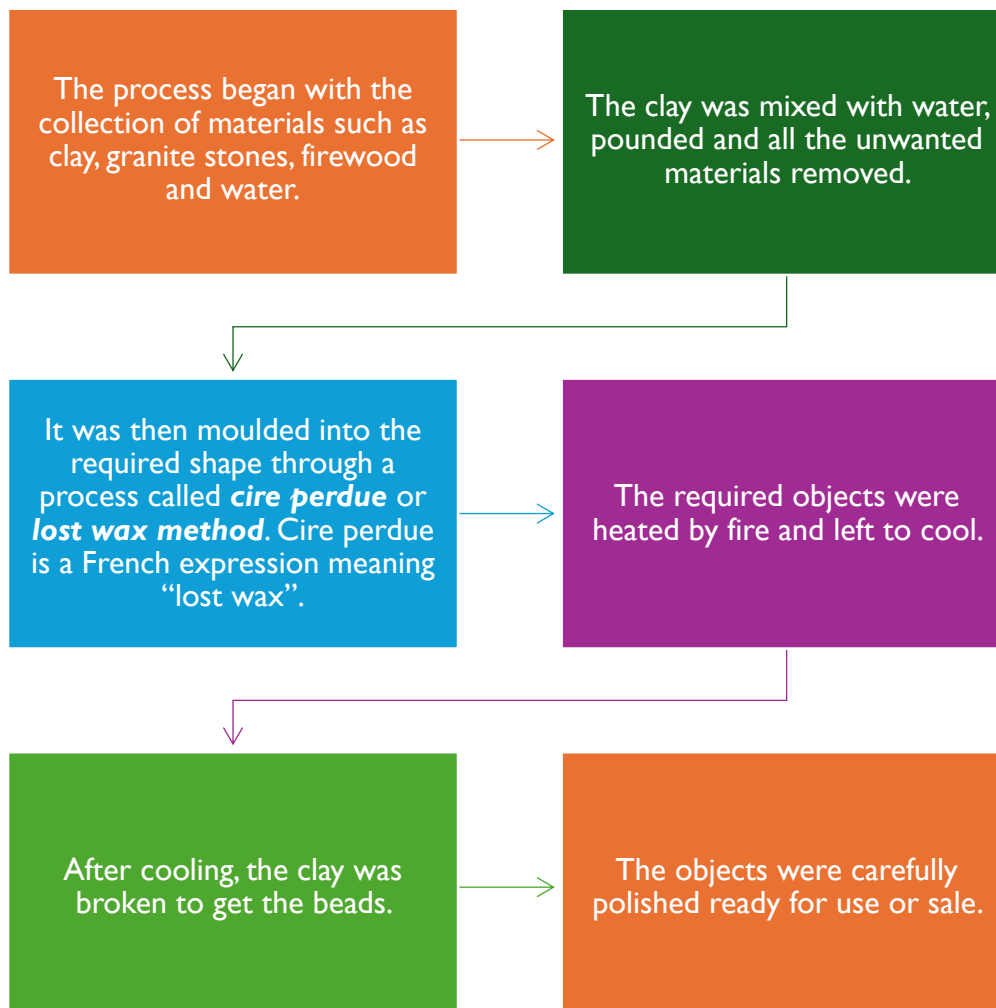


Fig. 5.19: Processes of bead making

Activity 5.27

1. Pre-colonial Ghanaians loved and produced various types of beads. Describe at least three of the types of beads that pre-colonial Ghanaians made.
2. Ghanaian beads have specific symbolic meaning and cultural significance. Investigate the symbolic meaning and cultural significance of beads.
3. Beads are common in Ghana, but some specific places were notable centres of bead production. Use the map below to identify the various places where beads were mostly produced in the pre-colonial times in Ghana.



Fig. 5.20: Bead-producing places in pre-colonial Ghana

4. Beads were an important item of trade in the pre-colonial period. Investigate the trade routes used for exchanging beads in pre-colonial Ghana. Trace these routes on a map and indicate the regions where bead-making was prevalent. Consider adding arrows to show the direction of trade. You may use the map in Figure 5.14 for your responses or better still, you may generate it using the computer.
5. Beads were made out of various materials. What were those materials?
6. Beads serve useful purposes in our society. Explain what made beads important to people in pre-colonial Ghana.
7. Different classes of people wore different sizes and colours of beads. What do you think the size or colour of a bead might have told us something about the person wearing it?
8. Bead making is a craft that has been practised for thousands of years across many cultures. Why do you think people continue to make and wear beads even today?

POTTERY MAKING IN PRE-COLONIAL GHANA

Pottery is one of the oldest and most skilled crafts in pre-colonial Ghana. It existed in places where clay was available. The pottery industry was very common in areas such as Asante and Kwahu. Other areas where the industry was practised were Kpando and Vume, all in the Volta Region. Production in the pottery industry was done by skilled artisans. Pot-making was hereditary. Mothers usually handed down the art of making pots to their daughters. This was done to protect the survival of the craft and maintain the high standards of production. For this reason, there were households in particular towns and villages which acquired a reputation for producing pots of excellent workmanship. There was no mechanical means by which the products were produced. The equipment used were all improvised locally. Some of the materials used for producing pottery artefacts are shown in figure the below:

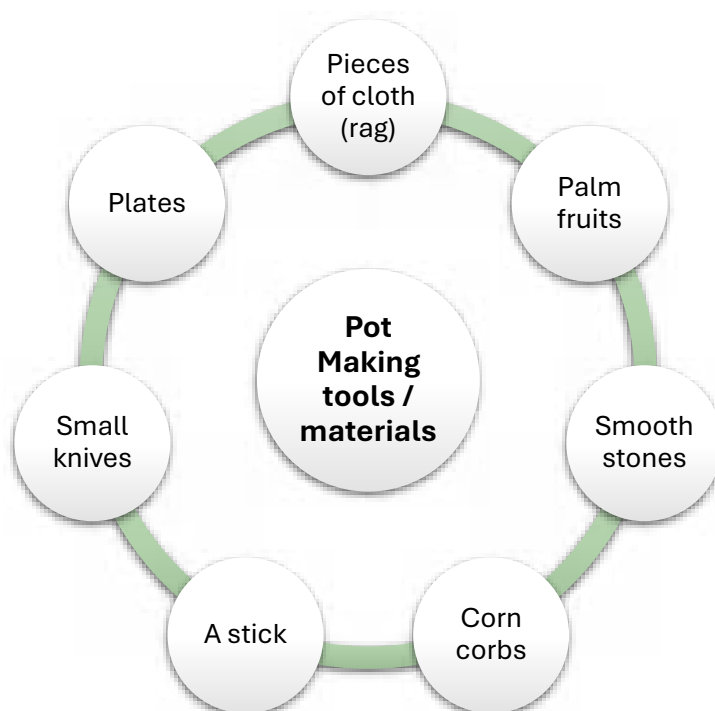


Fig. 5.21: Materials/ tools for pot making

Process of Pottery Making

An old pot served as the base or turn-table. After extracting the special clay, called Kaolin clay, it was covered to prevent it from drying. It was pounded to get soft, and all unwanted materials were removed from it. The clay was then moulded in different traditional designs. When one was satisfied with the shape and size, the product was exposed to sunlight for drying. After that, a pile of dry grass or firewood was then used to bake it. The baking was to ensure that the product was properly dried and durable. The pot was sometimes decorated with designs, colours and punch marks of red or black. To make the pot shiny, the potter applied graphite to make the pot more attractive, beautiful and shiny. Figure below summarises the processes of pottery making in pre-colonial Ghana.

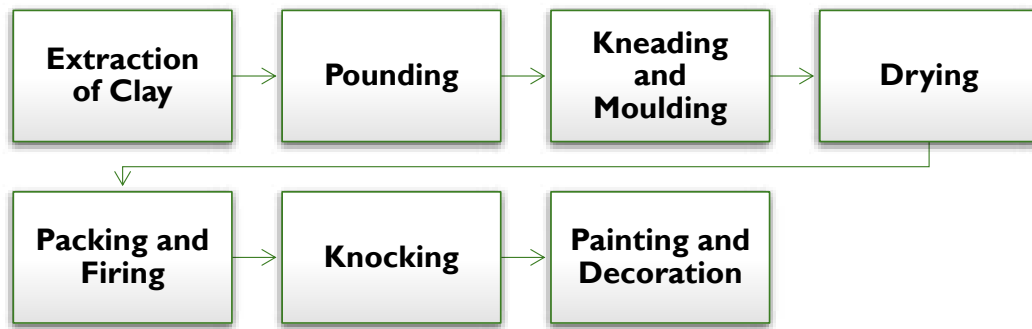


Fig. 5.22: Processes of pottery making in pre-colonial Ghana.

Examples of products or artefacts made from pottery included:

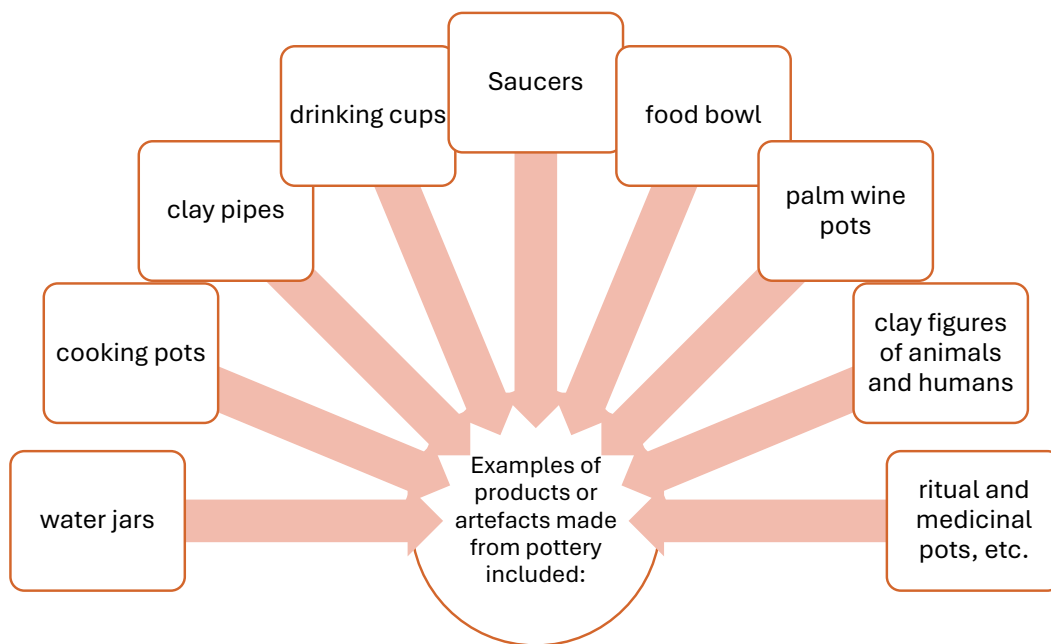


Fig. 5.23: Products or artefacts made from pottery

Activity 5.28

1. Pottery was a common craft practised in pre-colonial Ghana. Though pottery products were common, specific areas were noted for pottery production. Visit your school library or the internet to find out the various places where pottery was produced. Trace on the map of Ghana, places where pottery making was predominant in pre-colonial Ghana.



Fig. 5.24: Pottery-producing areas in pre-colonial Ghana

2. Clay is a common material used to make pottery. Why do you think clay might be a good material to use for making pots?
3. Pottery can tell us a lot about a society. Besides how food was stored or cooked, what other uses might we learn from looking at pottery made in pre-colonial Ghana?
4. Not all pottery artefacts were created equally. Imagine you are comparing two pots from pre-colonial Ghana. One pot is large and plain, while the other is small and decorated with intricate designs. How might these pots have been used differently based on their characteristics?

HOW PRE-COLONIAL GHANAIS EXPRESSED THEIR PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS THROUGH ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Pre-colonial Ghanaians expressed their philosophical and religious ideas through arts and technology in various ways. Some of these ways included sculpture, painting, architecture. These artistic forms served as a means of communication, storytelling and religious functions. For instance: A wood carving depicting a bird with its head turned backward symbolises the Akan philosophy of retrieving wisdom from the past to guide present and future decisions. This reflects the cultural value of learning from history and applying those lessons to achieve progress.

Ghanaians also exhibited their philosophical and religious ideas through their Kente and Adinkra cloths. As they do today, pre-colonial Ghanaians wore the Kente and Adinkra clothes on different occasions. The Adinkra cloth worn during mourning was usually stamped with pictures of animals, human beings and other figures intended to console the living. On the other hand, the Kente cloths, with their multi-coloured design, were worn in a festive mood during periods of celebrating the agricultural and ancestral festivals.

Some of the designs in Adinkra conveyed ideas like “Nya Akoma” (Have Patience), “Nkonsonkonson”, (the living was link with the ancestors), “Gye Nyame” (omnipotence of God).

The colour used in the cloth-making industry was also very significant. For instance, yellow in the traditional dyeing industry stood for honour, royalty and wealth. Therefore, it was used mainly by traditional rulers. Red meant bravery, courage, strength and endurance and was sometimes used for wardresses. Black stood for grief and sorrow and was used for mourning clothes. Blue was for peace, piety and sincerity. Green stood for youth, hope and fertility or growth. It was mostly used for puberty rites.

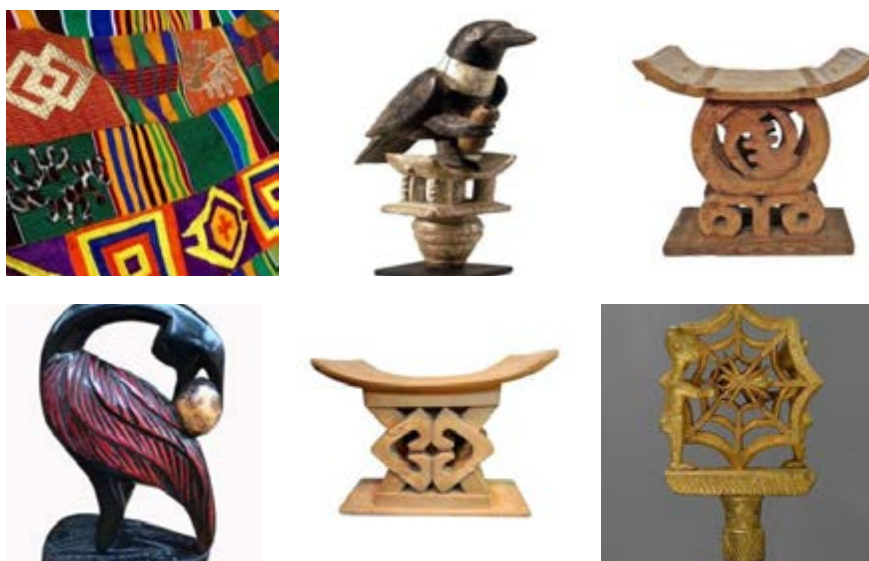


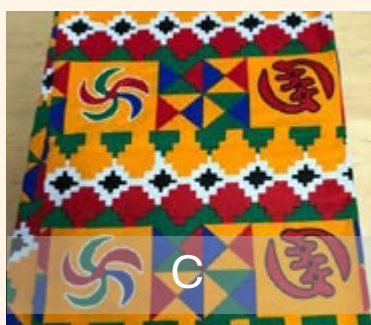
Fig. 5.25: Some examples of how pre-colonial Ghanaians expressed their philosophical and religious ideas through arts and technology

Activity 5.29

1. Sketch an artefact produced by any of the pre-colonial Ghanaian art and technological industries and show how it depicted the people's philosophical and religious ideas. Consider the following questions:
 - Think about why people might wear masks. Did they use them for celebrations or special ceremonies?
 - Was this artefact used in daily life or for religious purposes? Can you find any symbols or patterns on the artefact that might give clues about its meaning?
 - How does the artefact reflect the beliefs and values of the people who created it?
 - Are there any symbols or designs on the artefact that connect to creation myths, ancestor veneration or concepts of power and leadership?
 - How was the artefact used in religious ceremonies or rituals?

Activity 5.30 Source Analysis:

Study the Sources [A, B, C and D] below and answer the questions below:



- a. Identify the various art and technological industries that produced Sources A, B, C, D.
- b. List one symbol depicted by each source.
- c. Explain the philosophical ideas behind the symbols on the artefacts.

Review questions

1. How did pre-colonial Ghanaians treat themselves when they were sick?
2. Why did pre-colonial Ghanaians treat contagious diseases at the outskirts of towns?
3. How were new babies delivered in the pre-colonial period?
4. Which regions are noted for their iron deposits?
5. Leather items are common in our homes. Mention at least three of such items.
6. Kente or Kete cloth is common in our homes. How do Ghanaians use these clothes? .
7. In what four ways did the pre-colonial Ghanaians expressed their philosophical and religious ideas or thoughts?
8. For each of the following leaders, state the kingdom or state whose greatness they contributed to: *Sumaila Ndwura Jakpa, Amega Wenya, Okomfo Anokye, Yaa Asantewaa*
9. How did women contribute to the growth of political kingdoms in Ghana?

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Extended Reading

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Glossary

WORDS	MEANING
Arts:	Producing works (paintings, sculpture, etc) to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power
Bead making:	This is the process of creating beads as a small decorative object with a hole for threading or stringing usually from glass, clay, wood or metal.
Brass casting:	As a metal work this involves an alloy of copper and zinc to create a specific brass shape or object after melting and pouring it into a mould.
Cloth weaving:	This is the of creating fabric by interlacing two sets of threads (warp and weft) in a systematic pattern.
Great Traditional leaders:	Leaders whose love, dedication, sacrifice, ability and vision contributed to the rise and growth of their state and kingdom.
Indigenous healthcare providers:	These are Ghanaians who received indigenous training and skills in the diagnosis, treatment and management of diseases.
Indigenous healthcare:	This refers to the healthcare that began in Ghana and which met the social, cultural, and medical needs of Ghanaians before the country was exposed to Colonialism.
Ironworking:	As a process this involves the shaping, moulding and crafting of iron to create various iron objects, tools or structures.
Lasting Legacies:	Achievements that continue to exist and still being benefited by those living in the present.
Leatherworking:	This is a craft that involves creating, shaping and designing items from leather.
Philosophical ideas:	refer to the rich diversity of ideas and perspectives that have emerged from the diverse cultures and traditions of Pre-colonial Ghanaians.
Political organisation:	This is how people are governed or ruled.
Pottery making:	The process of producing pots, etc.
Pre-colonial Ghanaian political systems:	This refers to the political systems that existed in Ghana before the beginning of Colonialism in Ghana

- Queen Mothers:** Female rulers mostly a mother or sister to a chief or king in Ghana
- Religious ideas:** are about the beliefs, value and concepts that form the basis of Ghanaian religion.
- Technology:** Knowledge and skills use to do something
- Wood carving:** This is an art that involves shaping and sculpting wood into decorative or functional objects through the use of tools such as knives, chisel, mallets and gouges.

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