

## REVIVING NIGERIA'S ECONOMY THROUGH CREATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL ART AND CULTURE EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

This paper looks at the current status and functionality of art and culture education in Nigeria on the basis of which a proposal is offered for it to adopt a more realistic methodology in order to enhance a practical relevance. It discusses the problems of Nigeria's education system as the failure to prepare and encourage students to acquire skills that will help them develop the right mind set as well as creative spirits so as to become functional and more productive to themselves and their immediate society. It x-rayed the concept of fine and applied arts, the need for creative education, the important place of arts and culture. It proposes steps which arts and culture can be used to revive Nigeria's economy. It also highlights challenges and prospects of creative arts education in reviving Nigeria's economy. It is recommended among others that the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture should organize the major ethnic groups in each state of the federation to exhibit joint arts and carnivals. This can attract several tourists from other nations bringing in hard currencies to purchase art products and services. Learners should be well equipped with enough teaching materials, and equipment for their practical's, adequate professionally trained teachers be employed for all levels of education and providing a good psychological and physical environment to enhance a conducive learning.

<p>The purpose of education in any country whether developed or developing is not just that of developing learners intellectually but also that of promoting</p>	<p>functionalism and enforcing practical learning since they are the powerful forces in shaping the course of a person's life. This also helps individuals become</p>
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functionally independent with positive impact on the society.

Education generally should help students possess transferrable and marketable skills and enable majority of the citizens to become well informed and capable of participating actively in society. Any education worth its taste should lead to self reliance through creativity, inventions and productivity. The national policy on education (2004) emphasizes on the acquisition of competencies necessary for self reliance, yet in Nigeria and many developing countries of the world, the problem of unemployment and under employment is worsening because education in these countries is not functional enough to promote productivity.

The present trend in Nigeria where graduates are seen roaming the streets because they could not get government employment inspite of the fact that entrepreneurship education has been introduced into the curriculum of all tertiary institutions, calls for re-examination of the Nigerian educational system. This is because entrepreneurship education is expected to cause graduates to metamorphose from job seekers to job creators. According to Azubuike (2006), entrepreneurship is about self reliance in employment, in creativity and in risk taking.

It is worthy of note that the type of education that a nation gives to her citizens determines the success of such citizens in the highly competitive global economy. It is therefore unarguable that a nation's overall development is in

extricably linked to its educational system. There is therefore, a dire need for Nigeria to develop her resource base so as to embrace the new era of creative and functional education through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship offers functional education for the learners in art, sciences, and technology, language, social sciences, vocational education, etc. It reduces the high rate of poverty, providing training and support to enable individuals establish careers in small and medium scale businesses. Functional education therefore drives the creativity needed for inventions and national development.

The few students that graduate from these institutions lack the required skills to operate on their own successfully. This might be blamed largely on poor funding by government, inadequate number of professionally trained lecturers in the tertiary institutions and inadequate provision of learning facilities and equipment as observed by Mamza (2013).

According to Azubuike (2006), entrepreneurship is about self-reliance in employment, in creating and in risk taking. The tertiary institutions should therefore direct more resources in this direction in order to transform graduates so as to compete favourably with their counterparts in other developed nations of the World.

Ohio in Aliyu (2011) describes entrepreneurship as a "process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. The vision may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way to do something. The end

result of this process is the creation of a new venture formed under condition of risk and considerable uncertainty". This is why an entrepreneurship is seen/regarded as people who possess skills and techniques to provide services, take risks and is also self-employed. An entrepreneur is described as "someone who develops ideas through the identification of needs and opportunities, transforms the idea in an innovative manner into business and assumes all the risks in the process" (Adekokun in Amurade 2011).

### **The Concepts of Fine and Applied Arts**

Banjoko (2009) defines art as a very wide human activity involving some skills. It is imaginative, creative and aesthetic in nature. One uncontroversial thing about art is that it affects almost every aspect of man's life. Banjoko further explains that art can be said to be the universal language of self – expression of man in his cultural and natural environment through the use of some materials, skills and techniques to produce various works for self-satisfaction, utility and beauty or aesthetics.

Fine and Applied Arts according to Mwarik (2013) are directly under the visual art. She stated that "Fine Art" has to do with appreciating the beautiful and we use it to describe that branch of art which has no other function than the appeal it makes to man's sense of beauty and higher emotion. Drawing, painting, sculpture and Architecture are examples of Fine Art while Applied Art is also called industrial, functional or plastic art.

Examples of Applied Art include graphics, textiles, ceramics, photography, interior design etc.

Uzoagba (2000) states that applied art is that art which is concerned with the making of objects to serve particular purposes or perform certain functions. The chief aim is to make something useful and of commercial value. Often, such objects are beautiful as well. Those arts that are not considered under the fine and applied arts are classified under the dramatic or theatre arts, or sometimes referred to as performing arts. Examples of such arts include: music, dance, drama, poetry, journalism, folklore, and literature. In music and drama, the artist uses words and actions to express himself and communicates his feelings to his audience directly without the intervention of a visual medium of communication. Likewise in poetry, the poet uses the medium of words and actions to express himself and communicates his feelings to his audience directly without the intervention of a visual medium of communication.

### **Creative Art Education**

Creative Arts Expression refers to participation in a range of activities that allow for creative and imaginative expression, such as music, art, creative movement, and drama. The creative arts engage children's minds, bodies, and senses. The arts invite children to listen, observe, discuss, move, solve problems, and imagine using multiple modes of thought and self-expression. The creative arts provide ways for young children to

learn and use skills in other domains. In the domain of Creative Arts Expression, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

Creative arts include drama or theater, music, film, creative writing, graphic design, photography and visual arts. Creative arts are studied at various levels in education. Many colleges and universities offer degree programs in creative arts. Some of the most commonly offered creative arts programs are focused on the study of music, theater, film, dance or visual arts. Graduates of these programs may earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts or Bachelor of Creative Arts Degree. Creative arts are also incorporated into education at the primary school level. Most elementary schools include classes in music and art in their grade school curricula that begins in kindergarten. Creative writing is also included, although it is typically considered part of the students' language arts or literature coursework.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria Government has been making various efforts to enhance skill acquisition of youths and unemployment. However, Education For All (EFA) reported by Babalola (2011) showed that sufficient attention is not given to skill training for youth and adults. This form the basis of the then President Obasanjo to mandate all University students in Nigeria, regardless of which major, to be exposed to entrepreneurship development study.

However, as Babalola (2011) reported, efforts at integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum of Nigeria public university seem to be inadequate. As at 2010, the most coordinated entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian public universities is reported to be at the University of Ibadan which commenced in the 2003/2004 academic session. The programme is reported to be integrated into the curriculum and only concentrated on few students who are interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 2010 the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research (CEDR) was set up to promote entrepreneurial culture mind-set, skill acquisition, self employment economic independence and self actualization. The University of Ilorin was reported to have agreed since 2005 to create a directorate to handle entrepreneurship training however it was only in 2008/2009 the University established the directorate of Technical and Entrepreneurship Centre (TEC).

### **Art and Culture**

Webster's New Explorer Encyclopedic Dictionary (2006) defined culture as the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties by education. It can also mean enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training, acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills. It is also the integrated

pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to successful generations. Culture can also be the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits for a racial, religious, or social group: the set of shared attitude, values, goals and practices that characterizes a company or cooperation.

The value of arts and culture to society has long been debated. We know that arts and culture play an important role in promoting social and economic goals through local generation, attracting tourists, the development of talent and innovation, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering essential services. These benefits are 'instrumental' because art and culture can be a means to achieve ends beyond the immediate intrinsic experience and value of the art itself. This review concentrates on identifying robust research that explores to what extent arts and culture bring these benefits to individuals, communities and society. However, we are also conscious that there are intrinsic benefits of arts and culture experiences, such as aesthetic pleasure, which are seen as private and personal. These intrinsic benefits to an individual spillover to 'instrumental' impacts: These intrinsic effects enrich individual lives, but they also have a public spillover component in that they cultivate the kinds of citizens desired in a pluralistic society. These are the social bonds created among individuals when they share their arts experiences through reflection and discourse, and the

expression of common values and community identity through artworks commemorating events significant to a nation's (or people's) experience.

In 2012 the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Warwick Commission have opened a call for research on the theme of cultural value. These research programmes will add to thinking around the value of arts and culture, as well as developing some of the more complex questions about how this value operates – for example, how the benefits of art and culture can negatively change the experience and benefits gained from engaging in arts and culture. Taken together, these pieces of work will deepen our understanding of the impact of arts and culture and will map out and reinforce the changing and complex role that art and culture plays in our experience as individuals and on the fabric of our society.

Deasy (2002) explained that Art and Culture's core practice is one of the most participative, dynamic and social forms of human behavior. It has the capacity to trigger reflection, generate empathy, create dialogue and foster new ideas and relationships and offers a powerful and democratic way of expressing, sharing and shaping values. It can help us build new capabilities and understand how to imagine and rehearse a different way of being and relating. It can enable us to design useful and meaningful things and is increasingly the basis of livelihoods and enterprises that are motivated by much more than profit.

But to fully release this potential, we need to deepen our understanding of how arts impact on our values and rethink how and why we value art. Our values represent our guiding principles, our broadest motivations, influencing the attitudes we hold and how we act. They shape the way we look at and understand the world and the mental structures that order our ideas. They are the frame through which we construct the stories that we tell ourselves and others about what is important.

Hensen (2005) explained that Art and Culture influences society by changing opinions, instilling values and translating experiences across space and time. Research has shown that art affects the fundamental sense of self. Painting, sculpture, music, literature and the other arts are often considered to be the repository of a society's collective memory. Art preserves what fact – based historical records cannot: how it felt to exist in a particular place at a particular time. Art in this sense is communication; it allows people from different cultures and different times to communicate with each other via images, sounds and stories. Art is often a vehicle for social change. It can give voice to the politically or socially disenfranchised. A song, film or novel can rouse emotions in those who encounter it, inspiring them to rally for change.

#### **How Art and Culture Education can Revive Nigeria's Economy**

Farkas (1996) expressed that Businesses in the UK arts and culture industry generated an aggregate turnover

of €12.4 billion in 2011. The subsets of the arts and culture industry's productive activities of book publishing, performing arts and artistic creation are the largest contributors to the industry's aggregate turnover performance – an estimated €5.09 billion of gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy. The arts and culture industry employed, on average, 110,600 full-time equivalent employees in the UK and 99,500 in England during the period 2008 – 11. This represents about 0.45 percent of total employment in the UK and 0.48 percent of all employment in England. For every €1 of salary paid by the arts and culture industry, an additional €2.01 is generated in the wider economy through indirect and induced multiplier impacts. In 2011, 10 million inbound visits to the UK involved engagement with the arts and culture, representing 32 percent of all visits to the UK and 42 percent of all inbound tourism-related expenditure. Overall in terms of culture, the UK is perceived to be the fourth best nation out of 50. This is as a result of Britain being seen as the fourth best nation in terms of having an existing counterparty culture (e.g. music, films, art and literature). There are five key ways that arts and culture can boost local economies: attracting visitors; creating jobs and developing skills; attracting and retaining businesses revitalizing places; and developing talent. Looking at the spillover effects between the commercial and publicly funded arts and culture sectors in both directions, potentially more than once, as well as working concurrently in both. If Nigeria as a country that has

abundant natural and human resources can properly harness and package her art and culture education, it will greatly improve the nation's economy. This can be done by some creative repackaging of the nations arts, music, dance, crafts, festivals to become world class.

The Obudu cattle ranch is a perfect example of high revenue earner that other states in the country can emulate. The Jos Plateau with lots of beautiful mountains, rivers, rocks, falls, flat lands and beautiful climatic conditions, Government can massively invest into tourism sector which will attract lots of tourists both from outside and within the country. So also the Adamawa hills near Cameroon, the Mambila Plateau can be developed to attract tourists from other countries also. Nigeria as a country has so many ethnic groups than any other African Country. This is to the country's advantage. If all tribes and ethnic groups are organized to well package their culture which includes their dance, music, arts, crafts, festivals etc. like that of Calabar annual carnival, it will go a long way to boost the nation's economy. This is because this sector of art and culture can provide great employment to many young graduates that are unemployed. If people are encouraged to venture into such activities like art, music, drama, cultural dance, etc, then they will not eventually depend on the Government but will become self-employed. Their earnings will help to boost the economy as these activities are displayed. Nigeria has a very rich heritage that can be rebranded and exported to other countries of the

World. All this will help the country to earn lots of foreign exchange hence develop the economy.

The Nigerian Nollywood can still be improved on and repackaged so that their products can become more marketable and appreciated all over the World. The government can sponsor young great talents in their academics and give starting soft loans to these talents coming up so as to encourage them. This will help in making the industry to become very strong enough to compete with similar industries like Bollywood and Hollywood. Nigeria as a country can encourage government and private partnership in the area of investing massively in the tourism sector. When we develop this sector properly, Nigerians and Foreigners will patronize these centres and this will greatly revive our economy. Unlike where citizens from Nigeria spend billions of naira travelling to Mecca, Israel, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and other countries of the world which makes them build their own economy while ours is greatly on the decline.

### **Challenges of Nigeria's Economy**

Nigeria's economy is in a comatose. According to Welch (2008) defines Comatose as a Greek word koma, which means 'deep sleep'. Being comatose means being in that sleepy, unresponsive state and not being able to get out of it. For Nigeria's economy to be described as being comatose means the economy is really down, hence Nigeria's economy is now in a recession.

The Nigerian Economy is currently in recession. The price of crude oil, which accounts for more than 75% of the country's export is reducing at a geometric rate paving way for a historic freefall of the exchange rate against the dollar. According to Gabriel (2015), the collapse of oil prices is already taking its toll on the Nigerian economy. As it stands, there is no light at the end of the tunnel yet. According to Sobekom (2016), the Nigerian economy is going into extinction since its exports rate is currently declining. The fall in oil prices on its own cannot be said to be solely responsible for this decline in the fortune of the economy, but also the amount of domestic consumption in the economy.

For every recessed economy to be revamped to a growing stage, the domestic consumption must be boosted to drive home the economy. Domestic consumption is defined as the consumption of goods and services produced within a particular country (Bassey 2005). Domestic consumption can only be achieved when there are adequate production of goods and services in the nation. With the level of recession experienced in the country, there has been high level of unemployment, job losses and lower level of production of goods and services resulting to a reduction in the domestic consumption.

Former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Prof. Charles Chukwumah Soludo recently said the economy is in deep trouble considering the reduction in per capita income and dwindling Gross Domestic Product

(GDP). He said the economy had compressed by 50% in the past year. With inflation already at 16.48 percent and still rising, most Nigerians are finding it increasingly hard to meet their basic needs, as the economy entered into full blown recession following two quarters of consistent negative growth. His comment on the economy came barely 24 hours after another ex-CBN governor and Emir of Kano, Alhaji Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, expressed regrets on the policies of government. But speaking in Kaduna recently in his lecture the fourth progressive governance lecture series of the Progressives Governors' Forum in Kaduna, Soludo said the collapse in the oil prices was a blessing for the country to start a new beginning. His lecture was titled; "Building the economy of states: Challenges of Developing Inclusively Sustainable Growth". It was organized by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) Governors.

Soludo stated for instance that the GDP has been compressed to 50 percent from €578 billion after the rebasing programme of 214 to €290 billion due to huge deterioration in key economic indications, while per capita income has also dropped from €3,100 to €1,500. He noted that this has to be urgently addressed by economists if the country is to survive the harsh realities and continue as a going concern. The former CBN boss who further observed that the collapse of oil is a privilege for a new beginning for Nigeria, stated that the current recession was structurally and politically induced and that the APC-led government must

stop the blame game and start on a clean slate. Soludo, a foremost economist, noted that agriculture, which is currently receiving massive attention from the Federal and State Government, may not after all, serve as a means of economic diversification because many people will be forced out of the business when mechanized farming is fully implemented.

“Nigerian economy has been massively compressed by 50 percent. GDP is being compressed to 50 percent from €578 billion to €290 billion while per capita income has also dropped from €3,100 to €1,500. “The transition to a Nigerian economy without oil cannot be sustainable by merely pumping money into the system. If the aggregate demand is on one side, we have other things on the other side to consider in order to be able to sustain our economy”, he said. According to him, no state can develop sustainably if the overall governance and economy are in crisis, stressing that Nigerian economy in terms of the dollar has collapsed by about 50 percent.

“Nigeria is facing unprecedented and tremendous political and economical challenges with global and local dynamics. Regardless of these challenges, opportunities and possibilities abound if we address some fundamental issues. The key to achieving this is to have a development plan that is anchored on realizing inclusive and sustainable growth.

He therefore recommended the restructuring of the economy from consumption- driven to production-based and consistency in micro-economic policies. ‘Encouraging fiscal federalism in

ways that allow states to have greater control of their resources, evolution of a master plan for mass export-oriented industrialization that answers the economic questions and realities of today, he said.

- The issues of crisis, high rate of kidnapping, armed robbery, Fulani herdsmen attack on farmers, boko haram, etc scare tourists away.

- Only a few students aspire to study fine and applied art courses in the Nation Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities.

- Not all these tertiary institutions offer courses in fine and applied arts hence reducing the number of aspiring students.

- The Nigerian government and educational planners have not given art the needed attention and financial provision for the schools offering such courses as is being done in the engineering, sciences, medicine, pharmacy, etc.

### **Prospects**

- Many states in Nigeria have started looking inward and have resorted to diversifying into solid minerals, agriculture, cultural festivals, carnivals, etc., developing, tourism, e.g. Obudu cattle ranch in Cross River State.

- Nigeria Nollywood has developed recently that it is impacting greatly on other African and European countries.

- New art materials and techniques are now on the increase. This has promoted higher patronage of our arts and cultural products.

- More tourists are now visiting the tourist centres in Nigeria, and many Nigerian musicians are presently going to different countries of the world to perform.

### **Conclusion**

Since functional education is aimed at training students to be independent and become self reliant as well as solve their problems, it is right to assert that the current contents of Art and Culture Education need to be improved to take Nigeria to economic recovery. The paper had highlighted the fact that for the economy to grow, create employment and output, Nigerians must learn to appreciate their own products of arts and culture and patronize them which will greatly boost the economy and make it spring back to life.

### **Recommendations**

In order to revive Nigeria's economy which is now in comatose, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Ministry of Information and Culture should organize the major ethnic groups in each state of the federation to exhibit joint arts and carnivals. This can attract several tourists from other nations bringing in hard currencies to purchase arts products and services.
2. The Government can promote the teaching of art and culture education in secondary schools and all tertiary schools by providing adequate funding for the purchase of enough learning materials and equipment.

3. Government should employ adequate professionally trained teachers in the field of art and culture to teach such courses in all institution. This can within a few years raise the standard of functional education.

4. The private sector should be encouraged into partnership with Government so as to develop and repackage our tourism sector.

5. Art and culture teachers in all institutions should be encouraged to attend art and culture seminars, workshops, exhibitions, etc. to equip them more with the fast changing world.

6. Art students should be taken out for field trips, excursions which will help them learn about other people's arts and culture.

7. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure that contents of Art and Culture Education are more practical in nature, and improve on their supervisory roles.

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