

## NIGERIAN CULTURAL VALUE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Nigeria as a nation is blessed with cultural Diversities which suppose to be an added advantage to development but rather, this huge advantage has been thrown to the winds. Despite various economic and social measures taken by successful governments to address the tide of economic problems, Nigeria's economic and development aspirations continued to manifest in increase in unemployment, Inflation, poverty, corruption, soaring in prices of good and services. This is because, Nigeria has failed to acknowledge the cultural dimension of development. This is as a result of the fact that there has not been adequate sensitization of Nigerians and their policy makers to the cultural dimension of development. That which gave order and meaning to the past generations has been lost and superimposed by alien cultural heritage from the colonial Masters. Development prgorammes that take into account the cultural diversity of Nigeria and the place of culture in enhancing development of the country is lacking. This paper therefore posits that, there is the need to recognize, sustain and preserve the culture of the people and give them sense of belonging in development agenda for a sustained economic growth and development.*

**KeyWord:** *Culture, Sensitization, Employment Generation, Poverty Reduction and Economic Development*

### INTRODUCTION

Culture is a powerful and necessary driver for development with community – wide social, economic and environmental impacts. But the Nigerian culture has not be harnessed for this purpose rather the Nigerian cultural values have been thrown to the winds and consequently fading away. Nigeria has failed to recognize the importance of culture in the attainment of socio-economic development and harness same for national development. In chapter 4 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, Nigerian pledges to protect, preserve and promote the Nigerian culture which enhances human dignity as well as to encourage development of technological and scientific studies which enhances cultural values. There is a general acceptance that culture must have a role in guiding a population along a particular part, rather than making use of Nigerian's culture for national building, Nigerian has abandonee her rich and enviable cultural heritage for an alien one. Nigerian's lacks a viable culture compass and an ideology, rooted in culture.

Nigerians have their peculiar and established cultures that is evidenced in their living styles and way of life. Their values and believed norms are essential elements of their culture. These are advanced within their art forms, performing arts and other activities like communal living, religious practices, marriages and other kinds or social and practical way of living. However, with the eventual arrival of the western culture through colonialism, these Nigeria rich cultural values are not only challenged but are constantly threatened to extinction. Rather than making use of Nigerian's culture for national building, Nigerians have discarded her rich and enviable cultural heritage. Development as a strategy for improving peoples standard of living, quality of life, stability and growth of the economy must be viewed from the perspective of culture in order to enhance socio-economic development. Culture is a catalyst for a total societal change, with the strength of generating positive and sustainable transformations of economic development. In general, culture dictates what is and what is not, situationally relevant in terms of socio- economic development and otherwise. It is an important factor in gavanizing social inclusion and eradicating poverty, providing for economic growth

and active participation in development processes, as well as an important contribution in the reduction of poverty.

Recognition and inclusion of culture as an essential component of sustainable development provide important opportunities that help to preserve our social fabric, attract investments and improve our economic returns. Development programmes that takes into consideration the link between cultural diversities are likely to bring better dividend. Nigeria has not been able to fully acknowledge the cultural dimension of development. Therefore there has not been adequate sensitization of our policy makers and the general public to the development component of culture. However, there cannot be adequate and true socio-economic development in the absence of culture.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Nigerian economy has not been fully developed since independence. The unstable nature of the Nigeria economy is a logical outcome of the continued subjugation and control of the Nigerian economy by external powers and culture. There has been mass poverty, Increased unemployment, high cost of things, corruption etc. This is because Nigeria has failed to acknowledge the cultural dimension of development.

Development as a strategy for improving peoples standard of living, quality of life, stability and growth of the economy must be viewed from the cultural perspective in order to enhance the socio-economic development. Rather than making use of Nigeria's culture for national building, Nigeria's has abandoned her rich and enviable cultural heritage for an alien one. Nigeria lack a viable culture compass and an ideology rooted in their culture. This paper therefore posit that there can be no true socio-economic development in the absence of well articulate and cultural base policies.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Cultural values shape work related attitudes and behaviours, it defines roles for individuals in the social structure and prescribes guiding principles and values in ones life. Culture as it is generally understood is the totality of traits and characters that are common to a particular set of people to the extent that it marks them out from the other people or societies. These common traits go on to include their language, dance, music, work art, religion, dressing and so on. It also includes peoples social norms, taboo's and values. Culture is the umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of the individuals in these groups. Humans acquire culture through the learning process of acculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies.

According to Steve .A Nkom (2008:3) culture encompasses the world view of a people, the cognitive processes which structures the thinking and mindset of the people; the linguistic forms through which they communicate or express their ideas; the aesthetic manifestation of their feelings and creativity in art, music, dance and other aesthetic forms; the behavioural patterns which shape their actions; and the pattern of social structures which govern their ways of interacting with individuals, groups and peoples both within and outside their society. In addition to these elements is the cognitive dimension which relates to the skill and knowledge framework for getting things done, for inventing and producing those tools, implements and appliances which facilitate work, comfort and leisure.

These material accomplishments which derive from the people's indigenous senses and technology are as much a part of culture and are the customs, traditions, arts, dances and festivals which are often emphasized in discussions on culture.

It can be seen from Steve's elaboration and summation that it is unthinkable to imagine how a society can achieve any meaningful development without a sound cultural base.

Sachs (2000) identifies number of factors which have fundamentally affected developments in various parts of the world which can be detached from the conception of culture. He notes the (dis) advantages of geography and climate such as access to natural resources, being land locked or part of the poor, volatile neighborhood. Stressing on the issue, Easterly (2006) discusses the heavy burden on Africa associated with

the historically arbitrary demarcation of international borders. Development may have to do with geography and climate, with natural resources, management and with the toxic interactions between ethnic diversity and artificial borders, than with purely cultural factors. Contrarily, Porter (1990:26) stressed that geography, climate and natural resources are gradually giving way to knowledge, education and access to new technologies as the key drivers of production, and economic growth. He maintained that the world is witnessing the gradual emergence of a universal, global culture based on such values as adherence to civil and human rights, gender equality, respect for property rights, the rule of law, acceptance of market forces as a mechanism for resources allocation. Porter maintains that his assertion that education and the acquisition of knowledge and skills are desirable development objective, that they are making a statement that holds true across different regions of the world, that applies to all contemporary civilizations. Of course, societies will differ in the ways and the extent to which they have internalized some of these value in their policies, their traditions and their institutions. Acceptance of desirability of gender equality for instance, does not mean that inequalities and injustices based on gender- deeply entrenched in all our cultures, to a greater or less or extent, will suddenly disappear. But few would disagree with the thesis that gender disparities are out of step with modernity and that their presence retards human progress. Development is not only about reducing poverty and expanding opportunities against the background of rising incomes. It is also in a very fundamental way about adopting a set of values that are compatible with humanity's moral development.

#### **CULTURAL VALUES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Culture is one of the main pillars and powerful driver for development and sustenance of communities. No society can progress or develop in its absence. Culture is connected to development, it is the identity where common values, attitudes, preferences, individual consumption behaviours, values related to environmental stewardship, knowledge that are attributed to the behavior in a particular social; group, and has a positive influence on social development in any given country. There is an intrinsic value of culture to a society, irrespective of its place in the human development index, which makes it a prerequisite consideration for any development. An understanding and consideration of the cultural aspect of society is critical to adapting development approaches to local context and ensuring successful outcomes. A constellation of cultural values suited for modern business seems to be a critical ingredient for any progression. The culture sector helps support the economy through direct and indirect jobs creation politically; culture plays a national part in developing policy that is serious about human rights. A free and strong unadulterated cultural sector will promote other rights and values such as freedom of expression, diversity and debate about needs in society. It ensures unity during crisis, influences identity, debate and dialogue. The benefit of culture for individuals can spill over society as a whole.

Socially, culture helps to build the social capital which is the glue that holds the community together. This brings the community together where they participate on cultural activities such as cultural festivals, fun fares, cultural music's and dances. Most of the dances and local music are developed during the fun fares and cultural dances.

These music and dances so form are developed during community cultural activities which are developed into highlife music, juju music, Afro music's and other forms of music for the western world and a larger society. These creates social solidarity and cohesion, fostering social inclusion, community empowerment, capacity building and enhancing confidence participation. Culture contributes to a healthy population in several ways. Creativity and cultural engagement have shown to improve both marital and physical health.

Participation of arts can relieve isolation and promote identity formation which has positive health benefits. Culture is being integrated into health care in Nigeria where there are thousands and of traditional medical practitioners who use our cultural herbs to cure and safe guard so many people from illnesses. These cultural/traditional medicines are relied upon by thousands of Nigerians.

Over the years, the Nigerian music industry, both traditional and modern have grown exponentially and has had a direct impact on Nigerian economies. There are now small scale vendors who have established local laboratories to produce music for sale. Despite the low market cost, music has the potential to create job's which in turn reduce poverty.

Another cultural manifestation which merits closer consideration is the Nigerian film industry. according to Koichiro Malsuura, the former UNESCO Director General “ Films and video production are shining examples of how cultural industries, as vehicle of identity, values and meanings, can open the door to dialogue and understanding between peoples but also to economic growth and development” (UNESCO 2009). Thus, Nigeria films are expression of the continents cultural identity and demonstrates its endeavour to overcome foreign influence and develop its own voice.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

There is an intrinsic value of culture to a society, which makes it a prerequisite consideration for development. An understanding and consideration of the cultural aspect of a society is critical to adapting development approaches to local contents and ensuring successful outcomes. Nigeria can make good success story in development through respect for her culture and making her economy to be rooted in culture. Hereditary qualities are to be improved and assisted since it is fundamental to the survival of any society rather than replacing them with a culture that is alien to the society. There is need to broaden the participation of Nigerians in cultural life through the sensitization of the public and policy makers to adopt a legal framework that will reflect the cultural components of development.

Moreover, for Nigeria to experience a meaningful growth, there must be a synergy between Nigerian traditional values and modernity. Nigeria must be proud of her culture, taste and values. Nigeria lacks a viable culture compass and an ideology rooted in culture. There is need to create a policy based on the future and traditions of our people tailored to the peculiarities of our society. Despite the number of challenges that film and music industries has being facing in Nigeria, including financial constraints, piracy, problems in distribution and lack of proper regulating framework, Muedio (2013) confirmed that the Nigerian film and music industries are not only in entertainment industry but rather an important money maker. These entertainment industry has shinned the light of Nigerian youths and has remained the country’s shinning light, this paper insists and posits that effort should be made to ensure that this light continues to shine. These are major channels that expose our culture and way of life to the outside world.

There is need to broaden the participation of Nigerians in encouraging and enhancing the traditional medicine, traditional music and dances and other types of our cultural beliefs and practices that are beneficial to our existence instead of replacing them with foreign cultures there must be a synergy between Nigeria traditional values and modernity.

### **SUMMARY/ CONCLUSION**

Culture is a catalyst for comprehensive societal changes, with the ability of generating positive and sustainable transformations of economic development. It is an important factor in building social inclusion and eradicating poverty, providing for economic growth and active participation in development processes, as well as an important component of sustainable development. Culture is a driver for development as well as an important contribution in the reduction of poverty. Participation in the cultural sector and the engagement of cultural values provide important opportunities for development. Culture is one of the main pillar’s of development and sustenance of communities and no society can progress in its absence. According to Uyah (2006) A balanced development can only be assured by making cultural factors an integral part of the strategies designed to achieve it, consequently, these strategies should always be derived in the light of the historical, social and cultural context of each society. Nigeria can still make good success story in development through respect for her culture and making her economy to be rooted in her culture.

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