

GRAPHIC ART IN REFLECTION: CAREER PROSPECTS FOR THE REDUCTION OF POVERTY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Poverty as a major cause of hunger has assumed a global threat in varying degrees. Studies have revealed the major causes of poverty in Nigeria to include over-independence on white-collar-jobs, low acquisition and under-utilization of skills, among others. It was observed that the sustenance of democracy is greatly threatened by poverty as displayed by the percentage of unemployed graduates. This study critically looked at the Graphic art as professions with abundant that could grossly reduce the poverty level in Nigeria. It discussed various career prospects in graphic art. The paper recommended the acquisition of skills in graphics art by Nigerian undergraduates. The industrial related machines should be purchased and installed in various schools across the country as to enable the undergraduate to be adequately fit for self-employed and be employable.

Every developing nation accepted, recognized and acknowledges the fact that knowledge and skills in applied science and technology are vital for the development of any society. Experience has shown that rapid economic growth and development in the country are achievable through industrialization, which science, art and technology is instrumental to. Park (2000), maintained that science, vocational and technology education are determinants for ensuring the long term economic growth and the future prosperity in today's industrialized world. He opined that strong priority should be given to vocational and technical education. Lipsey (1983), agreed that

emphasis on science, art and technology are the base for industrial growth and development in the modern society. In general education, art is the first among the courses for its practical and skillful knowledge. This attributes is greatly gear towards industrial development and serious priority should be given to it for functional qualitative education in Nigeria. Graphic art is human creativity which is expressed through the production of aesthetic and functional purposes. Avea (1990), defined art as the highest form of human expression and reflection of the society that creates. It is a vital medium for promoting the richness of the culture of a society. It interprets and relates the history of a nation from past, present and to future generation and it touches our daily life in whatever thing we do.

Graphics art moving individuals from hopelessness to hope hence it provides the impetus as against skill acquisition and act as agent of life transformation whereby converting challenges into benefits. Graphics art plays dynamic roles in the society among which are as follows:

- i). It create employment generation through self-reliance and self sufficient.
- ii). It enhance skill acquisition and job security.
- iii). It promotes communication and advertisement of goods and services.
- iv). It promotes our cultures
- v). It improve economic development
- vi). Beautification of our environment. (Mural Design; mosaic design etc.)

- vii). It reduce unemployment and crime wave in our society
- viii). It promotes research and encourage findings.

Graphics art today propelled the activities and operation in the advertising industries; it functions as the engine room of advertising within which it facilitates the availability of finished products from been ubiquitous as the air we breath since its inception in Nigeria as its graphic messages are encountered in our daily lives via the prints and electronic media. These media present them through the channels of readership, listernership or viewship. Graphic messages are also found virtually in every product package in our retail outlets, supermarkets, bookshops, communication shops, etc. the graphic art within the global consciousness brought about by changing paradigm in visual communication. The place of graphic art within the global market communications today is that, it is part of marketing mix. This bedrock of market concept is in its fifth evolutionary stage which revolves around the five (5) ps; namely (i) product (ii) price (iii) Packaging (iv) Promotion and, (v) place.

Amifor (2001) avers the major challenges confronting the graphic artist of the 21st century demands that, he must function adequately in creating effective design for total communication focus as would be required in the new world order. That which its silent stress is associated with change, the reasons are not far fetched; in the market place are many and frequent technical innovation contending variables grappling for proportional share of the market, more particularly the advertisers. Technology and information consumption in their complexities have become the central focus of life, as such, those who resist shift in emphasis recede to the background simply

because they have accepted the ideas that, knowledge today has become too complex to embrace. Although, change is always hard to accept despite the fact that, it is the only constant thing, the scale and speed of transition. Inevitable is shifting the grains from the chaffs enabling the fines of the graphic artist to find meaning in our world whose outlines and core they daily become familiar with. Therefore, as we transit and reposition the consumers of our designs, their benefits will always demand cognitive and social responsibilities in design production to make communication meaningful given our highly – explosive competitive and fragmented media.

- **The Graphic Art:** It is a skill-oriented profession, which prepares the individual for gainful employment opportunities either by oneself or other group of individuals.
- Ofoye (2008) defined graphic art as the art of writing and delineating the true representation of information, directives, diagrams which are gear towards effective communication based on visualization, communication and documentation. He gave the functions of graphic art as follows:
 - i). It is used to visualized ideas and thoughts.
 - ii). It facilitate storage of knowledge and information.
 - iii). It is used to send quick messages through colourful illustration.
 - iv). Graphics make known new product's name label, trademark, trade name and services.
 - v). It help to provide job opportunity to the artist
 - vi). It serve as means of communication in media houses.
 - vii). It aid communication and promote sales of goods and services.
 - viii). It design suitable packages for products and services.

- ix). It involves in rebranding of existing products for maximization of sales and profit.
- x). it advertised newly produced commodities and services to the targeted population.
- xi). It educate and directs consumer visually on the uses of packaged products. Ofoye (2008: P. 44).
- **The Concept of Poverty in Nigeria:** Poverty has been defined by many authorities as Adereti (1999) defined it as a household's inability to acquire sufficient income to satisfy the basic needs for survival viz: good food, comfortable shelter, quality education adequate clothing and functional transportation. MDGs (2005). Poverty is essentially about human deprivation. It is about lack or limited access to essential capacities that could facilitate long and healthy life.

Ezema (2001) defined poverty as a state of living with less than the smallest income to provide the minimum necessities of life under the influence of age, education, religion, nature of job and ignorance. Poverty is characterized by low income, low education, unemployment, poor housing conditions, malnutrition, hunger, prostitution, sickness, crimes and other social vices (Adereti 1999). Igben (2001) classified poverty into four major types: **Case poverty;** in which people in a community are poor, even when economically conducive environment exists; **Island poverty:** That is when almost everyone in the community is poor as a result of their inability to conquer their environment; **relative poverty;** Which is relative to the standard set by the community; and the **absolute poverty;** Which is used to describe those who cannot provide for themselves and their family the basic needs for physical and biological survival. However, poverty, no matter its type it need to be dealt with through various strategies.
 - **The Nature of Poverty in Nigeria:** According to the World Bank Report (WRB 1996) more than 50% of Nigerians live below the poverty line with monthly household spending capacity of only seven hundred and sixty seven naira only (₦767:00). Poverty incidence in Nigeria rural area arose from 42% in 1960 to 80% in 1966, while urban poverty increased from 17.02% in 1980 to 37.8% in 1985 and 58.2% in 1996 to 43.3 percentage in urban centres. Individual, groups and government at local, national and international levels have made several attempts to eradicate or alleviate poverty in Nigeria without much success.
 - **The Causes of Poverty in Nigeria:** Over-dependence of Nigerians on imported goods and services to the detriments of locally produced ones have caused many factories to fold up with resultant poverty on the people and negative effect on the national economy. The rate of industrial development in the country is rather low and inconsistent despite, the industrial sector's vital role in the socio-economic development of any nation, the low level of technological advancement has adversely affected the production of basic needs for use by the populace, thereby increasing the level of poverty. The agricultural sector has not received adequate encouragement in the area of equipment for mass production, hence the nation can not boast of being able to feed its citizens above poverty level. This situation has resulted in malnutrition and prolonged illnesses and high mortality.

Attempts Made to Alleviate Poverty in

Nigeria: A lot of programmes have been embarked upon by different bodies (NGO) and agencies with the purpose of reducing poverty in Nigeria. For example, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), the National Directorate of Employment Programme (NDE) and many others. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had also placed poverty alleviation on top priority for urgent development within the 21st century. The UNDP categorically took steps to alleviate poverty through the provision of potable water, good access roads to rural areas, provision of highly subsidized fertilizer to farmers and electrification projects.

The result of the above aforementioned efforts is that poverty is still very much around, affecting adversely the ability of individuals in meeting the basics needs of life. In most cases the failure lied on fraudulent individuals who misappropriate the fund and robbed impoverished Nigerian of the mercy bestowed on them by donors.

The need therefore arises for the individual to develop him/herself in a manner that could make them take their destiny in their hands. The need for self acquisitions for self-reliance and self-employment by the individual becomes a matter of compulsion if the poverty level in Nigeria is to be reducing to the minimal level.

- **Relevance of Graphic Arts to Poverty Alleviation:** Graphic art is a field of study involving the application of scientific knowledge and creativity meet this publicity and advertising needs and live a

life of good quality. The components of graphic art courses are basically drawn with the objective of producing graduates who can be self-reliant and self-employed and reduce the rate of unemployment in particular and reduce the number of impoverished Nigerians.

- **Career Opportunities in Graphic Art:** According to Ofoye (2011) career opportunities in graphic art are numerous and rich that an individual can choose from: Graphic art is a vocational subjects, has a good number of lucrative career prospects for students. It is one of the school subjects/courses that needed to promote the achievement of the goals of the 9-3-4 educational system. One of such basics goals of the system is for students to be self-employed, self sustained, self-sufficient, self-reliance, and employer of labour and boosts the economy of the nation. Among the numerous careers prospects in graphics art are as follows:
 - ❖ Photographic laboratory (developer /printing of photo)
 - ❖ Television/radio electronics graphic designer
 - ❖ Computer/business centre (typing/ photocopy, binding and designing)
 - ❖ Engraving machine operators
 - ❖ Photographic studios (photographs and wood lamination)
 - ❖ Graphic art studio – (gift item/decoration)
 - ❖ Advertising company – (outdoor/indoor design, decoration/communication)
 - ❖ Cartoonist
 - ❖ Art director
 - ❖ Book developer
 - ❖ Stage designer
 - ❖ Costume designer
 - ❖ Concept developer

- ❖ Graphic aided design operator (CAD)
- ❖ Lithography operator (exposure and developer)
- ❖ Industrial designer

• **The Concept and Need for Entrepreneurship:**

The term entrepreneurship according to Ogunniran (2000) is the work or project embarked upon by any person called the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship can be defined as the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life as a way of doing something for gainful employment. Entrepreneurship is often viewed as risk bearing opportunities often associated with creative and innovative actions of productive inputs. Entrepreneurship in skill-packed courses and vocations like graphic art will surely bring about the expected change from improvised life of majority of Nigerians to a life above poverty level as agreed to by Adelegan (2004), that development is a multidimensional process involving the totality of man through increased skill and capacity, creativity, self discipline, responsibility, material well-being and greater freedom. Giving credence to the above. Aladenika (2003). Averts that the nature and concept of national development as proofs of social and material advancement should entail wide participating roles of people to bring about meaningful change emanating from manpower development through the acquisition of relevant practicable skills by individuals in the society. It is therefore imperative and compulsory for every individual to be involved in skill acquisition activities in order to make a certain level of income. Among the various production/services that could be achieve by recipient/apprenticeship in

graphic arts are as follows: Bill board, advert poster, enlarge photographs, vehicle branding, digital stickers, digital banners, digital signboard, roll up stands, heat transfer, Neon-light signpost, stamp/seal, engraving, wall mural, souvenir, calendar/almanac, printmaking, invitation/greetings cards, package design, label, shopping bags to mention but a few.

Conclusion

It is no gain-saying that the poverty level in Nigeria has recorded a stage of dehumanization and national shame. Poverty as a monster is staring Nigeria present democracy in the face with persistent civil unrest across the country. Nigeria has lost many of its stars at infancy due to infant mortality resulting from malnutrition through poverty. Many youths roams the streets for jobs and are not available despite the abundance of skills waiting for acquisition and utilization in graphic art.

Recommendations

With poverty posing threats to the sustenance of democracy and national unity, this paper recommends as follows:

- ❖ Government at various levels should enact laws to make the acquisition of skills compulsory in all Colleges of Education and universities so that graduates can fall back to utilize the acquired skills to earn a living in the absence of white-collar-jobs.
- ❖ Utmost attention is given to school leavers by establishing skills development centers in each local government areas of the country as to create avenues for the disadvantage school leavers as to live and sustain themselves above poverty level.
- ❖ The federal and state government should as a matter of urgency place a good

premium on fine and applied art education in Nigeria.

- ❖ The federal/state government should work in collaboration with Non Government Agency (NGO) and provide modern graphics industrial related machines across schools in the country in order to make Nigeria develop technologically.

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