

TIE & DYE CRAFT AS A MEANS OF FEMALE GENDER EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

The unemployment rate in Nigeria is at a deplorable state as at the third quarter of 2018 rising from 18.8 percent in third quarter of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter of 2018. Therefore, in a country where the rate of unemployment is fast rising with hopelessness, the resultant effects mostly pose a wreck on the female gender as she is poorly encouraged for education, hence becoming vulnerable, molested, forced into sex trade, rape, premature marriage, domestic abuse and other forms of abuse. As a result of this, there is an urgent need to put into effect, mechanisms that would reduce or scrap the fast rising unemployment and its severe effects on the female gender. This study enumerates the importance of tie & dye craft as a means of empowerment for the female gender and analyzes the step by step procedures involved in its production in such a way that is learnable for a layman. The methodology used in this research include some literature reviews, one-on-one interviews and use of an autobiography. The study concludes that the practice of tie & dye, if embraced, can eliminate or reduce the incessant rate of unemployment among the female gender. It recommends, among others that both governments and nongovernmental organizations should create opportunities to encourage the development of tie & die as a major entrepreneur craft among the youths; especially the female gender

Keywords: Tie & Dye, Empowerment, Unemployment, Craft,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tie & dye, just as the name implies, literally, is the process of tying or binding a cloth before it is dyed to create a beautiful pattern. It is an old handcraft art which has its history cuts across the globe. One cannot say specifically where it started from. Africans, Indiana, Indonesians, Japanese, all have traces of this ancient tradition in their history of fabric design. Over the years, with the constant development of arts and crafts in different culture of the world, many new types of tie and dye techniques; but the fundamentals remain tie and dye.

From time immemorial, tie and dye has appeared in various fashion trends so much that it becomes popular and never stop to be in demand. Hence, its value as a vocational trade especially for women. In Nigeria, particularly in Yoruba land, another general name for tie & dye is Adire which is its direct translation. However, the technique of wax resist popularly called batik also emerged as a form of tie & dye fabric design. The difference between the two is that in typical traditional tie & dye, raffia or a kind of rope or thread is used to bind some specific area of the fabric before it is dyed. While in batik, wax (most often candle wax) is used to achieve the patterned area of the fabric, before it is dyed. This technique will also be briefly discussed in this paper as an additional information for people especially the female gender who may want to start producing this trade as their main part-time vocation. It is worthy of note that the word Kampala also emerged as another nomenclature for both tie & dye and batik at a point in time in history. A view of thought believes that this name takes its existence from Kampala the capital city of Uganda where a form of Adire is been produced and imported to West Africa particularly Nigeria where it becomes popular.

In view of the ongoing discussion on entrepreneurship, this paper intends to look at Tie and Dye as a vocational and entrepreneurship means, especially for the female gender who are the most vulnerable by the menace of unemployment.

The female gender in this context refers to both the youth and adult women generally. Some simple techniques and methods of producing tie and dye fabrics will be discussed and a female icon in the tie & dye business, in person of Chief Nike Davies-Okundaye, will be studied.

The study focuses primarily on tie and dye as a vocation. It enumerates the importance of tie & dye craft as a means of empowerment for the female gender which can enhance the female gender economically and it does analyze the step by step procedures involved in tie & dye production in such a way that is learnable for a layman.

The methodology used include literature review of existing academic materials on the topic, studio experiment and field trip to Itoku Market in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria where the business of tie and dye production is popular.

1.1. Problem Statement

The unemployment rate in Nigeria is at a deplorable state as at the third quarter of 2018 rising from 18.8 percent in third quarter of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter of 2018. Therefore, in a country where the rate of unemployment is fast rising with hopelessness, the resultant effects mostly pose a psychological cum physical wreck on the female gender as she is poorly encouraged for education, hence becoming vulnerable for molestations, forcefully lured into sex trade, rape, child marriage, domestic abuse and other forms of abuse. As a result of this, there is an urgent need to put in place, mechanisms that would reduce or scrap the fast rising unemployment and its severe effects on the female gender.

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2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate in Nigeria is at a deplorable state as at the third quarter of 2018 rising from 18.8 percent in third quarter of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter of 2018. In a simplified analysis, the total number of jobless citizens who are completely unattached to a remunerable job or partially work for a few hour below 20 hours within 7days rose from 17.6 million in the third quarter of 2017 to 20.9 million in the third quarter of 2018. Edigbonanya, (2013) hence, the need for entrepreneurship in Nigeria increases by the day, as the rate of unemployment leaps nonstop.

The number of youths that our higher institutions turn out yearly is far higher than what the civil service and other existing jobs can absorb, hence the need to develop entrepreneurship education in Nigeria across all levels is Germaine. No wonder the Obasanjo led administration injected entrepreneurship education into the school curricula in all the tiers of tertiary education in 2006 (Oborah, 2006; Ajayi, 2019; Edigbonanya, 2013). In the same vein, in March 2012, the NYSC leadership in the country also introduced Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship (SAED) programme into the orientation programme of the corps service. (Ajayi, 2019; Bola, 2019). The vocational trainings injected into the youth service programme include Bead Making, Aluminum Fabrication/Repair, Barbing/hair making, shoe making, Bag making, Fashion Design, Computer/Phone Engineering, Interior Decoration, Events Planning, etc. The essence of the introduction was to persistently make the Youth Corps members self independent after their service year.

From a lexicographic perspective, entrepreneurship is defined as the ability of a person to make an additional effort in order to achieve an objective or a goal Val, et.al (2017). According to Olawale, (2019), entrepreneurship is generally understood as the process of starting and owning a business that provides goods or services to people in exchange for money. However, a person who creates and owns a business is called an entrepreneur. Furthermore, Brown (1997) defines entrepreneur as a person who recognizes a business opportunity and who organizes, manages and assumes the risk of a business enterprise focusing on that business opportunity.

Val, Gonzalez, Irritates Beiva, Lasa and Maite (2017) examined entrepreneur education in European school curricula with an attempt to ignite the spirit of entrepreneur in the upcoming generation. Similarly, Olawale, (2019) opines that entrepreneur is a mindset, a way of thinking which goes beyond buying and selling or production of goods to creation of new ways to solve problems and create value. He argues that an entrepreneurial spirit is to be characterized by

innovation and risk taking. While on the other hand, Ajayi (2019) listed entrepreneurship subjects in our higher institutions and advocated that photography should be given more attention as a vocational course.

In explaining the processes involved in the production of tie & dye, it behooves to be well informed of all the materials/tools instrumental for its production. However, Xiaohua, 2016 researched on tie and dye techniques and its application to puppet products while 4-H Manitoba, 2015 explains the materials and techniques of producing tie and dye fabrics with step by step processes.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research include some literature reviews, one-on-one interviews and the use of an autobiography. In respect to the on field work carried out at Itori area of Ogun State, an interview was taken to use in documenting a comprehensive analysis on how to go about the tie & dye fabric production, different techniques and some of the materials/tools required. Moreover, notes on the history of Chief Nike Davies-Okundaye were retrieved from online sources ranging from her official Facebook handle, her website and others.

3.1. Materials

During the course of the interview carried out, a lot of expository discussions ensued revolving around several materials that foster the production of tie & dye. The basic materials for the production of tie and dye include

- i. Fabrics: Suitable fabrics for tie and dye include pure cotton, silk, some rayon, wool, guinea brocade and some Ankara prints. Some fabrics like synthetic, polyester, acrylic, will not absorb dye, so they cannot be used. During production the fabric has to be washed first in order to remove sizing. This is the industrial starch on new fabrics. If not removes, it will prevent the dye from sticking to the cloth (E. H. Manitoba, 2019)
- ii. Threads: The thread which is also called bindings could be string, twine cord or rubber. In Yoruba land, Nigeria, Raffia is used mostly.
- iii. Dyes: Apart from the traditional indigo dye, the synthetic ones are imported. Due stuffs been used here in Nigeria, they are in various colours.
- iv. Caustic Soda: This is mixes together with the dye stuff and hydrosulphite in good proportion. It serves as the chemical agent which allows both the dye stuff and the hysrosulphite to work on the fabric as it breaks down the content of the fabric to allow penetration of the dye. Caustic soda should not be over used on the fabric, it can damage it by tearing it apart.
- v. Hydrosulphite: Like caustic soda, this chemical substance is mixed on a recommended ratio, with dye stuff and caustic soda. In proportion or quantity, it should be more than the soda. It allows the dye to fasten or stick to the fabric permanently. There is no restrictions to the quantity of hydrosulphite (also called salt). Some people even use common salt in lieu of sulphite.
- vi. Candle Wax: This is used for batik production. It is used as resist means for the dye not to penetrate the design area. It will be removed or dewaxed after dyeing with hot water.



Fig. 1: Batik. Source: Authors

Other materials are needle, rubber gloves, pots for boiling water, stove, buckets and bowls, among others.

3.2. The Workings of Tie & Dye Is A Means of Empowerment

There are several benefits embedded in employing tie & dye as a medium of entrepreneurship. The benefits range from the ever readily materials instrumental for its production which are accessible in various local markets; the tools which are common household items; the techniques and technology involved which are simple methods which with few practices one can master; the ready market for tie & dye products both locally and internationally; the fashion that is a revolving trend like Ankara prints makes the relevance of tie & dye in contemporary fashion and garment design significant and the innumerable techniques of creating new patterns based on individual's creativity. Hence, the knowledge of tie & dye for the female/male gender will enable whoever chooses to embrace the craft as means of livelihood as its lucrative nature is unquantifiable. Tie and Dye or Adire is an easy to do and flexible trade which have a lot of possibilities of been a profitable vocation for women.

4. FINDINGS

Through various interviews carried out at Itoku market vis-a-vis the authors' robust experience in the field, it was gathered that there is no limit or hard rules to the methods used for tie & dye, however, some basic processes must be followed. Besides the existing traditional methods, each individual entrepreneur can evolve his/her own methods. However, the following should be noted

- i. The binding or tying of fabric should be firm or tied tightly in order to get good effect.
- ii. Warm water is used for mixture of the dye stuff and the chemicals. Though after it has thoroughly been mixed, cold water can be added to increase the level of the water to accommodate the number of fabrics to be dyed.
- iii. When dyeing more than one colour, it is better to start with the lightest colour e.g Yellow and purple. Yellow should be dyed first
- iv. In tie & dye the process is tying first, dye, rinse and allow to dry. One can remove the thread before drying or after, as long as there are no more excess dye on the fabric after rinsing.
- v. Always allow your fabric to stay for a while inside the dye bath or bowl. We recommend between 5-10 minutes if the chemicals are properly mixed.
- vi. Applying the Thread or Raffia: in applying the thread or raffia to the fabric, one considers the width or narrowness. If it is wide, the raffia is wrapped around the fabric several times. However, if it is thin or narrow, the raffia goes round it one or two times if you want the effect of lacey-spider, wrap the raffia up and down in criss-cross manner.



Fig. 2: Post-Dye, Crisscross pattern. Source: Authors

However, it is always good to leave some area of the fabric free from tying and binding.

4.1 Techniques

Several techniques are used to produce tie & dye. The techniques range from tying method, folding, stitching or needle, knotting, marbling, pleating, twisting, adire ekeko, adire eleso, et.al

The following is a brief explanation on few of the techniques

- i. Tying Method: it is also called binding method, it has several form of tying which include stone, seeds or pebble tying, spot tying, circle method, etc. Stone, Seed or Pebbles are placed on the fabric, the fabric is folded over it while raffia is tied around the stone in a circular manner, this is repeated all over the fabric to the satisfaction of the artist. It is dyed, rinsed, untied and dried for finishing.

Fig. 3: Post-Dye spot/sectional tying pattern. Source: Authors



- Circle Method – Determine the centre of the fabric, prick it and bind it according to the below illustration



Fig. 4.: Post-Dye (1Colour) Circle
Source: Authors



Fig. 5.: Post-Dye (2 Colours) Circle
Source: Authors

- ii. Folding Technique: There are innumerable methods of folding. The entrepreneur will discover more as s(he) practices.
- iii. Marbling Technique: This is a recent method. Though there are several ways of achieving marbling effect in the fabric, the basic foundation is that it is done on the floor not inside dye bath or bowl. The fabric is placed on the floor after rinsing to remove the sizing. It is then squeezed as the artist desires. Part of it can be tied. Dye is poured randomly on it on the floor in a pleasing manner to the artist. If many colours are to be used, it will be done the same way.



Fig. 6.: Post-Dye, Marbling pattern. Source: 4-H Manitoba

- iv. Knotting Method: fold up a piece of fabric into a string and tie it into knots. Dye, rinse, untie and dry.

4.2. Nike Davies-Okundaye

Many women are involved in the production of tie & dye in Nigeria especially the South West. Places like Abeokuta, Osogbo are well known cities for this practice. Few people in Ondo, Ibadan, Ogbomosho, Oyo and Ilorin also produce Adire though in small quantities compared to the other two mentioned above. (Newman, 1975). Prominent among those women is Chief Nike Davies-Okundaye. Born in 1951 in Ofisi, Kogi State, Nigeria. Nike's experience as a craft woman started from childhood as her family were into traditional weaving and dying. They used indigo colour for their dying. She spent part of her early life in Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. (Nikeart.com). We should note that Osogbo is a prominent centre for art and culture in the Southwestern Nigeria.



Fig. 7.: Nike Davies-Okundaiye in one of her Art galleries. Source: Authors



Fig. 8.: Nike Davies-Okundaiye's Art Centre Osogbo.

Through her training and experience cum years of serious and consistent practice, she was led into prominence in the trade. She had facilitated workshops on traditional Nigerian textiles in the United States of America, Europe and Nigeria. She had participated and individually hosted many exhibitions. Nike is the founder and director of four (4) art centres which offer free training to several young artists in visual, musical and performing arts. Her collections comprising over 7000 artworks which include tie & due and other related Adire works. (Nikeart.com, 2019).

Nike Davies-Okundaiye's opinion is that the traditional art of Adire Eleko is fading away hence, she took it upon herself to promote it by educating youths especially the female gender. She teaches technique of indigo dying to local women in her workshops and other training programmes. She has her works in several art galleries in different locations in Nigeria and abroad, including the Gallery of African Art and the British Library in London. Gafraart.com (2019), Vaz, (1995).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, Entrepreneurship is not just the ability to establish a business, but the development of the spirit of innovation and creativity which allows an individual to be able to add value to himself or herself and also to the immediate environment. Part of the means through which a society can add value to its citizens especially the female gender is by empowering them to be entrepreneurs. Tie and Dye or Adire is an easy to do trade which have a lot of possibilities of been a profitable vocation for women. Hence, this paper had been able to do a comprehensive justice to the procedures involved in producing a viable and lucrative craft known as tie & die.

5.2 Recommendation

The government at all levels should create programs that will encourage the development of traditional crafts which may fade away if attention is not given to them. More so if well sponsored they are capable of enhancing the economy of individuals and the nation generally. Both public and private schools at all levels should also embrace and be very pragmatic with the teaching of trade subjects especially tie and dye. Women transmit family values to their children better than men, so if women are trained and become versatile in any vocation, they impact them to their children and it goes on and on like that.

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