



CRAFT AND ART EDUCATION FOR FAMILY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at reviewing different ways through craft and Art education can be encouraged. The paper highlighted how Art and Craft Education can help and enrich the conscience and well being of the society. The strategies that can be adopted in terms of what individuals can do for themselves and what the government can do to improve the economic status of the family. It also identifies how Craft and Art Education can be commercialized to generate funds for the individual either through direct or indirect education of the family for economic empowerment. It also discusses its importance and the decorative strategies of its usefulness in the home, identifies the problems in the impartation and ways of solving them.

INTRODUCTION

Art and Craft as a skill has the potential for economic empowerment and one of the means through which it can realize this potentiality is by encouraging Craft and Art Education in the becoming increasingly mechanized and standardized gives people the opportunity to work with their hands and to expose their individuality. Presently as the society is faced with problems such as unemployment, corruption, food scarcity, various economic reform measures, inflation globalization, privatization among others. Art and Craft should made to identify with these problems and deal appropriately with them. Lemchi (2001) noted that to deal with these issues. Families should first and foremost be economically empowered as it is suspected that poverty is the causative factor to most of the problems”.

Craft is an integral aspect of Art that helps develop creative abilities and manipulative skill that will enable them function effectively in the society. It was stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004) that children should be taught craft to give the child opportunities in developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity. Craft also often used in occupational therapy, e.g. a patient might be taught a craft to develop weekend muscles or to help in gaining use of an artificial limb. An emotionally disturbed person might be taught a craft that would serve as an outlet for feelings. Craftwork also provides the disable with purposeful activity that diverts attention from the handicaps.

Empowerment is the process and the result of the process whereby the powerless or the powerful members of the society gain greater access and control over material and knowledge, resources, challenges and ideologies of discrimination and subordination as well as transformation of the institutions and structures through which unequal access and control over resources is sustained and perpetuated". According to Oxfam, Olakulehin and Ojo (2006) citing Bathiwa (1995). The authors then noted that "empowerment involves challenging oppression which compels millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which deny them their human right". Okeke (1995) submitted that "to empower means to give authority to enable a person or group of persons gain power". Empowerment there implies that the person or group of persons being empowered has hitherto lack power or authority by circumstances, denial or default. Empowerment can be general or specific to certain area of life such as choice of career, type and level of education and what have you. It can also be individual or collective. It is collective if the enablement affects the group as a whole for example, "the rural society". It is in this light of the above that this paper will review ways in which Art & Craft Education can be encouraged for family economic empowerment.

Art and Craft

Art and Crafts comprise a whole host of activities and hobbies that are related to making things with one's own hands and skill. These can be sub-divided into handicrafts or "traditional crafts which have been practiced for centuries, while others are modern inventions, or popularizations of crafts which were originally practiced in a very small geographic area. Most crafts require a combination of skill, speed, patience, but they can also be learnt on a more basic level by virtually

anyone. Many community workshops offering to teach basic craft become extremely popular for brief periods of time (a few months, or a few years), spreading rapidly among the crafting population as everyone emulates the first example, then their popularity wanes until a later resurgence.

The term craft also refers to the production of artistic or creations that requires a high degree of tacit knowledge, are high technical, require specialized equipment and or facilities to produce, involve manual labour or a blue-collar work ethic, are accessible to the general public and are constructed from materials with histories that exceed the boundaries of western art history, such as ceramics, glass, textiles, metal and wood. These products are produced within a specific community of practice and while they differ from the products produced within the communities of art and design, the boundaries of such often overlap resulting in hybrid objects. As the interpretation and validation of art is frequently a matter of context, an audience may perceive crafted objects as art objects when these objects are viewed in an art context, such as in a museum or in position of prominence in one's home. The term can also refer to the useful rural crafts of the agricultural countryside. Craftsmanship refers to plato's idea of specialization, in which the lower society has a specific job in the greater society so that it functions properly as a whole.

Types of Arts and Crafts

There are almost as many variations on the theme of "arts and craft" as there are crafters with time on their hands, but they can be broken down into a number of categories:

Crafts involving Textiles

Banner-making, calligraphy, Canvas work, Cross-stitch, Crocheting, Curve stitching, Embroidery, Felting, Knitting, Lace-making, Lucet, Macrame, Millinery, Needlepoint, Patchwork, Quilting, Ribbon embroidery, Rug making, Sewing, Shoemaking, Spinning (textiles), Spirally, (also see scrap booking), String art, Tapestry, Tatting, Weaving, T-shirt art.

Craft involving Wood, Metal and Clay

Metalworking, Jewelry, Pottery, Sculpture, Woodworking, Cabinet making, Chip carving, Marquetry, Wagaen-nuri Japanese Lacquer ware, Wood burning and wood turning.

Craft involving Paper or Canvas

Altered books, Altered Art, Artists Trading Cards, Bookbinding, Calligraphy, Card making, Card Modeling, Collage, Decoupage, Embossing, Iris Folding, Marbling, Origami, Paper Craft, Papier-mache, Parchment craft, Quelling of Paper Filigreed, Scrap booking, Rubber Stamping/Acrylic Stamping and tea Folding.

Craft involving Plants

Basket weaving, Corn Dolly making, Flora Design, Pressed Flower Craft and Straw Marquetry.

Other Crafts

Ballon Animal, Beadwork, Doll making, Dollhouse construction and furnishing, Egg Decoration, Etching, Glassblowing, Lapidary, Miniatures, Mosaics, Pioneering, Stained glass, Toy making and Polymer clay.

IMPORTANCE OF ART AND CRAFT AND EDUCATION

Art is the product of creative human activity in which materials are shaped or selected to convey an idea, emotion or visually interesting form. The word art can refer to the visual art. We also use the word art in a more general sense to encompass other forms of creativity such as dance, drama and music, or even to describe skill in almost any activity such as bead making, bread making, book binding of decorative or functional objects, generally by hand.

According to Onwunedo (1996) “encouraging crafts is very important because the knowledge of craft helps student or individual to develop their creative ability and good taste”. The knowledge of art and craft education will help individuals or family make clothes. Weave, manipulate different types of gift items for sales in order to source for funds. Art and Craft education in the society will help individuals to be economically empowered, resourceful and appreciate the dignity of labour. It helps individuals to learn the correct way of using tools since craft involves the use of many tools. Menakaya (1995), states that “physical abilities are also acquired through

handicraft activities because children enjoy using their bodies to carry out physical activities needed during sewing, weaving or any other craft work”.

Cultures are also propagated through art and craft which produces happiness and joy of creation in individuals. According to Onwunedo (1996), “the act making things is a source of enjoyment which never fails”. Art and craft education should be encouraged as stated by Kaka (1980), “including paper craft and textile craft among other can be grouped by techniques or medium”. Below is a brief description of some of those crafts, with indications of the degree of skill and equipment required.

Paper Craft has tremendous potential and it is only when one begins to think objectively about it that one realizes just how versatile it is.

Paper Mache is the craft of fashioning object from any kind of absorbent paper that has been soaked in a solution of water and glue. When dry, sealant and paint are applied.

Bookbinding technique can be used to make craft diaries, photo albums, address books and note books from chipboard, paper, heavy thread, cloth and glue. Bookbinding requires dexterity and care but is not difficult to learn and is very useful for family economic empowerment.

Decorative Arts, categories of useful yet decorative objects, generally intended for the home. These objects classified as decorative art differ from other useful objects in their design, artisanship and beauty.

The field of decorative art is vast, covering not only ancient craft, such as weaving and pottery, but also some products of modern industrial designs such as tea kettles, toaster and also other small domestic appliances. The classification of decorative arts include, ceramics, glass, leatherwork, metalwork, textiles etc. these craft can be commercialized to generate money for the individual, hence promoting the economy of the family.

Sewing, weaving and related textile crafts play an essential part in industry today. Kaka (1980), stressed that “textile crafts that lend themselves most readily to clothing are sewing, weaving, dyeing, beadwork, quilting, knitting, crocheting, patchwork embroidery, smocking and tatting.

One of the major aims of encouraging Art and Craft education is to prepare individuals to become competent and self employed. If Art and Craft Education is encouraged, families will be

empowered, acquiring knowledge and many useful skills, not only for survival but for sustainable development. As a skill and vocation, it will never leave its custodian with an empty stomach.

ART AND CRAFT EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR FAMILY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Many social commentators hold the view that education is sine qua non to any meaningful development. Majasan (1997), asserted that “development in any society is anchored primarily on educational progress creating access to quality form education would undoubtedly give the individual, especially the rural women in the family a sense of belonging; they will gradually become more visible and recognized in the mainstream of activities both at home and in the society is regard, formal education is important.

Olakulehin (2000), observed that a large part of the empowerment process is associated with education of the women themselves and that the root of the problem is the degree of importance women have attached to education. As earlier stated, formal education is important and the family needs education as it is vital for their better understanding of the emerging appropriate technologies and for raising their productivity. The federal and state governments should encourage individual students or the family by providing free vocational programs for Art and Craft education, for they ought to be equipped with the needed skills, knowledge and attitudes to face the challenges of emerging technologies.

Olaitan (2004), citing Anyakoha and Ozoh (1999) and Ayakoha and Mbane (2002) suggested that “there is need to engage the services of the vocational programs such as the Art and Craft workshop program to educate the rural members of the family on the emerging appropriate processing technologies and hoe to make use of the tools and equipment available for their use”. These vocational programmes should be designed in such a way that would enhance the environmental awareness and should sensitize the family sufficiently to exploit their environment in a sustainable way. Art and Craft education should also be encouraged in schools. If this is done, particularly in places like Africa and the developing world be an encouraging tool and skill development that not only cut down poverty, but also educate young girls, women and rural members of the family, it will also bring awareness amongst participants raising their

interests towards benefits of studying Art and Craft. Therefore if Art and Craft education is encourage, it will benefit the country including the many generations to come. It will also be the first stepping stone for many of the disadvantaged especially women who have no husbands. This will take them to the designs and craft workers who will be fully skilled in their handwork. This might also help participants either gain employment or continue further education.

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSIONS

Art and Craft education should be encouraged in schools so that students will be interested in the course especially the teaching approaches are effective. It has been observed by Ofoegbu (1990), that most teachers approach to teaching of Art and Craft has been encouraging. Itheme (1989), pointed out that “Art and Craft teachers do not have aptitude to teach the different areas of Art, hence they may restrict teaching to the area in which they are competent and interested”. Therefore, students will be denied of the opportunity to learn necessary skills. In this regards, employment of Art and Craft Education teachers should be encouraged.

The relevance of the Art and Craft studio has a major role to paly in the society. Design studio our Nation in Nigeria today, serves as a strong room for Art and Craft education. The standard of design help in providing free vocational centers and solving problems by providing facilities for effective teaching and learning services, programmes and workshops should be organized by the Ministry of Education, in the state for effective teaching of Art and Craft at different levels of education.

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