EFFECT OF MAL-ADMINISTRATION ON FINE AND APPLIED ARTS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Government is the vehicle by which progress and change for people occur. Every aspect of a people's daily lives is influenced by politics. Political situations can however be inflamed or heated as is currently being experienced in Nigeria. Fine and applied arts education is an instrument that the nation can rely upon to bring about self-reliance, therefore, any nation that seeks reliance in the age of globalization must make every effort to give its citizens the best education possible. It is against this background that this paper examines the position of Fine and Applied Arts Education in the present government with challenging issues like the social identity, training and recruitment of qualified arts teachers, inadequate guidance and counselling services, lack of facilities, misguided priorities and notions, among others. The concern of this paper therefore is to examine the role of fine and applied arts education in promoting self-reliance and recommendations were made for the way forward.

Keywords: Mal-Administration, government, fine and applied arts education.

Introduction

Nigeria needs to be productive. There should be a deliberate attempt to establish a program of skill acquisition like Fine and Applied Arts education for the youth and for the developments of the nation. These programs can get the youth mind off social ills and less vulnerable to crime as technical and vocational education can improve the individuals and the society's economy. In the pre-colonial period, the practice of art was a special kind of profession, its services were mostly restricted to the courts of kings particular among the Yoruba and Benin kingdoms and artists were admonished almost religiously as super craft men who could decorate the kingdom and record events of the kings on plagues for historical purpose.

Art practice, therefore, went beyond embellishment of artifacts and was a type of practice that required patience for the service of humanity. This entails that man artists who did not receive formal training still found their relevance whenever beautification matters arose. Trained artists were specifically specialists in major areas of art and design. These vast areas provided opportunities for the explorations and experimentation of new media and materials. Art is a subject that stakes its claim; the development of creativity. It is not separated from life, from industry, from decision-making and from education. Art is central in the educational system of developed countries like U.S.A, England and Japan. It is all-pervasive in their primary education programmes. Art does not have that kind of position in the Nigerian educational system. Politically, practical skill acquisition makes possible the promotion of personal and national greatness. Aboi and Aniyas (2013) posited that the behavior of an individual in a society or the behavior of a nation in a committee of nations may be influenced by the skills and competencies possessed by that individual or nation.

The Nigerian government are still finding it hard to offer jobs for their citizens because the citizens themselves lack necessary skills they needed to have acquired (Udo, 2016). A lot of

job opportunities would have been generated for Nigerian graduates and other citizens if they were well equipped with skills (Udo, 2016). This is why it is necessary for government to organize practical skill acquisition academy for the Nigerian youth for self-employment.

Fine and Applied Arts and its gains for Self-Employment

Fine and applied arts education is a veritable instrument to check idleness, unemployment and poverty. When properly implemented, it can be used to create employment and generate wealth. It can also serve as a hobby as well as a channel of giving expression to one's natural gifts, talents and endowment. It equips people with saleable skills through which they can secure paid employment or become self-reliant or even do both. It also develops creativity among youths and thus develops into other areas of development (www.nou.edu.ng), 2009.

Sani and Mohammed (2010) averred that art education embodies all the good qualities of life and it can provide the opportunity for increasing the capacity for action, experience, redefinition and stability that is needed in the society filled with changes and uncertainties. This implies that art is a subject that is filled with all the satisfaction that is needed for livelihood. It provides one of the best ways for an individual to understand, organize and utilize concept with environment.

The need to develop self-sustaining individuals and feed the Nigerian economy cannot be over emphasized. One way of ensuring that individuals become self-sustenance is to help them imbibe creative skills through fine and applied arts education and vocational training. Fine and applied arts education as a subject spark's creativities in diverse ways. A well-trained visual artist explores and experiment constantly in line with the changing society. When fine and applied art is strengthened, there will be employment opportunities and expansion in the labour market. The experimental nature of the discipline has the capacity to

continue to break new grounds for more employment opportunities culminating into self-reliance.

According to Ibrahim (2000), fine art is an art whose visual products serve decorative purpose while applied art are form of art which serve a functional purpose. Fine art comprises of drawing, painting and sculpture, while applied arts encompasses area like ceramics, graphics, textile and photograph. The subject also assists learners in developing the ability to make self-evaluation as well as train learners who want to become professional artists; (NPE, 2007). However, the achievement of these desirable objectives has often not been realized mainly because of the poor execution of the Visual Arts programme and the inherent problems in the ministry of Education. It also helps individuals to develop the ability to perform using their hands or machine to produce beautiful functional things. Fine and applied arts graduates according to Mshelia (2001) have many jobs and prospects in the economic sector among which are; painting, sculpture, graphic, textile, art education, etc. These subjects relates to the application of skills during training which lead to the development of survival and competences. Acquisition of skills can help the individual exploit locally available resources and utilize them which can help him or her enhance sustainable development and the need of a nation.

Effect of Maladministration on Fine and Applied Arts

1. **Lack of Materials**

Fine and applied arts cannot be well taught without materials. The materials include infrastructures such as conducive classrooms, the requisite equipment, perishable items like colours, clay, gum, dyes, papers, etc. Raemen (2003) states that, if situation of non-materials persists, then certainly, the subject cannot gain ground and measure effectively in achieving the national goals.

2. **Inadequate Guidance and Counseling Services**

The fundamental element for any good choice to be made in one's career is guidance and counseling. However, guidance and career counseling at the primary and secondary school levels is lacking. Guidance and counseling services in our schools is very important as this could lead to career discoveries that may benefit youths in choosing art as a career that would be profitable to them as individuals and in the socio-economic growth of the nation.

Issues such as experimentation and the encouragement to incorporate new ideas and modern technologies using local content are lacking in our educational system particularly in the present regime (Anidugbe, 2003).

3. **Social Identity and Perception**

Priorities are given to other subjects like science, medicine and engineering by both students and parents. This type of attitude has not been discouraged by the present government. There is lack of political will on the part of government to implement the cultural policy and lack of commitment to art education by the political leaders which has hampered the need for the acceptance of the study and practice of fine and applied arts. In the same vain, Dankaro (2001) laments that the apathy towards art by the society is an issue that needs to be seriously addressed. The negative attitude misconception, non-appreciation and non-recognition of art as a subject or discipline. Its practice have long been with our society, and a complete re-branding of the existing theory may help to improve this long standing battered image of art.

4. **Lack of Qualified Teachers**

Government is unable to recruit competent and qualified fine and applied arts teachers at various levels of our educational system. Art teachers need to go on in-service training in order to refresh their minds and be exposed to more ideas and techniques of teaching art.

Experience in teaching has proven that even the art teacher who is a graduate of University needs some opportunity to keep pace with new discoveries in materials and techniques.

The art teacher has enormous responsibilities in the development of the subject and in nation building in general. Palmer (2004) identified some of them as follows:

1. Apart from classroom duties, the art teacher has a public life and a sense of mission to the community, especially in Nigeria, where the place of art still leaves to be desired. It is the duty of the art teacher to implement the art curriculum in the school and see to it that materials, equipment and facilities are provided for art teaching.
2. It is his/her duty to raise the status of art in the society by sensitizing the school and the community at large on the importance of art to an individual and to the society as well as to let them know that art is an aid to technological development and a means for teaching morals by promoting the cultural heritage and aspirations of the society.

5. **Misguided Priorities and Notions**

The huge capital released monthly by the government to politicians as wages and allowances has encouraged youths in Nigeria to abandon their professional callings and identify themselves with political parties that can elevate them to elective positions, where money will easily come by. There are records of trained artists who have take to other professions which they thought would provide greater income than when in art practice. The use of art to create a focused cultural value system and engagement of art in providing simulation for the reproduction in the industry as envisaged is being abandoned.

6. **The Negative Attitude of Government and Individuals**

The 1960 Nigerian Independence encouraged Nigerians to embrace Western Education which helped to foster art education. Innovations were brought into the teaching of art by various

artists with the activities of expatriates and indigenous art teachers already in Nigeria before 1960, art become reinvigorated with new art forms and concepts, as a result, many artists were trained in public secondary schools, colleges and universities. As time went on, art which played its roles as a way of conveying religious roles, philosophical as well as utilitarian values was disregarded. Creative abilities of individuals were relegated, and parents regarded art as an occupation belonging to the dullards.

Consequently, the negative attitude of government and society directly or indirectly hindered the various stages of creative artistic development of the individual from childhood. Ogunduyile, Kayode and Ojo, (2008) affirm this notion when they stated that in Nigeria, the study of art became disparaged while science-based courses were encouraged. For example, government at various levels engaged in constructions and renovations of science buildings, equipping them with laboratory chemicals and other technology based apparatus leaving art infrastructure to deteriorate.

Over the years, government and institutions in Nigeria have not been clearly seen to support art practices. Though a cultural policy for the encouragement of art and design was formulated in the cultural policy for Nigeria (1999) and a National Gallery of Art was established by an enabling act (Degree No. 86) amended by the National Assembly act of 2004 (Ibrahim, 2007). These policies were also meant to encourage the teaching of art, but nothing positive has come out of it yet. The national gallery of art therefore has the following objectives:

1. To serve as repository for artistic creations and practices
2. To promote research, art education and appreciation and
3. To promote creative genius in Nigerian artists and designers.

Good as these objectives are, the policies have never been positively implemented to affect the lives of the artists. The attitude of government officials and policy makers on education can be summed up as a "fire-on-the-mountain-approach". According to Wahab (2011), the UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of annual budget to spend on education has been met half way and this has overwhelming negative effect on art education in Nigeria. By the time a little percentage is released and spent on other subjects, little or nothing is left for art education.

Conclusion

Government determines what project a country embarks upon, for the benefit of the citizens. It is also expected that political actors and policy makers would have been ideologically groomed to know that fine and applied arts education is the bedrock of cultural awareness of her citizens and this would eventually reflect in developmental project that would benefit the citizens. Fine and applied arts education should, therefore, be given prominence and attention at the primary and secondary levels in Nigeria. This is because creativity that abounds in Nigeria is without conscious institutional support and as such suffers negative attitude.

Fine and applied arts education has suffered a great negligence due to poor implementation of government policies and the general attitude of the population towards the programmes. Fine and applied arts education is quality education which prepares people for the world of work.

Recommendations

1. In Nigeria, the government needs to make provisions for adequate funds to the schools to enable them buy all the basic needed facilities and equipment to enhance practical activities in pursuit of fine and applied art education.
2. Planning as well as coordinated training, retraining and development programme is needed for the teachers by the government.

3. Micro loans should be given to both professionals and crafts men/women to start small scale industries within their communities.
4. Government should give research grants and other opportunities that can help to develop and motivate art educator and teachers.
5. Experts in fine and applied arts education should be involved in curriculum designing and development.
6. The general attitude of Nigerians towards Fine and applied arts education should change. Fine and applied arts education must not be seen and regarded as education for never-do-well people.
7. Functional studios, galleries and needed equipment should be provided from primary up to university level for successful skill acquisition as well as development of the nation.
8. To make the area of fine and applied arts education more accessible to our people, there is need to allow as many universities as possible to offer fine and applied arts education from first degree up to PhD level.

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