

On Diversification of the Nigerian Economy through Cultural and Creative Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Diversifying the Nigerian economy through cultural and creative art is a sure way to emancipate dependence on crude oil, gas and minerals which is our major sources of income. With reference to the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Art and Culture 1977, Nigeria have untapped creativity which could effectively make a huge competitive economic base for her. A close examination of the economic history of Nigerian Societies shows periods when they exhibited high levels of creativity that resulted in comparable economics with those elsewhere in the world Iron blacksmithing in Akwa, Cloth weaving in Akwaette Abia State, Gbira cloth making in Kwara State, Delta Ibo Akwa-ocha making, Adire design in Yoruba Land, pottery in Katstina, and leather in Kano to mention but few. Arts and craft, music, films, textile, architectural designs have shown the quality that could make them competitive items of trade internationally. It is generally expected that if this is diversified it would promote economic growth and contribute to poverty alleviation. Analysts have argued that modernization, apart from the many positive impact it has on Nigerian societies, has tended to destroy local creativity and subjugated local peoples to foreign culture and mindset. Cultural diversification is therefore expected to empower Nigerian peoples to take their place not just on the cultural map of the world but in transforming these societies into viable participants in the global market by exportation of Nigerian arts and craft to the world.

Keywords: Diversification, Nigeria, Economy, Cultural and Creative Arts.

Journal Reference Format:

Omeh, M.N. (2018): On Diversification of the Nigerian Economy Through Cultural and Creative Arts . Humanities, Management, Arts, Education & the Social Sciences Journal. Vol. 6. No. 2, Pp 25-30

1. INTRODUCTION

The creative industry in Nigeria as we have reckoned from the cognizance of art, is endowed with the economic potential capable of “contributing to more than N1 trillion (one trillion naira) annually to the nation’s economy” (Vanguard: online news). If well planned and appropriately mobilized, art through practice, performance and intellectualism will provide the bedrock for cohesive and economic maturation of Nigeria. From this standpoint, it need not be over flogged the simple fact that the Federal Government is privy to the economic benefits of art as an instrument for engineering Nigeria’s cultural heritage. On October 30, 2012, for example, the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, commissioned 12 additional cultural industrial centers across the country (The Guardian; online news).

These centers operate within a scope of creative ventures that include; fashion, music, drama, arts and crafts geared towards enriching the nation's capacity for entrepreneurial and fertilizing the ideological terrain for cultural cohesion for diversification of Nigerian economy through cultural & creative art.

2. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There is a wider consensus that development of the least developed countries should be of global concern and that developed countries should commit resources towards eradicating this problem. The world's concern on development in most of these countries has resulted in financial aid to most of them. The result has been mixed. The larger percentage of Africans live in rural areas, characterized by poverty and subsistence agriculture on which they depend for their livelihood. A greater percentage of Nigerians live under this condition. Despite her oil wealth the greater proportion of Nigerians live in rural and poor urban settlements under poor and subsistence conditions. The challenge of development is to diversify its economy through creativity. The urgency for mobilizing the creativity of the Nigerian people for their own emancipation has never been felt as it is today, due to the public awareness of the economic downturn the correction of these problems is to diversify. Over the decades Nigeria has tried a number of developmental strategies. From import substitution industrialization to export promotion efforts have been made to create a sustainable economic growth process.

Creative industries have become as one of the world's most dynamic economic sectors. Developed countries have demonstrated that creative industries can play a major role in economic growth. In the past few decades available data shows that creative industries have facilitated cultural, social and economic development in most developed economies. They have contributed in creating jobs and played important part in promoting trade e.g as seen in performing Art, drama & music. Linking business, culture and technology, the creative economy holds great potentials for developing countries to mobilize and transform untapped creative resources into growth. Most countries have demonstrated the existence of creativity which would make this possible, Globalization and connectivity are benefiting the creative industries of developed countries and they can do the same in developing countries that are able to create the enabling environment for its growth. A few developing countries provide evidence for this. African movies and software have penetrated the world market. African has shown how creativity in the communications area can enable it to compete effectively with developed countries in that area.

3. THE CHALLENGES

The second World Black and African festival of Arts and Culture indeed forwarded for publication a whole lot of intapped treasurers for countless generation to come. People and culture are inseparable. For culture is an aggregate of concepts and values which characterize a community. One of the objectives of the festival is to promote Black and African Artists performers and writers and facilitate their world acceptance and their access to world outlets to promote better international and interracial understanding to facilitate a periodic return to origin in African by Black Artists, writers and performers uprooted to other continents. Diversification as a significant effect on the lives of our people all over the world to identify and intensify Nigerian efforts to posit their true identity in the contemporary world is a sure way to economic growth. This cultural heritage encompasses our world of building arts, songs, and dance, it extend to our behaviour to one another, our community and humanity as well as every other thing around us. A close examination of the economic history of our people, shows periods when we exhibited items as comparable economic value with those elsewhere in the world.

Iron blacksmithing in Akwa Cloth weaving in Akwaette, Adire cloth dying design in Yoruba land, leather in Kano, Akwa Ocha making in Delta Ibo and pottery in Katsina, to mention, but a few.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The role of industries in economic development has long been acknowledged. Various authors have established the connection between the level of investments in industries and economic growth. Creative industries could first be looked at within the context of industrialization. The various industrialization models adopted by various developing countries have yielded different results. We can look at the possibility of developing creative industries within each of those models. Within the globalization context and that of the increasing liberalization of developing economies the viability of export led growth has been a focus in a number of ways. In this context we might want to look at creative industries in a trade development framework.

The concerns would be how to develop a creative economy that is globally competitive enough to ensure global market penetration of locally produced creative goods. At the global developmental level we can look at creative industries with the contending development paradigms. It would be necessary to make the distinction between the creative economy and creative industries or cultural industries (the old idea of core cultural industries). Focus on the creative economy as the context within which creative industries operate and are integrated into the national, regional and global economy is important. Analysis of the creative economy would be necessary to appreciate the potential role of creative assets in driving growth employment and poverty alleviation.

Nigerian films are low budget produced with technically unsophisticated methods. This low budget has enabled the industry to sell its products at very low prices. Comparing the Nigerian film industry with those of India and the United States, the other two bigger industries, what are the gaps? Observers have noted that producers, directors, actors and other theatre workers do not compare with their counterparts in the other two countries. They need greater industry exposure and training to improve on their products. Quality assurance is said to be low. These are some of the identified gaps that if addressed could facilitate the penetration of Nigerian movies into the global market and make them competitive.

The same can be said of other core cultural industries in Nigeria. Quality required in the global market can only be met when producers are conscious of them and develop the skills to meet them. If we look at the Nigerian film industry we see an extremely high rate of video piracy and informal trade. We find a lack of formal connection to the larger economy despite its size. This reflects a very weak marketing segment of the value chain. Already efforts at developing new distribution and licensing framework are at play. Producers cannot invest more into production if pirates cream off the greater part of the profit from production. The situation today is that most producers market their products directly. They establish channels through which their products are distributed. This has greatly limited their ability to widely circulate their products and have created opening for others to fill in market through pirating. Industrial organizational analysis would also be necessary. Industry has a definite organizational form. The industrialization process involves a transformation process that has evolved over time and continues to evolve with the rapid changes in the global economy. To talk of creative industries we are assuming certain organizational form which is required to ensure that that form can contribute to the growth process.

5. FINDINGS

The interaction with the various respondents so far suggest that most people were aware and familiar with the core cultural industries and are confident that they could play a major role in reforms that could lead to economic growth and prosperity and poverty alleviation. The general perception is that core cultural activities in Nigeria have been undermined by the modernization of the economy and society. With the increasing modernization and westernization of traditional societies tastes have been changing towards western products and imports. The case of Nigerian performing Arts, music, textiles, theatre, sculpture, ceramics, paintings etc were cited as cases where traditional creative activities have been virtually wiped out by more sophisticated imports that respond to changes in taste. The situation was however not considered irreversible. Most respondents recognized that Nigerian people are still very cultural and have great respect for their culture and traditions. But the ability to transform these Cultural goods into marketable commodities is recognized as a major constraint. This transformation is necessary if cultural goods would compete in the global market.

5.1 Production

Policies should be articulated to create favorable conditions and institutional support for investors in the field of creative industries while protecting Nigerian values and heritage. In this regards there is the need to encourage banks to lend to activities in the cultural and creative industries, encourage linkages between the public and private enterprises for job creation and production of goods and services in the cultural and creative industries. We should ensure backwards and forward linkages between the cultural and creative industries and the conventional industrial sector, including linkages between rural and urban producers. The country should strengthen the competitiveness of Nigerian cultural goods within the framework of globalization and the liberalization of markets. All efforts to support cultural industries to increase production capacity and improve its quality while preserving the aesthetic originality of products should be made.

5.2 Marketing

Efforts must be made to facilitate global market access for Nigerian creative products and services. In all her negotiations Nigeria should press for agreements on global market access for creative products and services. Government has to assist in opening up new markets for Nigerian cultural goods and services in and outside the country.

5.3 Infrastructure

Improve infrastructure for the development of the cultural and creative industries and the working conditions of artists and creators in Nigeria is important and requires aggressive action by government. Government should improve national capacities for protecting, creating, producing, distributing and exhibiting cultural goods. Nigeria would have to strengthen the private and community initiatives of small and medium enterprises. Adequate light, good road networks, pipe-borne water system, etc should be in place. The Nigerian should facilitate new institutional partnerships between the public sector, private sector and civil such as within the framework of UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria is blessed as a creative country and our creative industries can play a major role in promoting the economy and addressing the issue of poverty. The creative sectors all over the world are becoming the most vibrant, employing local people that can be assisted to liberate a large number of people. In Nigeria they could play a greater role in economic growth and poverty alleviation. It is believed that millions of people

are employed in creative jobs and that the sector could contribute to far greater growth than it is today. Over the past decade, the creative sector, particularly cultural activities have been growing. Government has to promote creative industries as part of mobilizing new resources for the economic development of the country and of new jobs and income generating opportunities.

The data collected so far is only indicative as responses are still been seen. The results of this study so far suggest that there is a base for a creative economy in Nigeria, which can be enhanced by properly coordinated action by all stakeholders. There is a base for the production of creative goods and services, which could drive the country's incorporation into the global economy. The result of this study so far points to the direction of providing insight into the way to realise the potential of Creative Industries in Nigeria. It points to the importance of the Creative economy in promoting trade driven development. This project expects to support evidence based policy reforms and to mobilize stakeholders to take Creative Economy seriously. In Nigeria, although statistics are not available it is estimated that millions of Nigerians are engaged in some form of creative activity that when organized could boost the Creative Economy. The contribution of these activities to the informal economy is assumed significant and has sustained a large segment of Nigerians in this sector. There is need to encourage decision makers of the economic potential of cultural and creative industries to ensure their integration in strategies of development.

Given the complex and rapidly changing global environment that creative industries have to operate an understanding of the nature and character of creative industries is essential. This will become more apparent with the completion of the study. The context in which cultural goods and services are produced, distributed, and used in Nigeria call for a strategy that builds on already existing frameworks. It is clear that there is need for the improvement of the methods of information flow, organization, management as well as the development of cooperation networks. Individual respondents seem left on their own although most belong to cooperatives. There need to strengthen partnership and enhancing the role of public and private sectors in the development of a creative economy. There is need to establish relevant bodies and agencies that would focus primarily on creative industries in Nigeria and assist their production and export. A body that would cut across various ministries and government departments is urgently needed. The ministries of Culture, Tourism, commerce and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Labour and Finance have important roles to play in this process. No one ministry can cater for the enormous tasks of promoting and facilitating the growth of Nigeria's creative economy. The body should acknowledge that core cultural industries are important but its work must cover all forms of creative activities. Trade fares, exhibition, seminars and workshops at both local and international levels. We should identify all sectors with creative activities and articulate policies to enhance these activities. The creative economy is not limited to the cultural sector only. In fact it becoming obvious that with the current globalization process emphasis on cultural goods is fading to the background and technology base, knowledge based activities is becoming more relevant.

The role of exports in promoting the creative economy is also becoming very much pronounce. The ministry of Commerce and Industry must take greater interest in this process. The creative economy can propel industrial growth and diversify and promote non-oil export. This is how creative economy can be a driver of growth, job creator and agent of poverty allocation. Artist should explore into the use of waste materials to wealth creation for export as well. Nigeria should be around the creative economy. These concerns should focus on empowering Nigerian to take the leadership in promoting her economy through cultural and creative art. To be sustainable there must be a national consensus on the need to promote and advance the creativity and ingenuity of the Nigerian people. The core cultural industries are important and would continue to form the focal point of Nigeria's creative economy but the national Emphases on Cultural and Creative industries should be the mean focus on empowering Nigerian to take the lead in

promoting her creative economy fore industries like the ceramics industry at Umuahia, Kano Textile mile, Asaba Textile, film industries in Lagos, Abuja, Holywood etc and a lot of others to mention but a few should be creating a viable economic significant effect on the lives of our people all over the world.

6.1 Financing

Nigeria should set up fund for the promotion of creative industries. There is need to study and adapt the mechanisms existing in foreign countries in the field of financing and supporting the creative arts, the production and dissemination of cultural goods and services in the Nigerian context. Create funds to facilitate the mobility of artists, designers, managers, works, goods and services. Government should support in-depth research on organization and structure of firms involved in producing and disseminating cultural goods and services (book publishing, audio-visuals and recording industries, arts and craft, tourism etc). There is need for in-depth studies of the present situation in term of intellectuals, artists, creators, craftsmen and other specialists concerned by qualities and quantities of goods produced, commercialized, exported and imported. Government should strengthen Nigeria's cultural policy to promote and ensure the development of cultural products and new cultural forms and for sustaining the integrity of cultural production as an arena of creativity and social development.

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