

# FINE AND APPLIED ARTS EDUCATION AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

*Ewebiyi Adekunle Emmanuel*

## **Abstract**

This paper highlighted the potentialities, and discussed in details, the areas of art that open avenues for careers and opportunities available in fine and applied arts education for manpower development of Nigeria. According to S.E. Ezeagu & C. E. Eze (1999) these areas include painting, sculpture, some aspect of graphics and interior design, cartooning, creative photography, theatre art, art administration, art education, museum studies and fine arts criticism. The author also listed and highlighted some possible occupation titles for those who specialize in different areas, being talked about; in reference to Cetron & Appel (1984: 29) such titles comprise of art director, creative director assistant or chief visualizer, cultural officer, principal or chief designer, colour and dyeing technologist, assistant or principal producer, chief producer, processing manager, assistant, principal or chief designer, finishing manager, cultural or principal officer, teacher and lecturer. Further emphasis is placed on why art should be seen as an instrument of socio-economic and technological development, (According to Olasebikan (1982)) not just as a course in tertiary institutions for those who can draw, as assumed by the people who are visually ignorant. It is therefore recommended that both government and the community as a whole should do something both in cash and kind especially in the areas of fund and grants, supply of needed materials, equipping and building more art studios, organizing constant seminars and public lectures to educate the ignorant public and many more of the like will boost up the strength of the department toward effective manpower development.

## **Introduction**

The need for manpower development cannot be separated from the desire for the self-sufficiency in socio-economic and technological development possible through the work force called manpower. It is the same desire that brought about the objectives of the Nigerian Indigenous Education System, which included training a child to acquire the skill, or skills that would help him or her to earn a living and contribute to the well being of his or her existence in the society; this is outlined in Revised N.P.E. (1989). Therefore, when talking about the concept of manpower development, fine and applied art education (a branch of Vocational and Technical Education) is so appropriate for the issue to the extent that it cannot be overemphasized that it is a field of potential for manpower development not yet properly harnessed nor maximized in the country, Nigeria. Fine and applied art education provides occupational preparation for a very high percentage of the total work force in all levels of manpower in Nigeria beyond what can be fully expressed if the potentialities thereof are properly utilized towards manpower development. This is also explained by Okorie, J.U. (1980).

This paper highlighted the careers and opportunities available in fine and applied arts education for manpower development especially towards self-reliance and socio-economic and technological development of Nigeria. For the purpose of this paper also, the writer gives some recommendations for manpower development possible within the potentialities of fine and applied art education through the solution to the problems confronting the discipline.

## **Fine and Applied Arts Education**

According to S.E. Ezeagu and C.E. Eze (1999), Arts is made up to two broad areas, the fine and applied. Fine arts component defines the areas of art that have didactic intellectual, humanistic, educational, administrative, cultural, decorative and aesthetic values. These areas include painting, sculpture, some aspects of graphics and interior designing, cartooning, creative photography, theater art, art administration, art education, museum studies and fine arts criticism.

The second part which is the applied art component, describes the area that are mainly technical in approach and commercial, utilitarian and industrial in purpose. Applied art includes ceramics, textiles, industrial design, fashion design, some aspects of interior design or interior architecture and some aspects of graphics and sculpture. The above areas will now be discussed in details in relevance to the issue of manpower development.

1. **Ceramics:** This is the art of producing pottery with natural or synthetic materials like clay and artificial materials. Ceramics or ceramics designers can work in industries, research agencies, ministries and schools or set up their own factories. They can work as designers, researcher, visualizers, technologists, teachers and cultural officers. More on this is discussed in details by John Colback(1974).

2. **Graphics:** This is basically or simply the art of design, communication and commerce, in commerce, it advertises products and makes them acceptable to buyers. The graphics artist can work in government department's agencies, industries, publishing and printing companies advertising agencies, research institutions, military establishments, television stations, newspaper companies and educational institutions. The graphics artist can be called art director, creative director, assistant or chief visualizer, cultural officer, principal or chief designer, graphics officer or chief graphics officer or become a manager if he establishes his own graphics studio (Even finishing manager in the big graphics companies).

3. **Textiles:** This deals with the art of designing and producing fabrics. Nigeria Magazine (1980) explains more of this in reference to the fashion trends in Africa. Textile designers or textile industries, textile related industries like rug and carpet, foot mats industries, business organization, that deals on fabrics, ministry and educational institutions. Those in textile jobs can be called sales technologists, assistant or principal or chief principal or chief designer, finishing manager, cultural or principal officer and teacher.

4. **Sculpture:** This is the art that concerned with shaping solid figures of people or things cut out of stone; wood, clay, metal etc, (sculpture in round) the expert sculptor, like the painter is known world wide and also holds exhibitions. The sculptor can teach in college or university and can also work in a firm or in industry. He can also be self-employed producing magnificent work for which he receives a handsome reward. This is analyzed by Emu Ogunor (1984). The service of the sculpture can be needed in engineering firms. For instance sculptors can play a vital role in the production of mould;

5. **Painting:** This is another area of art that is concerned mainly with the use of (liquid) colouring matter either to produce a picture, landscape or portrait or spread on a surface to give it a certain colour. Experts in painting are usually known worldwide. This is explained by Elliot W. Eisner (1972). They constantly hold exhibitions in and outside their countries. Their services are needed in firms or companies, in the ministry, and in educational institution. They can set up their own business as well.

6. **Cartooning:** This is a unique and special area of art concerned with humorous drawings that often deal in an amusing way with something of interest in the work displayed. A graphics artist or painter or an illustrator can choose cartooning as a career. The cartoonist works in newspaper and magazine publishing companies, film or movie organizations, big television stations, and any animation company (companies that create excitement and amusement through funny magazine and posters). This is explained by Walter .T, Poster (1980). The cartoonists are usually ranked as junior, assistant and Chief Cartoonist.

7. **Industrial:** This is the most important aspect of art that required for a sound and realistic technological and industrial growth. Industrial art explains the sketching or drawing and designing of product by an artist before designed product is mass-produced by machines. The industrial artist works in industries where they design various products such as car, airplane, electronics, and jewelry companies, military or marine equipment company. (Just like in some universities, like Federal

University of Technology Akure, Nigeria where you have artist that graduated with Bachelor of Science in Fine Arts (B.Sc Fine Arts). They are mostly required to work or render services in a more Scientific and artistic company, they are industrial artists.

8. **Art History:** As explained by Olasebikan W.A. (1982), this deals mainly with the study of art in any culture, race or period in its socio-cultural and socio-aesthetic context. On a general perspective, it involves the study of world history of art and culture from pre-historic period to the present. However each art historian is essentially a teacher and researcher and may not necessarily be an artist. The art historian can work in museum, gallery or in a ministry.

9. **Art Education:** According to S.E. Ezeagu and C.E. Eze (1999), teaching is the main objective of this aspect of art. The art educator requires specialization in one or more areas of fine and applied arts, in addition to education courses. However, if he masters a particular area of fine and applied arts, he becomes a professional and can hold exhibition. In this area, we have lecturers, lecturing in higher institutions of learning as well, a potential art teacher in junior and senior secondary school education.

In all the above areas of fine and applied arts, the artist can because of their creative nature go into what is known as *Interior Arts*; this is a special art area concerned with planning, design and decorating of building interiors. This art area is known as interior design, interior architecture or interior decoration. Interior artist work in a private company or they can set up their own business. Another area is in the field of *creative photography*. Creative Photography is highly experimental and progressive arm of photography, it is greatly needed by various publishing companies, government agencies, educational institutions, military establishment, the police force and many investigative organizations. Another area well known in the open society is that of *fashion design*; the artist that specializes in textile can go the extra mile to become a fashion designer. This is a specialized field of art concerned with creative transforming of cloth or fabric into particular shapes or dresses or ordered design or styles. Fashion designer dictates fashion design and fashion style on the mode of dressing of a period. The fashion designers work in fashion companies or big departmental stores, industries, higher educational institutions and often set up fashion designing centre, which are individually owned.

#### Art as an Instrument for Socio-Economic and Technological Development

(a) **Art and Self-Reliance:** According to Titus Iioduba Eze and Nkechi P.M. Ezeani (1995) art develops one's talent to make most of his potentials and this enhances one's life and that of the society. When one is adequately introduced to the study of fine and applied arts, his or her personality, outlook, achievement and future are affected regardless of his or her individual bent or eventual career. Art refines abilities, no matter which stream of higher education, vocation one embraces later. A person with good background in an area of fine and applied art will be more sensitive to people, ideals and the material world. He or she will be able to choose, care for, value and use tools of his or her calling and those required for daily existence with discretion and imagination. The person certainly will be more likely to survive successfully in a decline world of economy like ours than those who cannot use their hands. This quality is necessary where skilled manpower development is a vision.

(b) **Art and Technology:** For a country's technological development, it has to imbibe the tradition of education that places fine and applied arts on the sublime. Practical activities in fine and applied arts focus on the creation of forms. The knowledge of art will therefore help students develop insight in creating basic models for engineering and architectural usage. Art is one of the basic ingredients for technological accomplishment, and practical art can help to overcome many problems in technical fields. Knowledge of practical activities has led to invention and innovation. Talabi (1979) opines that what the artist discovers through the sensitivity of intuition, the scientist advances through research. The artist indicates the possibility while the scientist makes them possible; this is also one of the qualities expected of the labour force available for the development being talked about.

(c) **Art and Economic Growth:** According to Arnold (1976), "there are two reasons for educating children. The first is, or should be; to elicit and develop their humanity and the second is to make them economically independent and useful". Artist can gain a lot financially as a result of involvement in the production of works of art. Works of painting and sculpture are usually commissioned at a very high price with the result that the artist makes sufficient gains. On the part of economy of the country, indigenously produced designs but beautifully executed will make our people stick to house made items instead of craving for imported ones. The production of textiles with cultural background in a good quality will not only attract Nigerian to stick to their products but will also attract a lot of foreign patronage and also save the country the huge foreign exchange which importation of the same would have consumed. The same thing also applies to the production of ceramics. The China ware and other table ware exhibit the

design that are cultural to the oriental world. We need not go into competition, instead, our ceramics design and product should have the cultural background of Nigeria to attract equal patronage. The products of fine arts boost tourism. Individuals or groups can market works of fine and applied arts overseas. In fact, the production of works that compete favourably with imported ones will help the country conserve foreign reserves which will be used in the enhancement of other areas of the economy. A graduate of fine and applied arts without government job can establish on his or her own and can even employ someone else to work with him.

### Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that

1. Adequate provision should be made in equipping fine and applied arts department in every school especially in higher institutions for better manpower development in the country.
2. There should be more avenue for generating more funds and grants especially from the government and the community as a whole, to build studios, buying of equipment and materials necessary for student and teacher's use.
3. Organizing constant seminars, and public lectures to educate the public as earlier said, should be encouraged.

### Conclusion

Efforts are made in this paper to highlight the potentialities in fine and applied arts education for manpower development. It reveals the causes of problems confronting the discipline in schools for effective implementation of its goals and objectives. Solutions towards solving such problems, like lack of good fund and grants, inadequate supply of materials and equipment, public ignorance about the discipline in school are provided through the writer's problem solving recommendation, for effective, skilled manpower development in Nigeria.

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