

FINE AND APPLIED ARTS EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Any country that seeks rapid development in this age of globalization must make every effort to give its citizen the best education possible for job creation and sustainable national development. Fine and Applied Arts Education is an instrument per excellence that a nation can rely upon to bring about self-reliance. It is against this backdrop that this paper focuses on Fine and Applied Arts Education; not only for its aesthetic value, emotional and psychological satisfaction but also for its functionality, purposeful and utilitarian values. The paper also considered the conceptual nature of Fine and Applied Arts Education and their place in the National Policy on Education. It also looked into the various branches of Fine Art as distinct from Applied Art. The paper concludes on how Fine and Applied Arts Education help to create job and generates income for sustainable national development. Challenging issues were discussed; with useful suggestions and recommendations for improvement to help achieve the aims and objectives of Fine and Applied Arts Education as Job creation and income generating ventures to be achieved.

Introduction

The trend of educational development in Nigeria reveals that the educational policies and plans made numerous experiments on education programme with various structural changes and modifications. These efforts are geared towards ensuring qualitative,

functional and utilitarian education that can bring about job creation and sustainable national development in Nigeria.

The earlier school systems and structures have failed to meet the yearnings

and expectations of Nigerian society. The system was bookish, eclectic with irrelevant details. This resulted in high rate of school drop – outs, and dysfunctional graduates, thereby making the products heavily dependent on the government of the day for survival and eventually rendered the products counter productive. In recognition of this prevalence deteriorating situation in the Nigeria educational system, there is need therefore to restructure the system to serve as a dynamic instrument for the needed positive change using Fine and applied Arts Education as one of the major panacea for this great task.

According to Toby (2000), one of the important factors that should influence the future decision in our educational systems is work – oriented curriculum programme of which Fine and Applied Arts education is a prominent subject from the primary school level to tertiary level. Fine and Applied Arts embraces basic knowledge and skills necessary for individuals for job creation and to live useful and contended life.

The Oxford Advanced learners Dictionary of Current English (2000) defines Art as the creation or expression of what is beautiful, especially in visual form. Visual Arts are expressed by the skillful use of medium; which is addressed primarily to the sense of vision.

Uzoagba (2000) defined the word “Fine” as what has to do with the appreciation of what is beautiful and is used to describe the branch of art which has no other function than the appeal it makes to the man’s sense of beauty. This

brings about emotional and psychological satisfaction. Fine Art includes painting, sculpture, drawing, art appreciation and art history. Applied Art concept is where works of art are applied as craft work for personal use of the artists or individuals and also for commercial purposes or industries. Applied Arts includes such areas ceramics, graphics, textile, photography among others.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004) has provisions for the teaching of Art at all levels of education. It recognized the role of art education (Fine and Applied Arts) as one of the powerful instruments for self-reliant economy. It is one of the disciplines in our educational programme that avail trainees the opportunity to acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competences for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society.

Cornelius (2004); Ubangida (2005), observed however that in reality, the teaching of art at the primary and secondary levels of education have not been fully effected because it has not been effectively implemented.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) stressed the objectives of Art education (Fine and Applied Arts) at the tertiary level to include:

1. The production of self-reliant, resourceful, and creative people; people with initiative and understanding for the need to train people with a positive identity in the community.

2. The development of aesthetic awareness in the general public with regard to the products of industry and the environment.

The role of art has been too over emphasized in our educational system as the medium for unity and instruction for all subjects among others but it has not been given adequate attention for proper training of the students. From reliable sources, some schools are yet to teach art and art teachers are not available even when it is taught in some schools. (Ubangida, 2004; Barnabas 2005).

According to Okeke, (1989) the issue of supply and training of qualified art teachers to teach the subject at all levels of education is something of much concern. It is stated in the NPE that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession. This dream became a reality with the promulgation in 1989 of decree No 3 establishing the National Commission for College of Education (NCCE).

The Role of Fine and Applied Arts Education in Job Creation and sustainable Development.

Fine Art which includes painting, sculpture, drawing and others has great potential for job creation and sustainable development.

Painting: An artist that specializes in painting is often commissioned to produce portraits of notable figures in the society. There are lots of mutual paintings that decorate the wall of buildings in Nigeria. These works abounds in Museum walls,

cultural centers, ceremonial halls, airport and buildings of some tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Such works are highly priced. Most of the painters often organize exhibition in public places and halls of general buildings with price lists of the paintings tagged on each art piece. Notable personalities are invited to the exhibition show. Such personalities buy the art works and sometimes commission the artist to also produce work for them. All these help in the area of job creation. Some states government of Nigeria employ the services of the painter to beautify walls of buildings and ceremonial grounds as part of their beautification programmes of their various cities. This helps to create job for the artist and aids sustainable development.

Sculpture: There is a very bright job prospect for the sculptors. They enjoy very high patronage in Nigerian society. Sculptors are often commissioned by various governments in Nigeria to decorate notable public square, market squares, and other places of interest like the museums, stadia, airports, culture centers , offices and secretariats. All these contributes to the development and are high generating income projects for the sculptors and at the same time, contributing to the beautification of the society/environment.

Sculptors are also commissioned to produce sculptural piece on walls, residential buildings and gates. Metal construction are executed on entrance gates of some buildings. Many tertiary institutions commissioned the sculptor to decorate their entrance gates with sculptural pieces. These are all sources of

economic well being for the sculptors. Most curators and museum authorities commission the artist to enrich their establishment. Water fountains, relief sculpture and airport arts are now common in cities of Nigeria sculptors enjoy patronage from government in these regard. Applied arts are not left out in this job creation and sustainable developmental process.

Graphics: Graphic Artists are gainfully employed in television stations, news paper and magazines corporations. Graphic artists are often called upon to produce illustrations of new commodities and for advertisement for such products. They are equally employed by the companies and factories for such jobs. In this computer age, graphic artists have an edge over every other persons in using computer to produce designs, cartoons animation, illustrations and others. They are needed in industries establishment, and other institutions that use computer. Their works abounds in various textbooks. Graphic artists are working in printing industries all over the country. In the area of advertisement, they are often called upon to produce sign boards of different sizes and packages for manufacturers, institutions and establishments. Government agencies also need them for slogans, illustrations, captions and to carry information to the entire public/audience. Job creation and sustainable development through graphics cannot be exhaustively discussed. Photography is one sure area for job creation and development. There is hardly any sphere in life without

photographic work. They are needed by the government institutions, agencies, social organizations, and even individuals. They functions in meetings, ceremonies, programmes, and any of such events. Photography has a very high potential for job creation and sustainable development. Men and women, children and students on daily and ceremonial occasions snap photography and this helps in generating income and job for the artist photographer.

Textile: Textile designers are needed in textile industries, factories and mills to produce designs of different motifs which they reproduce into clothes. Jobs are created for them by corporate bodies, firms etc. They are commissioned to produce clothing materials like *Campalla* through the process of tie and dye; *Super-print* through the process of Batik; *Adire* through the process of weaving etc. Designers also set up their own business and also create job for others.

Ceramics: There are lots of ceramic industries in Nigeria that create job for the ceramic artist. Products from such industries are too numerous to be listed. They includes ceramic plates, cups, jugs, mug, flower vases, flower planters, jewelries, beads, chains, necklaces, pendants, tiles, pot, water system accessories, and many other household utensils, office decorations and ornaments for body adornments. These are all sources for job creation and sustainable development.

Craft: Craft Centers are very many in Nigeria and they are taking the center stage in job creation and sustainable

development of the country. Jobs are created in areas like mat weaving, basketery, carving of household utensils, materials for social and religious functions like walking sticks, masks, etc. Decorative figures and objects are also products of artist. Apart from graphical production of greeting cards, craft methods have been creatively introduced. Wall hangers, picture frames of different types and dimensions form part of craft works today. Their products are displayed in various public places in Nigeria cities and towns. Others includes weaved hat, bags, foot wears, etc. cane work is still creating job for many artists. They produce chair, stools, tables, baskets, local filter, and many decorative objects. All these helps to create job and for development. Mosaic works abounds on walls of residential buildings, secretariat, religious buildings for worship like churches and mosques, museums and monuments: Artists are commissioned to execute such designs. They help to create job and generate income.

Challenging Issues in Fine and Applied Arts Education

By and large, if the objectives of Fine and Applied Arts Education as stated in NPE is truly pursued, it will contribute to poverty alleviation and the sustainability of social and economic development of the nation via job creation. However, there are inherent problems that Fine and Applied Arts education is facing. Notable among them are: shortage of qualified art teachers, inadequate teaching facilities and funding,

poor government and societal attitudes towards the subject among others.

There is need for a deliberate and purposeful training of Art Teachers for the nations school system. There are many schools that do not have qualified teachers to teach art. Although the National policy on Education (2004) has recognized the teaching of art at all levels of education, some schools do not still have Art as a subject in their curriculum. (Cornelius, 2004; Barnabas, 2005).

Researches in Art education (Gofar, 2000; Ubangida, 2004; Barnabas, 2005) shows that most schools are faced with the issue of lack of art materials and art studies in secondary schools and colleges of education for the teaching of art. This rendered the teaching of art an exercise in futility.

The ambivalent negative attitude of Nigerians society and even the government towards the subject compounds the problem of teaching and learning of Art.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to look at the conceptual nature of Fine and Applied Arts and the place of Fine and Applied Arts education in the National policy on Education. The paper also considered the various branches of Fine arts and Applied arts education. Materials associated with the various branches are also mentioned. Detailed explanation and information are given regarding the methods of improvisation of the materials, the sources, their location and the various art wares. How Fine and Applied Arts education can

ensure job creation and income generation are also discussed. Challenging issues in Fine and Applied Arts Education as it affects job creation are also discussed with useful suggestions for improvement.

Recommendations are made to help achieve the aims and objectives of Art Education (Fine and Applied Arts) as job creative and income generating venture.

Suggestions for Improvement

In other to achieve the stated objectives of Art education (Fine and Applied Arts) at all levels of education, government, private organizations, parents, individuals and all stake holders in the national educative process should jointly work to provide human resources, financial resources and materials to ensure improved quality Art Education programme. These resources according to Ukeje (2000), and Mbahi (1989), should include:

1. Adequate preparation of qualified Art teachers; Shortage of man power has restricted many schools from introducing Art in their schools. The current number of art teachers should be increased at NCE level.
2. Conducive Teaching-learning environment and provision of art materials. Indicators of a conducive teaching-learning environment are attractive physical structure of studio and classroom, supply of art materials at any given time, most especially the ones that are not readily available.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from the forgoing discussion will

go a long way towards making Art Education a viable vehicle for self-reliance and job creation.

1. Review of the art programmes at all levels of education to keep pace with this age of globalization
2. Increased funding for Fine and Applied art education. This Could be done by giving special incentives to the teachers, by the supply of art materials and equipment that are difficult to improvise.
3. Increase the supply and training of qualified art teachers at all levels of education. Without high quality Art teachers in the right quantity; no appreciable progress can be recorded.

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