

**A REPORT ON AN ADIRE PRODUCTION WORKSHOP AS AN INTERVENTION FOR SKILLS
ACQUISITION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION AMONG YOUTHS OF OTTO / IJANIKIN IN
LAGOS STATE NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

One of the dominant social problems in Nigeria is unemployment. Most economies tend to be unable to make use of the labour of its entire people. That is why emphasis is laid on education for self-reliance in many countries. The National Policy on Education in Nigeria is tailored to achieve that (Daira, 2007). The wish of all youths after graduation from an institution is to secure a good job (i.e. white or blue collar jobs) but unfortunately, not all of them are lucky. Joblessness is a serious social problem. Art and craft provides the opportunity for all, to acquire specialized skills for possible self-employment. Textile Design has been identified as an area for self-reliance education by Bakare Olumide. Tie-dye, batik, screen-printing and other textile related skills acquisition would enable the individuals to practice these skills and earn a living. Adire production has been identified by the facilitators to be one of the cottage art industries and a possible means of providing employment, succor and income generation for the youths of Otto/Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria. This can reduce the incidence of poverty through self-employment. Research Design, Ethnographic data collection, 10 facilitators and 150 trainees were involved in the workshop. Ethnographic understanding is developed through close exploration of several sources of data. It was discovered that, Otto/Ijanikin youths were excited by involving in different techniques of dyeing during the session and the training was a haven to them and brought them closer to entrepreneurial orbit. The workshop provide training that enable Otto/Ijanikin youths (both University of Ado Ekiti (CESADEP) and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos students) to acquire specialized skills of craftsmanship that would empower them to compete globally. Also, it refocuses vocational education qualities for the attainment of poverty eradication, wealth creation and employment generation. It is recommended that adire production has a great and viable potential, if government can provide an enabling environment, equipment, facilities, fund, man power etc. for the youths to acquire this specialized skill to reduce poverty in the society, because it is believed that informal sectors cater for the mass employment in African nations.

Key Words: Adire, Entrepreneurship, Poverty Alleviation, Skills

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is about starting one's own enterprise. Earning profit from its development remains a strong policy option for developing countries in manufacturing and industrial sectors (Afolayan and Kolawole, 2012). Entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies. It contributes in no small way towards creating new jobs, wealth creation, poverty reduction and income generating for individuals. Economic depression in most of the world countries, just like Nigeria has led to unemployment among youths and school graduates (Keister, 2005 and Abubakar, 2010). The youth needs a stop gap measure to combat the unemployment maniacs that has become an albatross for the Nigerian states (Dare, 2007).

Art in Nigeria was a major enterprise in the maintenance, survival and the development of the society. Artist in traditional societies including Nigerian communities were used to sustain the socio-economic and religious existence of the society (Oladimeji, 2007). The totality of the socio-cultural, geographical and environmental conditions of an ethnic group have major impact on the popularity and uniqueness of the art commonly found in such a community. As a result of climatic disparities, *Adire* art production differs from one tribe to another, Cottage art industry operation is essentially based on small scale production. Design inspirations are derived from myths, culture, folklore, and symbols of the particular locality. After so many years of creative endeavours, most cottage art industries are still faced with problems.

The Cottage art industry is presently faced with the challenges of survival because of socio-economic changes resulting from global industrialization (Bakare, 2007). Unfortunately, the products of most cottage art industries have lost patronage significantly to foreign industries. Cottage art, though dying out at the beginning of the 20th century noticeably exists in a number of cases. Cottage art industry has become a tradition among the Yoruba people and is adapting local materials using old techniques and skills, to serve new needs. *Adire* production has been identified to be one of the cottage art industries and means of providing employment, succor and income generation for the youths of Otto/ Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria to reduce the incidence of

poverty. This art plays an important role in projecting Nigeria's economy, and culture to the outside world.

Studying the art of a culture and its industry requires information about the group, its beliefs, values, and social practices. In recent times, the use of *adire* for decorative purposes has become a worldwide thing. Informal skill has been relegated to the background among youths in Nigeria; which poses a serious social and economy problem for the younger generation. The problem of this study is to organize vocational skill training in *adire* for the development of Oto/Ijanikin youths by African ESSENTIALS, Center for Home-made Textile Arts, Lagos.

In doing this, they will be enlightened on how to make different *adire* techniques of good colour to earn a good living and transfer the knowledge to the younger ones. The main thrust of study was to expose Oto/ Ijanikin Youths to practical reality in making *Adire*. The study was concentrated on Oto/ Ijanikin youths, impacting on them the procedure of making *adire* such as: folding, tying, stitching, pleating and cassava resist method to achieve different colour effect of brocade material.

Concept of *Adire* Making and Entrepreneurship

Adire resist fabric constitutes a vital part of the material culture of Yoruba people of Western Nigeria and this art form (patterned cloth) is dynamic, widely practiced and ubiquitous. *Adire* is a Yoruba word which simply means *tie and dye*. A combination of two Yoruba words meaning *Adi* which means to tie and "*Re*" which means to dye. This is a resist technique with indigo tied or stitched pattern arranged symmetrically within a grid or on a central axis, and then likely over dyed to reduce contrast. This process involves keeping some areas of the cloth from absorbing dye – tying, stitching, covering areas with paste or wax or clamping the cloth between carved blocks of wood to producing a negative image which in the case of *adire* would be a white pattern on a blue background. *Adire* is the specialty of Nigeria's Yoruba (Bakare, 2014). In the early 20th century, Simonds and Barbour (1972) document new access to large quantities of imported shirting materials via the spread of European textile merchants in Abeokuta and other towns, which encouraged the women entrepreneurial and artistic efforts, in making *adire* a major local craft in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ede and Oshogbo, that attract buyers from all over West Africa

Adire is a practical skill development designed to expose youths of Oto/Ijanikin to practical realities. We must understand that nowadays, wealth flows around entrepreneurship because despite the resources of Nigeria, many youths are still suffering from hunger since inception of austerity and recession. The rate of unemployment is alarming and the informal education skill has been suggested for the solution. Hardly can someone hear of any culture without traces of resist fabric techniques. The wish of all youths after graduation is to secure a good job. Unfortunately, not all of them are lucky; joblessness is a serious socio-malaise. Art provides the opportunity for all to acquire vocational skill needed not only to become qualified job seekers but also employers of labours. Oladimeji (2005), observes that as a vocational subject, art was relevant in the pre-historic period and shall forever continue to be relevant in any society, for as long as it continues to be a direct preparation and participation in occupation of social values. Trainings in art and craft empower individuals to be independent in daily living, more socially acceptable and be able to maintain a useful role in the community they belong (Oladimeji, 2004).

According to the dictionary of contemporary English (2001), Enterprise is the ability to think of new activities or ideas and make them work. It may also refer to skills acquired from vocational practical training. This is the type of training that will be design for the preparation of individual learner to earn a living that is to be self-reliant. It is an aspect of educational skills that utilizes knowledge in the acquisition of practical and applied skill in the solution of technical problems (Olawepo, 1992). Small scale enterprise is useful to the Nigerian economy in the areas of service, distribution and production industries. The growth of an economy usually requires a large number or small changes, each taking advantage of local opportunities and availability of resources and which in turn make further growth possible, thus, small scale enterprise is an aspect of entrepreneurship, which is important to the economic development of a given country (Dara, 2007).

Eicher, (2003), the importance of the industry to understand the world view of the various societies is made to manifest. While the focus of the different scholars differs, they were however unanimous in the view that cloth and textile production, most notably *Adire*, remains a local, and individual or family driven cottage art industry. More often than not, the various stakeholders in the industries face challenges that are common to most informal sector operators. These problems relate to how informal sector operators negotiate the socio-economy and political space, especially in fledgling societies of the third world. It is in view of this that a study of empowerment of the poor through cloth making and textile production becomes inevitable among Otto / Ijanikin youths.

Research Methodology

Ethnographic data collection was used to obtain information on facilitators background, imitation into dyeing techniques and the social functions served by the workshop. An ethnographic understanding is developed through close exploration of several sources of data. Using these data sources as foundation, the ethnographer relies on cultural frame of analysis. Long-term engagement in the field setting or place where the ethnography takes place is called participants observation. Data in observer research was based on observer notes, logs, diaries etc. Additional data were obtained in items such as published and unpublished documents, papers, books, public records, letters, photographs, videos and assorted artefacts. The facilitators consist of 10 persons and participants (trainees) consist of 150 Otto/ Ijanikin youths in Lagos state of Nigeria (both University of Ado Ekiti (CESADEP) and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education students). The composition was to create total freedom and interaction between them, that is, the varied levels of mutual interaction during the workshop (Personal communication by Kolawole Christianah Yeyetunde, 1/10/17).

Adire Training Procedure:

The training took place on October 1st 2016, by Bakare Olayinka Olumide, who was the chief facilitator and with other facilitators such as Kolawole Christianah Yeyetunde, Tunde Salako, Adeleye Tosin, Elias Olarewaju, Folarin Image, Kassin Waheed, Kayode Anifowose, and Henry Farotimi (Personal communication by Waheed Kassim, 1/10/17). This workshop led to unleashing of dyeing techniques enthusiasm, because quite a number of trainees (Otto / Ijanikin youths) have never come across the practical aspect of dyeing juice session (Personal communication by Adeleye Tosin, 1/10/17).

Freedom of expression was emphasized during the workshop and several methods were introduced to the youths such as:

- i. *Adire Oniko* – Tie resist (e.g. Bull eye, Folding, or crumpling, Stripes, Dots or Rings).
- ii. *Adire Alabere* – Stitched resist, was taught to the youths. It is not how old this technique is, but it postdates *Adire Oniko*. Thread was also used resist but the designs were made by stitching.
- iii. *Adire Eleko* – Paste resist, technique dated to the 20th century – long after the period when enslaved Africans were being brought to the Western Hemisphere was introduced.

It was further explained to the youths that *adire eleko* has names such as, *Eiye pe*, (all birds), Ibadan dun (Ibadan is sweet), *Olokun means "goddess of the sea"*, *Oga* (Ostrich) and others are more stream of consciousness (Personal communication by Salako Tunde, 1/10/17).

Conclusion

The trainees (youths) of Otto / Ijanikin were encouraged and uplifted as they found themselves in tying, stitching, pasting batik and dyeing for the first time, at the same condition with their masters at the same center. The trainers (facilitators) trained youths to acquire skills and competences to explore life's opportunity and take care of their life. *Adire* training was a haven to youths and brings them to the center of entrepreneurial orbit and ultimate tourist destination that was created (Personal communication by Elias Olarewaju, 1/10/17). The *adire* training was captured with the objectives which the facilitators set out to achieve, that is poverty reduction and skill acquisition.

Recommendation

There are a lot of potentials in *adire* making if government can provide training that will enable youths acquired specialized skill that will empower them to compete globally help in alleviating

poverty and reduce the high level of unemployment in the country. It will also provide a platform for professionals and non-professionals to explore and express their visual vocabularies in a variety of media.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Adeleye Tosin, 01/10/2017.
Elias Olarenwaju, 01/10/2017.
Kolawole Christianah Yeyetunde, 01/10/2017.
Salako Tunde, 01/10/2017.
Waheed Kassim Omotola, 01/10/2017.

APPENDIX



Plate 1: Youths exploring tie-dye process. (Source: Bakare Olumide, 1/10/17)



Plate 2: Youths trying stitching & knotting method. (Source: Bakare Olumide,1/10/17)



Plate 3: Dyeing section, source: Bakare Olumide,1/10/17



Plate 4: dyed Handkerchief display, (source: Bakare Olumide, 1/10/17).



Plate 5: Diagonal folding displayed. (Source: Bakare Olumide, 1/10/17)

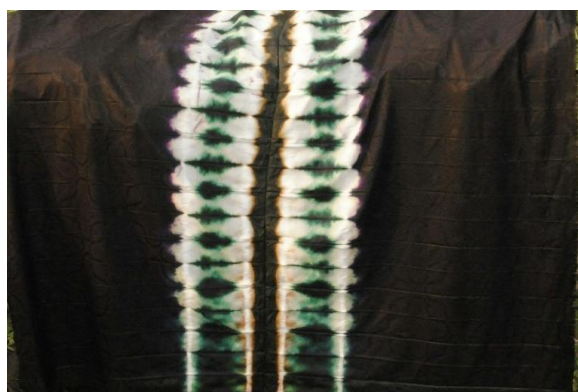


Plate 6: Pleating Method displayed. (Source: Bakare Olumide, 1/10/17).