

ART EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL TO CURB THE EFFECT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN IN NIGERIA

Romanus Ejike Nebo

Abstract

The Global Economic Meltdown is a worldwide recurrent crisis. It was initially thought that Nigeria may not be affected because of its unseriousness concerning her economic policies, this is because the major export product is the crude oil which the major buyer is U.S.A. where the meltdown started and Nigeria became affected. This paper is of the opinion that the problem can be curbed through art education. The topics of discussion is on the following sub-headings – meaning of economic meltdown, global meltdown in Nigeria, concept of art education, objective of art education, curbing the effect of meltdown, recommendations and conclusion. It, however, recommends that Nigeria diversify her source of revenue to other sectors such as art education, which has job related approaches for self-reliance.

Nigeria is part of the global economic system. It was a strange assumption to think that the country was protected from the financial crisis that rocked the economic stability of the industrialized nations such as United States of America, United Kingdom, Japan, China and the Asian world. Nigeria believed more in the resilience of the economic capabilities of her banking sector, rather than strategizing on how to get out of the worst and make better possible economic stability.

Economic experts of all nations around the globe are aware of the fact that all economies throughout the world have been adversely affected by this crisis. This has created the fear that Nigeria may be prevented from meeting the Global Target of “Education for all” by 2015. Leburi (2009) stated that government markets, business and billions of hardworking people around the world are recounting with reminiscence their everyday predicament and the hitches, which they must combat everyday because of this economic doom. This is described variously by experts as; economic crunch, meltdown and recession.

However, economics deals with the material well-being of people. If this is true, then art education can be used to promote and develop different concepts for different social, economic and aesthetic purposes. This is because, it is an aspect of vocational education which is a functional skill based education that can create jobs. One of the five main national goals of Nigeria’s education is; the building of a united strong and self-reliant nation (FGN, (NPE) 2004:6). Art education awakens sensitivity to one’s environment and makes the learner responsive to the society he belongs.

Journal of Research Development, Volume 24 No.1, July, 2015

This paper attempts to examine the meaning of economic meltdown, global meltdown in Nigeria, concept of art education, objective of art education, curbing the effect of the meltdown, recommendations and draws conclusion.

Meaning of Economic Meltdown

Meltdown, recession or economic crunch has been defined in various ways by economists. It is said to be a situation in which prices fall by a very large amount (Longman, 2007). It refers to a business cycle contraction or a general slowdown of economic activities in a country over a period of time. According to Wikipedia (2008), economic meltdown is a figure of speech signifying the financial, monetary and fiscal crisis currently experienced by governments, institutions and people.

The term economic meltdown gives a feeling of extreme heat, which dissolves the current macroeconomic system from a solid structure into a sloppy, slushy mess. It is not always detectable until it is already in motion and lasts for more than six months. Longman (2007) inferred that the stock market crash might lead to a financial meltdown.

This present meltdown started with the United States Stock Exchange Market which began to experience long decline in the prices of houses and the self destruction of the foundations of financial institutions. The effects of this crisis developed into a global stock crash which causes the failure of many European banks, a consequential decline in various stock indexes and a large decline in the market values of goods and services. The entire world was thrown into a state of panic over the Global Economic Meltdown.

Global Meltdown in Nigeria

Nigeria has overly depended on the crude oil as the most important source of revenue since the 1970's. This accounts for about four-fifths of total government revenue. As a nation, it does not exist in isolation of other countries of the world, but relates with them. Consequently, fiscal operations have been influenced by the uncertainties of the oil market (Babalola, 2009). The crisis in the United States has also affected the national economy, because, the U.S. is the largest buyer of Nigeria's crude oil.

The construction in the global scene has led to a drastic fall in the revenue accruing to the federal government from the exploration and exportation of crude oil, which is the country's main source of income. This situation, however is incongruous with Dada's (2008) opinion that Nigeria's economy might not be hurt because she is not a key player in the global economy due to her lack of seriousness and disorganization.

Nigeria became more apprehensive of where to invest their money because of the unwholesome development in the capital market. With the collapse of the Nigeria stock market, investors found themselves losing between 53% - 93% of their investment. Nigeria is facing a serious problem of revenue shortfall that is currently put at about 30% (Muhtar, 2009).

The global meltdown has no doubt reduced foreign direct investment appetite in Nigeria thus making foreign debts and risk premiums unusually expensive. Many civil servants have lost their jobs due to this economic crisis.

Concept of Art Education

Art education is a field of study that is concerned with the teaching and learning of art. Otopa (2011:99) stated that, ‘art education deals with the process of explaining the functional plurality of the art discipline and as well generates awareness about the various facets of art. ‘It includes the preparation of teachers and administrators in the field, as well as research and theory on the psychology, aims and methods of instruction in the visual art.

The world of art is a system of knowledge as valuable to man as the world of philosophy and science. The effectiveness of art education to man may be traced to childhood, and continuing throughout youth to adulthood as the individual moves in a visual world. Eisner (1972) stated that “the goal of art education is to help each learner develop an artistic potential and grow creatively through meaningful experience in art”. The educational programme is effective because, it is capable of producing young adults that can achieve self-realization within their own environment and in world society after graduation.

Ordinarily, education in Nigeria is aimed at equipping the learners with the necessary skill that would make them effective and self reliant. As an aspect of education, art education is vital as a means of self-realization. Every individual needs to discover himself or herself and find out his or her main ability related to others, and the society. In agreement, Uzoagba (2002:48) wrote that, “art education should help to prepare learners for a vocational or professional career”. As a vocational subject, it has intensified emphasis on skill acquisition for its graduates with a view to enhancing their capability for self-employment.

Art education is understood as limited to drawing, painting and sculpture. The scope includes painting, sculpture, textile, graphics, architecture, photography, printing, ceramics, and furniture making, beadwork, craft technology, metal work and others.

Objectives of Art Education

The main objectives of art education as an aspect of the general education is to assist in the intellectual, emotional and social growth of the learners according to needs and capabilities. In the view of Talabi (1991:1) “art education forms the basis for, and an integral part of the total education of an individual. The specific objectives according to Gaitskell and Hurwitz (1975) include:

1. Gain insight into and identify with the nature of creative artistic acts. A learner should be able to directly observe, analyse and compare works of art by himself to discover the nature and varieties of form and style. Observation is almost entirely an acquired skill.
2. Acquired artistic skills in decision to activities involving their emotion and intellect. Here, art learners would be able to develop skills in the use of art materials through experimentation, manipulation and practice for design, construction and creativity.

3. Learn some of the possibilities that accompany freedom of thought and action in relation to artistic pursuits. The programme should be based on the social, commercial and technological background of the society in order to achieve full self-actualization and self-reliance in any field of art.
4. Be brought to understanding with what the 'environment' means so that as adults they can assume responsibility for its improvement. When art learners study in an atmosphere that is comfortable to them, they gain experience by interacting with materials and equipment to improve and develop upon the environment they live.

Curbing the Effects of Meltdown

Education is said to be the best instrument available for building capacity. A quality art education programme beginning from the primary education level is fundamental to endow individuals with the capacity to equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to contribute effectively to the society. Talabi (1991) observed that, 'the education of a child should be geared to perpetuate the social, economic, political, cultural and ethical values of freedom. Uzoagba (2002:37) added that 'educating these children is a national investment'.

Nigeria as one of the richest fifty countries in the early 1970s has retrogressed to become one of the twenty five poorest countries at the threshold of the twenty first century. This shows that Nigeria cannot sustain her growth and meet the ever increasing needs of the people with over dependence on crude oil sales. The country should diversify her economic base by embarking on an aggressive art education programme for the acquisition of special skills in technology, designing, construction, culture, communication, urbanization and environment in order to realize the vision 2020 aspiration. Uzoagba (2002: 36) opined that, "the art of a nation, so far as it exists, is an exponent of its ethical state'. Art is obviously an imaginative creation and every work of invention by man is an origination of his imagination.

The United Nations Education and Scientific Commission (UNESCO) rated Nigeria as one of the nine countries with the highest number of illiterate population in the world. This rating was made amidst the large number of primary, secondary, and tertiary schools in Nigeria. In agreement, Alu (2001: 40) wrote that, 'education cannot produce parasites of the system and remain an instrument for development. In the context of this paper, art education economic pursuit empowerment can reduce this 'baseless education'. Art education economic empowerment is a process whereby it challenges existing norms and culture of society to effectively improve upon the individual well-being. The essence is to help develop the mental and physical capability, origination and imagination of creative ideas combined with skill, attitude and values in the individual to enable him operate meaningfully within his social environment.

Art education in Nigeria should be regarded as a veritable tool for economic and technological development in the area of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. As a vocational course that emphasized skill for self-realization, the programme of instruction is packaged to impart the needed skill and technical self-sufficiency. As a vocational course that emphasizes skill for self-realization,

Art Education: A Veritable Tool to Curb the Effect of Global Economic Meltdown in Nigeria

the programme of instruction is packaged to impart the needed skills, technical and scientific knowledge, attitude, safety habits and related information essential to succeed in occupational jobs in a free and secured society. The national goal of Nigeria's education according to FGN (NPE) (2004:6), is 'the building of a united, strong and self-reliant nation'. A self-reliant nation is one which relies on its own abilities, resources and judgment.

Conclusion

It is evident that Nigeria cannot sustain her growth and meet up with the increasing needs of her people, if she over depends on the sale of crude oil. So, this paper thinks she should diversify her sources of revenue to other sectors such as art education. The education sector is very significant to any nation and at the same time, the bedrock for progress, growth and development.

Art education represents untapped reservoir for self-reliance, job creation, economic growth and social cohesion. It can serve as an instrument of change, which will help achieve the goals of national integration by inculcating in the individual graduate, national consciousness, attitude and the right type of values necessary for the survival of self and society.

As a self-reliant and entrepreneurial programme in all its ramifications, individual graduates can process and utilize the available raw materials, through their acquired skills, turn them into tangible manufactured products that can generate both internal and external revenue for the country.

Recommendation

In the light of all these discussions, this paper recommends as follows:

1. Nigeria is among the nations that depend on foreign aid, remittance from abroad and trade with countries at the epic centre of the financial crisis, the political leaders should not fold their hands and expect miracle to happen, they should reduce waste and improve social environment. Among other challenges, they are expected to position the economy to be domestically and internationally competitive to achieve long time accelerate sustainable growth.
2. Government should as a matter of urgency assist the small scale industries by creating a comfortable environment and developing the energy sector, providing adequate infrastructure and making friendly policies that could stand the test of time.
3. Art education programme should be made compulsory in the primary and secondary schools in order to encourage the expansion of knowledge, attitude, values and the development of the appropriate skill by learners in order to function effectively within the society after graduation.
4. That art education curriculum at all level of education should shift from the theoretical platform to job-related approaches and, the skills imparted on the students should be the type that would be utilized in establishing and managing their own small-scale businesses.
5. Qualified art education teachers should be employed to teach the skills in art activities and their remuneration enhanced. There should be adequate provision of art materials, tools, equipment and infrastructure for better learning.

References

- Alu, B. E. (2001); 'Education National Development'. In *journal of arts and social science review* (2001). FCE Eha Amufu, Enugu 1(1).
- Babalola, R. (2009); 'Wearing, The Economy from Overdependence on Oil'. *The Punch, Thursday 21st May, 2009*. P64
- Dada, A. (2008); 'Developer Gauges Impact of Global Economic Meltdown in Nigeria'. *The Punch. Monday 2nd, December, 2008*. P46
- Eisner, E. W. (1972); *Educating Artistic Vision*. New York: Macmillan Publishers Co. Inc.
- F.G.N. (2004); *National Policy on Education*. Lagos; NERDC Press.
- Gaitskell, C. D.; & Hurwitz, A. C. (1975); *Children and their Arts* – Third Edition. U.S.A. Harcourt Bruce Javanovich Inc.
- Leburi, G. F. (2009); 'The Global Economic Meltdown, A Red Alert For Nigeria Economy – Awakening Light'. *Theological Magazine* 10 (2). 62-64.
- Longman (2007); *Dictionary of Contemporary English*. England Pearson Educational Ltd.
- Muhtar, M. (2009); Global Crisis: Political Will Needed To Save Economy. *The Punch (Friday 15th May, 2009. P43)*.
- Otoba, E. O. (2011); 'Critical Thought About The Aesthetic and Art Education in Auchi Art School'. In *The Truce-Annual Staff Exhibition (2011)*. School of Art and Design, Auchi Poytechnic, Auchi.
- Talabi, G. (1991); *Art Teaching In African Schools*. Ibadan. Heinemann Educational Book Ltd.
- Uzoagba, I. N. (2002); *Understanding Art In General Education* – Third Edition. Onitsha: Africana-Fep Publishers Ltd.
- Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia (2008) Emergency Economic Stabilization. Retrieved 28th October, 2009, from <http://en.wikipediagor/wiki/>