

Organization for Fundamental Education

Key words

dancehall, urban poor, inner city, culture, representation, impact, hegemony, power, social, economic, political,



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Main research themes and their characteristics

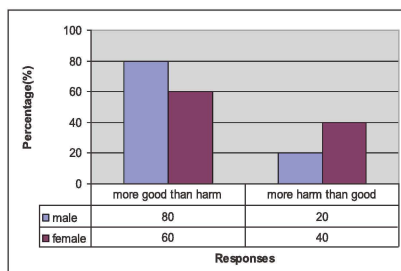
[Dancehall as a Representation of Urban Poor's Social, Economic and Political Power]

Numerous scholars such as Carolyn Cooper (1995) and Kingsley Stewart (2002) have noted the resilience of the Jamaican urban poor and how they have manifested their creativity in cultural forms as a means to social, economic and even political survival. Their cultural creations have come under frequent critical attacks but have been growing and evolving into a world wide movement regardless of the social confrontations that face them.

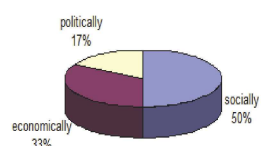
Nevertheless, the dancehall culture of the urban poor has stood as a representation of the ability of that sector to influence the thoughts and behaviors of persons from different classes and empower subalterns socially, economically and politically. However, the negative effects of the dancehall culture are still posing problems in as much as they are said to threaten social solidity while promoting chaos, slackness and vulgarity. Dancehall has become a very powerful, influential and inescapable part of the Jamaican and even Caribbean cultural experience as its contents and ideological world schemes are far reaching and culturally imposing.

This study gets its basis from the theoretical constructs of Gramsci's 'Hegemony from Below' theory, Hall's theory of 'Cultural Representation' the theory of 'Social Learning' and 'Media as a Communication Institution' theory among others. The study explores how the dancehall way of life is viewed by the urban poor and others who have come into contact with its idiosyncrasies. It explores the notion of the urban poor possessing power and influence that is represented by the dancehall culture. The results indicate that dancehall culture is very influential and its power is far reaching in as much as it gives social validity to the urban poor's way of life and provides them with other-wise illusive and unscrupulous means of economic survival. On the other hand, the political influence the urban poor are said to possess is rather questionable when dancehall stands as its representation.

Dancehall doing More Good than Harm or Harm than Good



Contribution of Dancehall Music to Community



Dancehall Empowering the Community

