Development in a Recessed Economy

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Abstract
Entrepreneurship, as a money-making venture, creates opportunities for individuals and groups to create financial independence for themselves and others around them. In Nigeria, there has been a pervading problem of unemployment, poverty, hardship, reduction in production and so on This situation was further aggravated by the removal of fuel subsidy in 2023, during the inauguration of the current Federal Government, led by His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. It has escalated the level of unemployment, restiveness, armed robbery, kidnapping, internet fraud, destitution, thuggery, hardship and other social vices, leading to very severe economic crisis that has affected governance, commercial activities, cost of living, standard of living, education, health care, private and corporate lives, to mention but a few. The question is: in the midst of all this, how does the theatre arts graduate remain above waters? This is the problem which this study sets out to investigate through the instrumentality of theatre entrepreneurship. The paper employs the content analysis methodology, and recommends, among other things, that the theatre arts curriculum should be reviewed to create room for more experiential teaching and learning that will expose participants to more engaging, inventive and innovative learning opportunities, thereby fostering development. This will prepare young theatre arts graduates with the needed skills to be self-dependent and create employment, rather than wait for government or white-collar employments. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship and skills acquisition are the necessary options in curbing the socio-economic dilemma plaguing the nation.

Key Words: Development, catalyst, entrepreneurship, recession

Introduction
The seeming disconnects between labour/services and productivity level resulting in unemployment, loss of job, hunger, restiveness, poverty and general feeling of social insecurity, has put many Nigerian families in a crisis situation. Many can no longer feed their families as they used to, or would like to. Providing three meals for one's family in today's Nigeria has become almost a mirage for many; leaving many individuals and families in situations of bitter anger, helplessness, hopelessness and frustration. Many factors can be identified as being responsible for the apparent increasing hardship and social insecurity levels experienced in the country. These factors range from the Covid-19 pandemic of year 2020, which resulted in a lockdown of government, corporate,

individual, and family businesses (from which many are yet to recover), the END-SARS protest and its aftermath in 2020; the Central Bank of Nigeria's introduction of a monetary policy that affected cash flow, and created economic crunch in 2022/2023, the announcement and actual removal of fuel subsidy by the present Federal Government of Nigeria, led by His Excellency, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, in addition to the already existing long term insecurity issues – kidnapping, terrorism, armed robbery, Boko Haram insurgency, and Niger Delta militancy among others. The above have all contributed in no small measure to the current socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political logjam the country, and its citizenry have been exposed to. No wonder therefore, that citizens took to the streets in protest on August 1st to August 10th 2024, to register their grievances against the state of governance. The protest, tagged "End Bad Governance in Nigeria" aimed at drawing the attention of the government to the biting economic experiences of Nigerians.

This paper is an attempt to seek a way out of the above situation by focusing on how young, budding theatre artists who are at a dilemma as to how they could survive and escape the current economic situation, could be helped to gain skills and entrepreneurial know-how that will ultimately create change and enhance development.

Economic Recession: Conceptual Clarification

The subject of recession has been on the fore front of discussions for quite a while. Many societies in the world get plagued by economic hardships as occasioned by government policies, down turn in global market outcomes, climate change and so on. Countries like the United Kingdom, America, Japan, China, Greece and a host of others have had their fair share of experiences in terms of economic recession. According to Imam, Mohammed and Ridman Suleiman, "some of these western countries are still experiencing worse forms of economic recession". The scholars argued further that their recession "had metamorphosed into depression, which is the worst type of economic recession" (114).

Again, as noted by Imam and Suleiman:

> A recession has many attributes that can occur simultaneously… declines in component measures of economic activity (GDP) such as consumption, investment, government spending, and net export activity. These summary measures reflect underlying drivers such as employment levels and skills, household savings rates,

> corporate investment decisions, interest rate, demographics, and government policies (115)

In the words of Davis, Bob, in April, 2009, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) changed their Global Recession definition to:

> A decline in annual per-capita real World GDP (purchasing power Parity weight), backed up by a decline or worsening for one or more of the seven other global macroeconomic indicators; industrial production, trade, capital flows, oil consumption, unemployment rate, per-capita investment, and per-capita consumption (86).

The *Encarta World Dictionary* defines a recessed economic condition as a situation whereby:

> Microeconomic indicators such as GDP (Gross Domestic Product), investment, spending, capacity utilization, household income, business profits and inflation fall, while bankruptcies and the unemployment rate rise

According to an online publication by Ntara, Caroline, Paul Mckinney, Steven Scalia:

> a recession is a period of economic turmoil where the rate of unemployment is high, individuals and banks hold money and production declines. It is characterized by low trade and industrial activities resulting in a fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), increase in unemployment causing people to make and spend less money (accessed September 27, 2024).

Another internet source (https://study.com>academy), states thus:

> an economic recession is considered to be "a period between a peak and a trough in the business cycle where there is a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy that can last from a few months to more than a year".

According to Fapohunda, Tinuke, economic recession is a period of:

> economic slowdown featuring low output, illiquidity and unemployment. It is characterized by its length, abnormal increases in unemployment, falls in the availability of credit, shrinking output and investment, numerous bankruptcies, reduced amounts of trade and commerce, as well as highly volatile relative currency value fluctuations, mostly devaluations, financial crisis and bank failure (8).

Discussing the effects of economic recession in Nigeria between 2016 and 2018, Iniwori submits that, "companies and industries, mostly multi-nationals folded, there was massive retrenchment of workers, and unemployment indices soared. Prices of essential commodities soared. Things went from bad to worse encouraging all kinds of bad situations for human survival" (400-401).

The need for a nation's economic development moves becomes very necessary therefore, in order to stem the tide of slow growth in business, education, employment opportunities, skills and skills acquisition, social, physical, psychological, and general wellbeing of its members (individuals, government, and organizations). This explains the reason one would find individuals and government of various societies making diverse attempts towards creating change-a variant from routine or pattern…, substitute or replace something… "an alteration or replacement of an existing phenomenon, idea, value or mode of doing something" … (Boh, Aondowase, 19). This change is often found to become realistic when approached with an entrepreneurial mindset. According to Onuigbo Okonkwo Esq., Monanu, Ogechukwu Gwamniru G., Bassey-Ewa, Evelyn Okoli Ifeonyi:

> Economic theorists and practitioners emphasize the fact that development can occur… only when 'creative' or 'achieving' personalities emerge in … societies to initiate economic innovation and progress through entrepreneurship. This is so because entrepreneurship has the ability to create employment opportunities for the teeming masses in the rural areas thus making them less dependent on white collar employment in the cities (2-3).

However, the challenge of slow growth in business, education, employment and skills acquisition is anchored on the attitude of Nigerian youths toward self-dependence, change and development. As observed by Ayakoroma, "the Nigerian Youth have not come to terms with the need to make legitimate living outside white collar jobs. Incidentally, it is practically impossible for government to provide jobs for the teeming unemployed graduates" (138). Ayokoroma therefore submits that: "the imperative is for them to come to terms with stark realities on ground, adopt entrepreneurship", (138). On his part, Lucky, Esuh sees entrepreneurship as a platform for wealth creation, as it can help one have revenue streams that are under one's control. These submissions, above, go a long way in affirming that self-dependence and financial security, which also point to the possibility of future hope, are guaranteed through sincere dedication, and commitment to entrepreneurship. Meaning that when one is persistently sold out to investing in personal business, despite the challenges, he/she sooner or later can position himself/herself on a pedestal of revenue creation, thereby boosting the economy of his family and the society.

What then is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship: This term, according to Venkataraman, (1977), Shane and Venkataraman, (2000) (qtd in Ayandele 34) is "an activity that involves:

> the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organizing, markets, processes and raw materials through organizing efforts that previously had not existed.

Ayandele also quotes Bell's (2015) definition of entrepreneurship thus: "the ability and readiness to develop, organize and run a business enterprise, along with any of its uncertainties in order to make a profit" (34). Onuigbo Okonkwo, Esq. Monanu, Gwamniru, Bassey-Ewah and Evelyn Ifeanyi, define entrepreneurship as:

> A process through which individuals and/or governments either on their own or jointly exploits available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks, or inadequate resources under their control (3).

In the same vein, Lucky, describes entrepreneurship in the words of Ogundele (2007) as, "a process involving recognizing opportunities in the environment, mobilizing resources to take advantage of such opportunities in order to provide improved goods and services for consumers and making profits as a reward for risks taken" (141). This definition clearly implies that within the operational space of the theatre artist, exists "veiled" opportunities waiting to be unveiled and harnessed for the furtherance of individual and societal growth.

The Notion of Development

According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, (https://dictionary.cambridge.org) development is the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced. (accessed August 2, 2024). As opined by Doki, Gowon, John Onah and Jerry Odeh, Development is related to attitude or behavior of people within the contexts of economic, political, religious and socio-cultural life (220). They further see development as concrete experience of both quantitative and qualitative transformation of life conditions of a people (221). According to Ogbu (quoted in Ekpo, Akpan, "development is perceived as an outcome of a transformative attitude embedded with knowledge and ideology" (9).

The Theatre Entrepreneur: This is that individual who has interest, background and qualification in any field of theatre and manages to innovatively employ the knowledge to create maximum productivity and optimum profit. In the current wave of high rise in living standards, economic challenges, and unemployment, courses tailored to meet employment and economic needs are necessary for the development of individuals, communities and nations.

The Need for Entrepreneurship

As earlier mentioned in this paper, the reason for which entrepreneurial option should be sought for is not unconnected with the fact of high-level unemployment, take home pay (or salary) which cannot "really take people home", the government cannot employ everyone, the need to create a more secured future for individuals, government, families, communities and organizations etc. Discussing on this subject, Awodiya, Muyiwa States that:

> In the light of mass unemployment among Nigerian university graduates and of the need to offer a secured future for our youths, stakeholders in the university system have called on Nigerian universities to offer entrepreneurship training to all their students (377).

According to him, this suggestion came as an outcome of the "resolutions at the stakeholders' conference on Curriculum Review for University Education in Nigeria which was held in Abuja between 23 to 27 April 2001" (377). This development, among others, may have been the reason for which the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) were mobilized to engage young graduates during the period of orientation to sensitize them on the need to cultivate self-employment attitude and skills rather than wait for government employment.

Who then is an entrepreneur, one may ask? An individual qualified to be called and identified as an entrepreneur is one who, according to Druker (1934) (qtd in Ayandele 35) is willing to risk capital and other resources in new business venture from which he expects substantial rewards… Ayandele, on his part, describes this individual as "the originator" of business ideas(s) and one who has the ability to combine scarce resources in a new way that will be beneficial to his customers on one hand, and lubricate his business with a comfortable profit margin on the other hand" (35). He therefore qualifies an entrepreneur as one who is:

> Innovative, creative, pragmatic, proactive, dynamic, imaginative, ingenious, stimulating, perceptive, persuasive, intelligent, logical, disciplined, realistic, systematic, idealistic, modest, honest, reliable, and above all, possess the ability to perceive economic opportunities (35).

Again, Onuigbo *et al* see the entrepreneur as one "who wants to make money by starting or running businesses especially when this involves financial risks… He is the visioner, the creative or achieving personality who emerges in society to initiate economic innovation and progress through entrepreneurship" (3).

Theatre Arts and Entrepreneurship

The Theatre Arts graduate is that individual who had registered and subjected himself/herself to be taught in the theatre arts discipline. Theatre Arts, is one of the fields of studies in the Faculty of Humanities in the Nigerian tertiary institutions-universities, colleges of education etc. It has over the years created opportunities for interested individuals to apply, for and be admitted to study in the Department of Theatre Arts, Performing Arts, Media and Film Arts, Creative and Dramatic Arts etc; (whatever the nomenclature is for each academic institution). As many that have, or had been subjected to the learning processes in these various Departments, are what this study classifies as theatre arts graduates. Most times we experience situations whereby prospective students and their parents/guardians exhibit some reservations about the Theatre Arts discipline. This is as a result of their perception that the discipline has no economic value and therefore cannot be accepted as a professional course. As noted by Asagba, (2012, qtd in Johnson 23) "over the ages, theatre has also generated its own share of controversies, negative imagery and attracted public odium whether as an art form or when perceived from the perspective of the performer…" (23).

It is known that some students in the discipline have openly expressed that they found themselves in the Department of Theatre Arts because they were denied admission into such other "more professional fields" like Law or even Communication Studies. . However, by whatever means and circumstances they may have come, the fact remains that they will be accorded the name, theatre artist as soon as they are done with their studies. According to Johnson, the Theatre Artist is that individual:

> … who studied in the discipline known as Theatre Arts, or Dramatic Arts orperforming Arts or creative Arts, as the case may be, and at the end of that programme, graduated after writing a project, in one of the interest areas of Theatre Arts, namely, acting, directing, playwriting, dance-choreography, lighting design, sound design, costume and make-up design, theory and criticism, creative dramatics, puppetry, theatre in education, theatre for Development (TFD), television production, radio broadcasting, film studies and theatre management (21).

This paper totally agrees with the above description of a theatre artist. Among Nigerian theatre graduates are individuals with high entrepreneurial skills and talents that can be

nurtured into useful instruments for turning around economic conditions of their families, and of course, that of the nation. This according to Onuigbo *et al*, "appears to be the main reason behind the injunction of the National Universities Commission (NUC), that the study of a course on the subject of entrepreneurship be made mandatory in all tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria" (121). The following submission by AtakpoUwemedimo is worth noting here:

> … the beginning theatre artist must be able to learn to be a creative carpenter, an architect, a tailor or seamstress, a painter, an electrician and a moulder. With the combination of all these expertise, the true theatre artist will lay a solid foundation for his work and can excel outside the theatre when the need arises (10-11).

According to Nkanga, Justina:

> The art as a discipline creates opportunities for self-employment and employment of labour. It promotes entrepreneurial skills thereby enhancing the creation of wealth. In the various sectors of the arts, performing, film, theatre (children or adult), music, dance, puppetry, cinema, video and games, creative skills are developed and these open opportunities for employment and by extension, development (186-187).

According to her, "the field of arts provide opportunities for business and job creation, and through it individuals can obtain their means of livelihood" (187). Discussing on the same subject, AkwangEtop avers:

> As an interactive medium, the theatre trains men and women in speech art, playwriting, writing for the radio and television… and film production. It also apprentices students on aspects of design, leadership and followership (through directing and acting) as well as business and entrepreneurship skills (through theatre management courses). Design courses expose students to carpentry, as well as architectural, electrical and textile technology spheres (87-88).

The assertion above implies that theatre arts practice is laden with the potentials to curb unemployment and create opportunities whereby individuals and groups can positively affect and change their economic atmosphere through innovative creations that will result in the eventual creation of jobs for themselves and others.

Theatre and Teaching Opportunities

Seen from the perspective of educational theatre; it offers opportunities for individuals to think towards establishment of schools. Theatre Arts studies offer opportunities for young graduates to engage themselves and explore their intellectual capacities to help create knowledge system for any nation. With the diverse theatre fields, impartation of knowledge can be made and circulated to further advance the frontiers of awareness on the value of the arts of theatre. Besides working in government institutions (which is why we are advocating entrepreneurship), young graduates can venture into the establishment of schools of which emphasis would be placed on the arts and human development. As a Theatre in education specialist, one of the researchers, Justina James had occasions to expose her students to apply drama and dramatic approaches to teaching in the classroom and other spaces. A case in point is the Theatre in Education project that happened at The Special Needs Children's Centre, MbioabongEtoi, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State between January and August, 2022. Here, one of her postgraduate students, Dorcas Okonnah, was supervised to employ dramatic techniques in effectuating learning. Again, between April and July, 2023 she coordinated an applied theatre project for her undergraduate student, Shalem-Beulah Theadore at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. Here, the mentally challenged inmates were exposed to theatre experience. Through the opportunities offered in such courses as creative dramatics, puppetry/animation, theatre/drama therapy, drama/theatre in community education, children's theatre and so on, young graduates can earn a living through practice of theatre in schools. Establishment of teaching and learning centres that dramatic and creative experiments could be explored to develop skills in young children, could be made possible here. According to Nkanga (189) "creative drama promotes teamwork and co-operation…" She also notes that, "should the techniques of drama and theatre – role play, arts and crafts, improvisation, story-telling, games, puppetry be effectively applied in the teaching/learning processes, they have the ability of developing a set of entrepreneurs who can conveniently achieve the goal of sustained industrialization…" (201-202).

Again, this author has had occasions to supervise and take her students on field work in various nursery, primary and secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The outcome of these experiences attest to the fact that great opportunities reside in this area – opportunities for creative inventions with children and youths. Engaging in children's theatre programmes where entertainment and educational contents can be created to serve children and adults is an opportunity to promote self-reliance and economic recovery, while advancing the course of pedagogy. Development of skills on arts and craft are some of the things this area can further help do, as it can grow interest in puppetry and entertainment art, as well as facilitate effective learning and development. Through teaching on speech and speech art, one could cultivate a public speaking skill that could help him/her function as Master of Ceremony at social functions, become a public orator, etc.

Animation, Cartoons and Graphics

As an aspect of film studies which many Theatre Arts Departments have made to become part of their curriculum, opportunities are available to make animation films, puppetry, art and craft, and get oneself established in them. As noted by Atakpo:

> Animation is a newer addition to the film industry and animators are few. Animation studios are not many and whoever goes into this area of film will make a lot of money (66).

Young theatre graduates can take up training courses to hone their skills in puppetry and animation arts. This training would expose theatre artists to computer and its technological possibilities especially as provided by graphics, multimedia etc.

Theatre Design and Technology

This is another area where the theatre graduate can explore and improve his economic condition. This area comprises set design, lighting design, sound, makeup and costumes design.

According to Iji, in Theatre technology:

> … adequate training and education are effected through theatre designs, in space and wood works, costumes, in carpentry, stage. Lighting and acoustics, making copious use of physics and mechanics principles. The application of other applied sciences, mathematical calculations… in

> creating the wonders of lights in rhythms with stage sound
> in effective communication… (128-129).

The contents and demands of this area of theatre are very engaging, and aim at producing skillful hands that can create opportunities for individuals and groups to become professional entrepreneurs who can both employ themselves and others. A close assessment of these areas offer opportunities in fashion design (dressmaking), interior decoration, furniture making, arts and craft-designing of beads, bags, shoes etc. The colours and designs we see on women at weddings, traditional marriages, burials, and at other social events, are the handiwork of artisans who daily create new designs in head wears, dresses and facial appearances (makeup). Many theatre artists have excelled through this art. This can be seen in the various Nollywood films produced in the country.

The technical skills in dressmaking, beads making, knitting etc, make theatre graduates well equipped to open fashion houses, hair/makeup studios, engage in knitting of sweaters, head dresses etc for commercial purposes. Lighting and technology experts like Molinta Enendu, Sonny Ododo, Alphonsus Orisharemi, Kenneth Njoku and others have made great impact on stage design and technology both nationally and internationally, over the years. Many of the students taught by these professionals are making waves in their various spaces today. Some of these persons include: Andrew Esekong, Charles Nwadigwe, Nsefield Uwem, Ubong Pius, to mention a few.

Playwriting and Entrepreneurship

This area creates opportunities for one to develop himself/herself in writing dramatic texts for publication, short stories for radio and children's drama, television scripts, writing for the newspaper and magazines and so on. According to Atakpo: …" the theatre artist from his training is a potential job creator. He is a writer, writing playscripts for sale. He writes playscripts for radio, television and film. He is also a short story writer for newspapers and magazines "(11). There are many theatre graduates who engage in freedance writing to earn a living. According to Lucky, "over the years, screenwriting has been one of the freelance professions or businesses. It is the art and craft of writing sripts for any of the following: feature films/movies, video games, television production etc" (148).

Directing and Entrepreneurship

This is yet another area that many young Nigerian graduates have explored and can still explore to make a living. EjekeOdiri sees directing as:

> an art of making your creative ideas precede through the imaginations of your cast and crew; it is the ability to use the skills of other artists as your instruments to achieve your goal in a production through effective leadership". Directing means the control of the disparate parts (elements) in the evolution of a production, uniting and harmonizing the acting, costumes, lighting, sound, stage design, and other paraphernalia the show requires artistically (i).

Ejeke also quotes Huberman, Pope and Ludwig as saying that "the theatre director is an obsessive organizer with skills, training, and talent in many areas and disciplines" (4). According to Johnson, "A director has to be masterly enough in his acumen and judgment to tame and tone every art and artist to the acceptable dimension" (146). Quoting from another of his published works on directing, Johnson defines directing as;

> an intellectually-tasking, create-theatrical stage activity, which involves the management of artistic personnel and creative devices towards a deliberate moulding of a perceived vision, into its most sublime form. It is the master art of the theatre which utilizes all the theatrics of theatricalities in the process of presenting a vision of life (160).

By these submissions, the director becomes an indispensable personality that is very central to the coordination or planning and execution of the production project. He is considered a highly versatile creator who must be well knowledgeable in assembling and employing both human and material resources, as well as finances to achieve a wholesome, consumable artistic meal.

Whether in directing for the stage or screen, individuals have survived through offerings from this art. A typical example is what is happening in the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) in addition to live commercial theatre performances.

Acting and Entrepreneurship

Both in acting for the stage and screen many young people are surviving through this art. Again, we can attest to what the Nigerian film industry is doing in this direction. Online acting of short skits is another new trend that young people have explored to keep themselves above the economic limitations created by recession. There are very many theatre graduates who formed theatre groups and are performing for commercial purposes. Among these are Ezekiel Charle-EdiyieAfriacn Troupe (Uyo), Invince Sunday, NditoUforo Theatre Troupe (Uyo), Ime Pual, New Dawn Entertainers (Uyo), Jackson Abasiodiongo Jacky African (Uyo).

Dance, Choreography and Entrepreneurship

These are very vibrant and lucrative areas of theatre discipline in which Nigerians all over have made great impacts in their spaces. Lucky notes that "… Choreography is the business of designing dancing movements by a choreographer for individuals, groups, or music firms" 'sic' (146). According to him, the enormous potentials of this art stand it out as a lucrative field begging for exploration. He particularly draws attention to the positive impacts of the works of Nigel Lythgoe – superstars of Dance and co-created television director and film producer who created. "So, you Think You Can Dance?" According to Lucky, these programmes can be replicated in Nigeria for buddying artists with "interest in dance and music" (146). On-line dance performances are also very common features on the social media space. Over time we have witnessed the emergence of dance troupes like the Ikoon Africana managed by the Ufford family in Akwa Ibom State, Ebekpo Ubong Abasi cultural Troupe, managed by Edikan Ekpenyong, Udo Miriam Troupe, Okon Ekpe Cultural Group, The Ethical Troupe etc. all in Akwa Ibom State. As duly noted by Ayakoroma:

> Some Nigerians are also currently making a living through dance and choreography. These are people who are dance instructors, teaching young children the art of dance. Furthermore, the horizon has been broadened with the introduction of calisthenics into state events. Abuja Carnival, Calabar Christmas Carnival (145).

When discussing dance, theatre practitioners like Bakare Ojo Rasaki, Arnold Udoka, Ifure Ufford-Azorbo, Nsikan Brendan, etc readily come to mind and they are making

waves in this field not only as teachers in government employ, but also as floaters of business enterprises in their own right.

Entertainment Art and Entrepreneurship

Entertainment as an art is considered as the action of providing amusement or enjoyment for oneself and others. It is a moment where creativity is employed to create fun and laughter, thereby providing relaxation to an audience. They are activities that are designed towards "providing diversion, or that gives people the opportunity to amuse themselves in their leisure time" (Lucky, 147). It accommodates such artistic forms like "comedy, cinema, theatre, sports, dancing, stage and performances, which are shown on TV, at the movies or in the theatre. Entertainment provides fun, enjoyment and laughter for the audience" (147). Dandaura recognizes Hubert Ogunde as the first to make effort to "eke out a living solely from live theatre" (60). He also notes that, Ogunde's appointment as the founding artistic director of the National Troupe of Nigeria by the Federal Government in 1989 is a testimony to the success of his theatre enterprise" (60-61).

Mr. Boniface Ebewo from Akwa Ibom State is popular with his *Real Brass Band*. He has made a name for himself through musical performances and other forms of entertainment at burials, weddings, government functions and other social functions. Public event in Nigeria have been aesthetically enhanced through the creative inventions of the Real Brass Band. We can therefore say that Mr. Boniface Ebewo, a graduate student of Theatre Arts Department in the University of Uyo currently studying for his Ph.D, is a highly enterprising and successful entrepreneur that is worthy of emulation. Today, many other musical brass entertainment groups are coming up in the state, taking a cue from what Mr. Ebewo has done. Comedy as a genre of literature also presents itself as an avenue through which audiences could be entertained. Whether through live theatre, film, social media skits etc., theatre artists can explore relevant contents and present same in comic forms for economic benefits.

Filmmaking is another field in the theatre that offers entertainment, and so much opportunities for economic improvement. As noted by Ayakoroma, "The Nigerian Film Industry, (popularly called, Nollywood, and other emerging "woods"), is gradually becoming a global brand" (143). This implies that the Nigerian film art is saleable both within and outside the shores of the country, and has been patronized by the entire world, offering artists in it, unimaginable exposure to local and international markets whether as directors, actors, costume/makeup designers, light/set designers, photographers, producers, location managers, soundmen, script writers, editors etc. The

above are opportunities for economic venture. According to Ayakoroma …filmmaking offers several windows of opportunity for the Nigerian youth to eke out a decent living. The opportunities abound in front of the camera and behind the camera" (144).

Theatre Management and Entrepreneurship

Management is the art of organizing material and human resources towards the realization of a goal. It is the coordination of all the resources of an organization through the processes of planning, directing and controlling, to achieve an identified target. This is very central to theatre and entrepreneurship, as no entrepreneur can succeed without the effective management of the human and material resources available to him. In fact, this aspect of the theatre is the core of entrepreneurship. According to Rantimi, "the theatre must train events managers to handle the packaging, audience sourcing, crowd control, theatrical venue and relevant publicity gimmick necessary for a successful production" (129). He further avers that:

> Theatre is marketable only when the practitioners consider it from the business point of view. The management and marketing of the theatre is undergoing changes in the face of capitalism and financial survivalism. Today's theatre practitioners have to study those factors that accounted for the success of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Moses Olaiya Adedumo's theatres, before the era of the cinema in Nigeria (130).

This implies that, the knowledge of theatre management can equip a theatre artist with skills of events management, tourism event management, logistics, packaging and marketing of products. Literary educational products, (books etc), entertainment products – dance, music, drama etc, costume/dressmaking products, etc, can be packaged to meet the taste of the end users. And this, theatre management can help do.

Conclusion

The current trend in global economic changes has placed an unprecedented demand on theatre and the need to grow skills of entrepreneurship as well as create small and medium-sized businesses to exploit its ability to help grow the economy. This has empowered the individual, both in terms of employment and financial growth. The paper addressed the need to create an interventive strategy to mitigate the economic crises in the country through the instrumentality of theatre practice. It submitted that

there is the need for theatre arts curriculum to be reviewed to focus more on entrepreneurial practices. For, according to Rantimi:

> The theatre curriculum must be designed to incorporate elements of dynamism as pertaining to dealing with social and economic realities as evident in the society. The curriculum must be tailored towards empowering the graduates of the discipline to achieve economic independence (131).

With the afore discussions on the subject of economic recession and survival of the Nigerian theatre graduate, it can be deduced that the theatre discipline has so much to offer and should be deployed as a catalyst to serve individuals, families communities and government to achieve the needed change and development.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that:

i. There is the need for leaders and government to invest in people by creating micro-economic credit schemes and making credit facilities and marketing services accessible to theatre practitioners. Supportive incentives should be created to assist small-scale theatre entrepreneurs to help them grow their industries. The provision of loans and grants by government and non-government organizations is also an option that can help theatre artist grow their art.

ii. It is imperative to state that no entrepreneur can make much impact to sustain his success without an effective Information Communication Technology (ICT) skill. The cybernetic feats in the information and technology world offers dimensions of opportunities for theatre artists to explore for skills development. This will also help promote interconnectivity within the global community.

iii. Theatre scholars should adopt a change of approach towards their teaching to allow room for novel inventions. Every course taught should be approached with a mindset of helping students to see it as an opportunity to employ themselves through it. Course outlines that reveal business interest should be designed e.g Creative Drama Experience and Entrepreneurship etc.

iv. A new curriculum that emphasizes and attaches entrepreneurial skill acquisition on every theatre field should be developed. This is important to enable teachers

realize and prepare from the outset, to engage themselves and their learners with activities that will provoke creative explorations and inventions.

v. The need for individuals to seek for collaboration with other individuals, corporate bodies, government etc. to help showcase their talents and skills in the arts is also a very vital approach towards achieving better economic conditions for theatre graduates.

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