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## The Role of the 21st Century Women in the Development of a Child's Creative Prowess: Challenges of Child Art

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# Academic Leadership Journal

## Introduction

Developing the child's creative prowess has become an indispensable venture in the course of a nation's educational advancement programme. The Government may embark on laudable projects for the teaching/learning activities without achieving positive results if basic fundamental principles are neglected. The basic foundation of any country's educational system start from Early Childhood education. This stage according to NPE 2004, that is why the government deem it fit to embark on early education for every child. While Policy Makers in Nigeria have seen education as the 'magic wand' to solving the diversified problems of mankind, it is obvious that Art and creativity if utilized and properly harnessed at the appropriate developmental stages in life has more underlying strength. According to Piaget Cognitive developmental stages highlighted in Santrock (2007), the child creativity and mental development start from age 0 to late childhood which is from Sensori-Motor stage to concrete operational stage. Art is inseparable from 'all' and 'any human endeavours because it affects both the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains which are basic experiential levels, if qualitative education would be accomplished.

According to Udegbumam and Okorie (1999),

*since creativity depend very much on the integration of the various domains of human experience, and Art is more or less basic to each of the domain, Art could be said to be basic to creativity. Moreover, artistic creativities involve the various types of levels of experience thereby making it possible for one to see the interrelationship of the various domains. Art through this interrelationship, transforms intangibility to tangibility; emotions, feeling and ideas are objectified; uncharity is clarified, and illusion verified. Such experiences as Art offers could be transferred to other areas of human endeavours.*

## Purpose of Pre-Primary Education

- (i) Effect smooth transition from home to school;
- (ii) Prepare the child for primary level of education;
- (iii) Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parent are at work;
- (iv) Inculcate social norms;
- (v) Inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, environment, art, music and playing with toys, e.t.c.;
- (vi) Develop sense of cooperation and team spirit;
- (vii) Learn good habit especially good health habit; and

(viii) Teach rudiments of numbers, letters, colour, shapes, forms e.t.c. through play.

As we can see vividly from the purpose of pre-primary education that with do all thus through play, one can deduce that it is through play that the process of the child can be developed with the assistance of the mother and caregiver because they are closer to the child.

The above ascertains the indispensability of Art from cradle to grave especially in the educational development of a man. Therefore it is highly essential to further strengthen a child by equipping him early in life through Art and Creativity ventures, as stated in the purpose of pre-primary education as highlighted in NPE 2004 that 'to inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys e.t.c.

### **The Women's Capabilities/Influence on the Child's Educational Development**

Little attention has been given to the development of Art in the education of the average Nigerian woman. Recent trends and development shows that there is increased world interest in developing potentialities in women to enhance national development.

According to Lawani (1996), women play very significant roles in the overall development of children. She emphasized that the intellectual performance of children lies mainly with the mother and that the mothers are directly or indirectly responsible for the level of intellectual achievement of their children. This in essence is why it is important to educate the Nigerian woman on the advantages of the stages of graphic expression in the development of a child's creative prowess. Fafunwa (1991) identifies with the woman's role in effective transmission of social and cultural heritage. The woman by her dressing and other participation in the culture transmit the cultural values (which often cannot be separated from Art values as Art is inseparable from culture). Therefore, the woman becomes a force to be reckoned with in the development of a child's creative ability. This is why Adekanye (2000), suggested to the Federal Government to establish Vocational Centures in the rural areas all over the country for women to learn Art. The woman can only transmit a skill she has acquired.

When we talk about parenting, the mother has 80 percent role to play in the life of their wards. If the mother is portray the following styles, authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful, indulgent, it will surely affect the skill of the child in future because the mother as well as the child will face some challenges which will be difficult to amend. A mother that is not creative in nature, through hereditary, the child will be affected.

### **The Challenges of Child Art**

Beside crawling, walking, talking and such similar activities that are common to toddlers, Art and creative tendencies are the first sign of human endeavour that children gets involved in. this first sign is known as scribbling – a stage of graphic expression which is very essential in the development of a man's creative prowess. It is an act that the child gets involved with naturally at about age two to four to express himself through writing (scribbling) with his foot, marred on the plate, table, sand, floor or wall (whichever is available to him) making some creative forms with writing materials such as coal, chalk, nails, pen, pencil or biro. This is the foundation of many emotional stability or hazards in children. This is the stage when children either becomes lovable or aggressive. This newly discovered zeal is inborn and gives him so much pleasure. Any attempt to disturb him create emotional instability in him.

However, it is discovered that most women (due to ignorance) are very inattentive to the needs and requirement of this peculiar and essential stage of development. Often, adults usually disrupt these activities, sometimes children are beaten up for defacing the table or wall. They are cautioned never to do that again. It is important to note that these tendencies are not learned, it comes naturally and an attempt to stop such deforms the child's cognitive, affective and psychomotor developmental experiences in life. The following things are obvious. As many times as you sprank the child for this act, soon or later he forgets and naturally returns to same because the mother refuse to inform the child while she sprank on him rather than being authoritative but as he gets older in age and he still face the threat that ensued from his creative ventures, he begins to assume that it is a wrong venture and he gradually drops it. He has in essence, dropped off to a greater extent what could be described as the lubricant that should propel his life's educational machinery.

However if same is developed in children with the parents providing necessary amenities for scribbling, the results are greatly rewarding. But in the other way round if the child is taken to a standard nursery and primary schools, where these amenities can be found, it expose the child to a good prowess in future. As posit by Akinbode, Oduotowu and Lawal (2001) children creative play, they explore the behaviour and properties of the materials and how to use them, they explore the properties of the materials with all their senses. It affects his handwriting, as he grows up he finds it easier to write figures and letters. His conceptual ability is braced early enough to assimilate faster than children who were deprived of experiencing the fullness of the scribbling stage. Apart from the child's Artistic talent being developed, (if not discouraged at that early stage), he would have developed a solid foundation which forms a basic principle for easy understanding of other subjects on the school curriculum, and also develop the child's imaginative power such that learning experiences don't remain in abstract form for long. He is able to assimilate with ease. Art develops his ability to take decision as he develop himself in the use of colours to form harmony. It takes great efforts to harmonize colours, hence his ability to make the right choice is enhanced.

It is important to note that if the scribbling stage is properly taken care of to bring about full manifestation, the other two stages of child Art development (the symbol stage which is from 4 – 8 years and the Beginning Realism stage which is from 9 – 12 years) therefore not disrupted, thus the child's creative tendencies which he needs in all human endeavours are intact.

### **Developing the Woman's Creative Ability: A Strategy for the Development of the Childs Creative Prowess**

The very first step to restoring a woman's creative sense is to create an awareness for Art in her. Most adults see Art as an unachievable venture for them at their stage in life. With the dissemination and acceptance of correct information on Art, it is possible to reawaken in the adult that inborn tendency which was rendered impotent at an early state of their life.

Therefore, letting the woman know that every human being is a potential Artist is the first dose in the therapeutic treatment that is ahead. Also outlining the advantages of Art to all human endeavours is another dose. This should be followed by introducing her to the basic tools of communication to little children (Pre-school, kindergarten, nursery) and even Adult literacy class i.e. picture books, posters built up as teaching aids for the purpose of easy understanding of the subject matter.

One principle that is attainable to the women folk in general are ventures that will improve the lot of their

children. They will buy it, embrace it, adopt it, cherish and nurture it and tap all resources to improve the lot of their offspring. Art is one of such that the Nigerian woman should be encouraged to embrace.

Adaptation to the challenges of child art calls for a life of emotional stability. Most women loves to keep their home beautifully well, while the new artist get spurned into action not minding what he is spoiling since his actions are not primarily destructive, while his mother is raging he is smiling for the satisfaction he gets from his creative exploits. Alas, that beautiful table cover that was the most precious wedding gift she received is already marred. Never mind. The psychologist opined that while you intend to keep your house in order, the toddler's emotional stability must not be hindered with unnecessary harsh attack that could breach the child's trust in people around him.

The woman should attend to the needs of the stages of graphic expression. She should provide, the necessary materials for the scribbling stage. Paper either rough used or new, even old news paper could be of help, writing materials, space for work, dust tray e.t.c. to enable the child have a wide range of activities, to express himself. These items are affordable for both literate and illiterate mothers. The child should not be ignore whenever they ask question about nature because art itself is a gift of nature.

The mother's role in encouraging their children to bring about desired result cannot be underestimated. Her attentiveness by way of making positive comments that would gear up the child to do better in art is another dose that would enhance the child's creative prowess. While some women will scold the child for drawing – passing uncomplimentary statement such as “what is this, you had better face mathematics, physic... the best you can be is a roadside artist whose products may not sell or at best a teacher, I want you to become a medical doctor... etc on and on, the woman shows her displeasure. Some will mock the drawing and condemn it outrightly. Only very few will appreciate the child's effort. As you appreciates a child's creative works, it builds in him a self confidence – he begin to see himself as one that can achieve and thus it builds in him a determination to be great. He does not believe that there is something impossible for him to achieve. This is why Lawani (1991) advocates that mothers should devote enough time to interacting and attending to their children's need.

## **Conclusion**

The woman is indisposable in the education of her children. As the first kindred to the child and the closest of course, her impact in ensuring that the child's creative tendencies are nurtured, unhindered are versatile avenues for developing the child's future career. It would therefore be necessary to hasten up actions as to the development of the average woman artistic and aesthetic tendencies so that the woman who has many work to do at home will have interest in the child artistic potentials without bias.

## **Recommendation**

The following are suggest for action:

- (1) The paper advocate for public awareness programmes for mothers.
- (2) Government should embark on mass campaign for the development of the child's creative prowess from the onset in life.
- (3) Materials needed in our various public school for art should be provided.

- (4) Art lessons should also be made compulsory to bring out the potentials in the child for the Adult literacy programmes while teaching of improvisational approach to acquiring of art materials are emphasized.
- (5) Government should do away with sentiment concerning some disciplines.

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