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# Communication and Africa's Development Crisis

Essays in Honour of Professor Des Wilson

# Nollywood and Nigeria's Indigenous Cultural Values: The Developmental Imperatives

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### Introduction

This chapter chronicles the historical overview of the film industry popularly referred to as Nollywood. It takes an explorative look at the existence of the industry, its challenges, performances and future imperatives. The second section of the chapter identifies Nigeria's indigenous cultural values which are at the brink of extinction because of the uncontrolled intrusion of alien, mostly Western cultural values into the Nigerian society. The chapter holds that Nollywood is one sure channel this intrusion occurs. This informs the third section of the chapter. The section juxtaposes the industry's existence and role with that of Nigeria's indigenous cultural values. This is because the film industry is part of the culture industry. Another major reason is that culture defines a people and Nollywood is a means of cultural dissemination.

This chapter, therefore, attempts to evaluate the type of cultural values the Nigerian film industry portrays. To achieve this objective, some vital questions as posed by Ekeanyanwu (2009) become pertinent here: Are Nollywood films bastardizing Nigerian indigenous cultural values or are they promoting them? Do the themes of Nollywood films portray Nigerian indigenous cultural values in true light or not? What role could Nollywood possibly play in promoting Nigerian indigenous cultural values and thus advance Nigeria's developmental agenda? These questions have remained contemporary, apt, topical and controversial. The issues they raise have also remained unresolved suggesting a Nigerian society and an industry in a dilemma.

This chapter attempts to take advantage of the emerging paradigm shift in media/cultural studies by looking at the developmental imperatives of a focused, culture-conscious Nigerian film industry. It sees Nollywood as an instrument of development in the hands of Nigerians and dreams wide about such possibilities if well used. This position will pervade this section and inform the concluding arguments.

### Nollywood: A Historical Overview

Two and half decades ago, the Nigerian society and people were starved of any interesting home-made movies that are rich in indigenous cultural flavour. The majority of the population then could not relate to the alien movies from Hollywood and Bollywood as well as the Asian variety of martial, mostly Chinese films. To worsen the situation, only a few privileged families could afford video machines and a colour television (TV) set and piracy was still at an embryonic stage. The cinema culture also was at the lowest ebb because of the dangerous

activities of touts and hoodlums who made those places their abode. The only consolation was the then government-owned TV station – Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Despite the low quality production of NTA programmes, especially the TV series, they proved the only form of escape and entertainment for millions of Nigerians. These TV drama series only whetted the appetite of the public for made-in-Nigeria films. This was the opportunity that the pioneer small-time businessmen took advantage of and today we have a thriving movie industry in Nigeria.

However, it may not be out of place to regard the last 15 years as the turning point in the history of the Nigerian film industry. This era marked the phenomenal rise of the industry as a major player in the Nigerian economy and a major stakeholder in the Nigerian culture industry. Before this era, Nollywood did not really exist. The dramas aired by the government-owned television stations then were drab and uninspiring. So, the industry lacked support from stakeholders who have heavily invested in the sector today (Ekeanyanwu, 2009).

Okoroji (2006), who was at this point the Chairman of Performing and Mechanical Rights Society (PMRS), observes that before the recent explosion in the production of cinematograph films in Nigeria, which films are presented on various video formats, different Nigerians had engaged in movie making with different levels of commercial success. He adds that it is difficult to forget the pioneering role of the likes of the great Hubert Ogunde who in the 1970s began the transformation of the Yoruba traveling theatre into the building blocks of a Nigerian movie industry. According to Okoroji, apart from the late Hubert Ogunde, Jab Adu had produced the all time winner - *Bisi Daughter of the River* which starred singer/actress Patti Boulaye. The late Ade Love made a number of reasonably successful Yoruba language movies and so did Moses Olaiya who appeared to be successful with *Moshebolatan* but whose *Orumoru* appeared to have led to so much controversy and financial misery. The likes of Eddie Ugbomah and Ola Balogun also tried their hands on a number of movies (Okoroji, 2006).

Ekeanyanwu (2009) notes that the emergence of television also contributed immensely to the early beginnings of the Nigerian film industry. He further writes that with the emergence of television came the need to fill up the air time with some home-grown drama series as against the monotonous cowboy films from the West. One of the first successes in this area is Segun Olusola's *Village Headmaster* later christened *New Village Headmaster*. The success of this series inspired others such as James Iruoha's *Masquerade* also later re-titled *New Masquerade* in its twilight days, Peter Igho's *Cockcrow at Dawn*, Jab Adu's *Adio Family*, Lola Fani Kayode's *Mirror in the Sun*, Matt Dadzie's *Behind the Clouds*, Zeb Ejiro's *Ripples*, Amaka Igwe's *Checkmate*, and late Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Bassej and Company* (Ekeanyanwu, 2009).

The true birth of Nollywood is traceable to the phenomenal success of *Living in Bondage* produced by Kenneth Nnebue. Okoroji (2006, p.1) states:

*The true birth of the Nigerian motion picture industry which today is referred to as Nollywood is traceable to the overwhelming success of what may have been considered an experimental project by an enterprising Nigerian businessman called Kenneth Nnebue. Kenneth Nnebue's Igbo language movie - Living in Bondage which was marketed on VHS sold like hot akara. In Living in Bondage, the universal contradictions of love,*



*wealth, greed and crime were captured in a story that everyone could relate to. After Living in Bondage, Kenneth Nnebue made other movies like Glamour Girls and proved that an industry could be built around the sales of home videos using the VHS format. Following the success of Living in Bondage, most of the serious TV drama producers in Nigeria quickly followed the footsteps of Mr. Nnebue to make feature films marketed on the VHS format and a new industry was born. Some might say that Living in Bondage succeeded because the VCR had become widely available domestic equipment in Nigeria. Others might say that Living in Bondage may, more than anything else, have led to the explosion of the sales of VCRs in Nigeria because everyone needed the equipment to watch Living in Bondage.*

The early Nollywood movies presented a stereotyped and fixated view of the Nigerian culture. They gave the impression that the Nigerian society is a terrible, bloodsucking, witchcraft-infested, secret cult-pervasive society. Surprisingly, however, the desire for made-in-Nigeria home movies was so high that these movies that presented this view of the Nigerian cultural environment (but produced in Nigeria by Nigerians) were all highly successful commercially. This made the Nollywood self-styled moguls instant successes too. These moguls were not very learned, small-time and unprofessional businessmen who stumbled on film making (Ekeanyanwu, 2009). Uba (2007) notes that these businessmen willingly staked their capital and other investments into a non-existent film sector then. According to Uba, without any formal filmmaking knowledge or professional advice or assistance from the government or the so called organized-private-sector (OPS), these persons created Nollywood and in twenty years they made Nollywood the third largest film market in the world as well as the most innovative. Uba writes that they broke all the rules, broke the formats of filmmaking and they broke the dictatorship of time. They would start shooting a film on Monday and by Saturday the films would be selling in markets around the country and the continent (Uba, 2007). These people are not interested in awards or recognition; the money was rolling in, and that was all the compensation they craved for their valiant effort; yet the world continues to marvel and wonder how they achieved all that we see today (Uba, 2007).

These pioneers grew so wealthy in the emerging film industry and became attached to the false believe in the formula that brought them success. This made things very difficult for the professional film maker with no capital of his own and no access to the banks, to control the creative process in film making (Uba, 2007). Uba goes on to note that the professional film makers were forced to dance to the tune of these businessmen who bonded themselves into a cabal under the aegis of Nigerian Film Marketers Association. Any professional director, actor, actress, producer, or scriptwriter who fails to do their bidding was dealt with. Several leading Nollywood actors and actresses were victims of this recently when they were banned from featuring in any film for a whole year. The government was not left out in this destruction. The government for so long deferred its film regulatory policies to the

bidding of these pioneer Nollywood merchants. Today, these merchants still call the shots on the content as well as the themes of Nollywood productions because they are largely still the financiers of the major productions.

Another unique aspect of Nollywood's history is uniquely captured by Esan (2008, p.4) thus:

*It can be argued that in more ways than is readily evident, the economic and political instability experienced in Nigeria since the 80's contributed to the development of Nollywood. The austerity measures and the perils of night life in the 80's was a sharp contrast from the 70's when life was easier; then there was a bubbling night life and cinema attendance was usual. The prevalent need for caution and security consciousness meant changes in lifestyles that led to the preference for home-based entertainment. This was when 24 hour TV transmission began in Nigeria first as a weekend service on Lagos Television. As stations had a demand for local productions to put on the airwaves independent production became viable. Dwindling public funds had led to cutbacks in the funding of the arts and government-owned television stations. In this context, independent production thrived though television production as a whole was quite challenging at that time. Independent producers were forging through uncharted paths as television funding had been secure under the public service stations till then. For survival, they needed direct access to audiences, hence their forays into production of home movies. It is indeed ironic that the same instability which contributed to the decline in cinema attendance contributed to the growth of the Nigerian movie industry.*

Esan (2008) further notes that the early Nollywood movies did not use fully developed scripts and that performers were not always fully briefed on creative issues and ideas for security reasons. He notes that much of the dialogue especially in the Yoruba language productions was ad-libbed. Performers therefore, had to be knowledgeable in the culture to do this successfully. This early situation of Nollywood was thus characterized by predictable storylines, slow-paced rendition of lines, questionable sequels, lengthy and noisy dialogues.

These, however, did not affect the economic growth of the industry. A special report on *The Guardian* of March 2006 indicates that the Nigerian film industry "in just 13 years, has gone from nothing to an estimated earnings of US\$200million (£114m) a year." Industry watchers and analysts are already projecting estimated revenue of £100 billion by 2020. Going by Nigeria's current population estimates of 147 million (140 million by 2006 Nigerian census figures; 7million across other nations of the world by World Bank estimates), this projected revenue target is realizable.

The gradual entrance of Nollywood productions into the global movie market will ensure this projection comes to pass. Nollywood is now a regular feature on channels which specialize in the black and African audiences via satellite or cable (Multichoice Nigeria, BEN TV - Sky channel 194, etc). Since January 2008, Nollywood has a dedicated channel offering 24 hour movie service on Sky digital platform to audiences in the UK and Ireland. There are a range of websites which also support the circulation of Nollywood (Esan, 2008).

### **Nigeria's Indigenous Cultural Values**

Nigeria as a diverse cultural entity is noted for her rich cultural heritage. However, Nigeria is a conglomeration of many cultures but each entity that makes up the Nigerian society has a unique cultural value that makes such an entity distinct. You can never miss a Nigerian in a company of Africans. You can never miss a Nigerian amongst the black population anywhere in the world. They are unique culturally and carry a sense of who they are anywhere they go. There is a culture of hardwork, determination, persistence and resourcefulness.

Notwithstanding the diversity that is inherent in the Nigerian society, there are some common features in the different ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian state. Some of the traditional values in Nigeria include honesty, moral rectitude, respect for elders, respect for fellow citizens, respect and loyalty to family values, hardwork, resourcefulness and education. Understanding the diversity in religious beliefs is also considered a core value within the country, as there are several religious groups that make up the population in Nigeria. One of the most significant values that Nigeria holds to be of great importance is the wisdom of its elders. Age is a symbol of experience and intelligence, and the mistreatment or disrespect of elders is viewed as taboo and therefore unacceptable. Even in religious gatherings, elders are given a pride of place and specially recognized.

With regard to religious values, Nigerians are noted for deep spirituality. Spirituality or religious belief is therefore regarded as a core value. Nigerians are always noted as amongst the true worshippers anywhere they reside. However, we must note that Nigeria is also diverse in terms of religious obligations and values. Christians and Muslims comprise the predominant religious groups in Nigeria. Christianity is more common in the southern part of the country, while Islam is the dominant religion in the northern part of the country. Indigenous religious beliefs, although typically spiritual, also include the belief in the magical practices of witchcraft and sorcery and account for about 10 percent of the population, according to the report "Development of Education in Nigeria" from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. These traditional beliefs are specific to certain rural or indigenous areas and are usually intertwined with either Christianity or Islam.

On its educational goals and values, Nigeria is also amongst the comity of nations that places a high premium on educational pursuits and attainment. After Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960, the implementation of educational awareness became a priority for the country, and Nigerian government and educational advocates became involved in educational development. According to a research study conducted by Dr. Samuel N. Maduagwu, from 1960 to 1984, the number of primary schools grew from approximately 16,000 to 38,000. Today, that figure has tripled.

The same goes for secondary and tertiary education. As at the last count in 2010, Nigeria had 104 approved universities while many more which the author is familiar with are almost through to getting their operating licenses. It is expected that by 2020, Nigeria will have more than 200 approved and highly networked universities worth their name. A recent report from some oversea countries notes that in Africa, Nigerians rank highest amongst foreign students in most Western nations. Recently, a national policy on education was formulated, and Nigeria is working to maintain a stable primary educational system and further develop secondary and higher education institutions. Therefore, educational pursuits and attainment is regarded as a major core value for Nigeria.



Nigeria also has a food culture. In Nigeria, local foods such as rice, lentils and maize are staples for most citizens. Fish like carp, Nile perch and catfish are abundant proteins from the access of the Niger River. Mangoes are also an abundant fruit common to the area.

Recreational activities are not left out in what makes Nigeria unique culturally. Entertainment and leisure activities in Nigeria are typically marked by traditional cultural practices like festivals, musical performances with singing and drums, dancing, etc. Exhibitions are also common forms of entertainment for many Nigerians. In urban areas, entertainment is mostly influenced by mass media and Western practices, like movies, technology and nightlife.

### **Nollywood and the Nigerian Indigenous Cultural Values**

The subject of this essay is culture. Is the Nigerian film industry helping to bastardize Nigeria's indigenous cultural values or is the industry helping the globalization of Nigeria's indigenous cultural values? This primary question is the overriding issue, which this chapter addresses in this section. Therefore, there is a need to look closely at what constitutes culture.

Culture is a universal concept and experience. On the other hand, Africans look at culture as the preserved traditions or ways of life of their forefathers. Thus, most people limit the concept to such things as traditional dances, music, art, traditional institutions and rites of passage such as marriage, birth, initiation, burial and the likes (Ajayi, 2009). Continuing, Ajayi (2009, p.407) notes:

*Though all these are aspects of culture, but not the totality of it. Culture is the established pattern of behaviour among a people, an all embracing and heterogeneous concept that encompasses every aspect of a man's life and experiences. It is perceived as a way of life or the totality of all human efforts and achievements in the struggle for survival in the midst of unfriendly and militant forces of nature. It is also the aggregate of all human inventions and discovery and the accumulation of socially acquired human characteristics. It is a collective and integrated whole, comprising everything about man's ideas, behaviour and products or anything relating to his needs as a social being. In other words, culture is the totality of the historical experience as a people, the values, the traditions, the beliefs, morals, world view and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society.*

\* UNESCO (1994) defines culture as including the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture is also the totality of human endeavours in a given time and place. People are constructs of their culture. Culture gives people their identity and dignity. It is every day expression and future aspirations. Culture and development are intertwined because culture underpins development and reinforces it. That is why it is often said that a people without a culture are a people without a future or destiny. The World Book Encyclopedia (2005) sees culture as all the ideas, objects and ways of doing things created by a group. These include arts, beliefs, customs, innovations, language,

technology and tradition. Culture also consists of learned ways of acting, feeling and thinking rather than biologically determined ways. Ukeje (1980) cited in Ekeanyanwu (2005) also defines culture as "a fabric of ideas, beliefs, skills, tools, methods of thinking, eating and talking, customs and institutions into which a member of a society is born."

From these definitions, it could be deduced that the greater part of what makes up culture is acquired or learned, not innate or inborn. This implies that culture could be learned, acquired, experienced or transferred from generation to generation through many ways. One of such obvious ways is through the media of communication or communications technology (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

The Nigerian movie industry evolved on the platform of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage in the arts. The talents from traditional street theatres, traditional story telling cultures and early attempts at indigenous television programming also made enormous contributions to this evolution. In building on the antecedents of indigenous cultural values, Esan (2008, p.10) states that:

*Nollywood evolved around a dominant language structure which also reflects the original geopolitical structure of Nigeria. The industry thus has three distinct sectors; Yoruba movies, Igbo movies and Hausa movies. The movies tend to reflect the cultures in these areas and are often produced and distributed from the commercial nerve centres in these regions and Lagos - the nation's commercial capital. This structure has been inherited by the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board as a basis of classifying the videos/films. There are also English language productions and what has evolved as a distinct category - the Engligbo, so labelled because of the tendency to use both Igbo and English languages. Engligbo also reflect tensions between modern and traditional Igbo cultures. The ethnic affiliation around the industry is very clear in the story lines, shooting location, and sometimes even in the cast. To this end, it becomes easier for audiences to relate to and identify with Nollywood.*

The collateral challenges fostered by Nollywood are as a result of diverse interests, needs and preferences of its heterogeneous audiences. This heterogeneity is rooted in the range of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other socio-political factors within Nigeria and other parts of Africa that constitute the primary market for Nollywood movies (Esan, 2008). It is therefore important to restate here that culture identifies a people and is central to primordial and self-determination sentiments. Nollywood is therefore expected to portray these sentiments in the themes of its movies/films.

According to Ekeanyanwu (2009, p.76):

*To fulfill this objective, three lines of arguments are clearly distinguished. These lines of thought have emerged in the analysis of the impact of Nollywood on Nigerian indigenous culture, and the impact of Nigerian indigenous culture on the Nigerian movie industry. The first line of argument sees Nollywood as bastardizing Nigerian local cultural values, thus, impacting negatively on the Nigerian indigenous culture. The argument here is that the Nigerian indigenous cultural values are not*



*adequately portrayed in themes of Nollywood movies. This is, however, debatable. But the truth of this argument lies in the reasons given to justify their position. The display of witchcraft, ritual killing, crass immorality, etc. as major and prevailing themes in Nollywood movies is argued as not being representative of the true Nigerian indigenous society. The proponents of the view believe the Nigerian society is much more than the movies portray. They see the Nigerian society as rich in cultural ethos, hospitable, and have a rich traditional heritage of respect, high moral standards and respect for family values. So, overplaying the minority incidences of voodooism, loose sense of morality, witchcraft antics and ritual killings is not acceptable to this school of thought. To them, this amounts to a poor betrayal of cultural trust.*

The second major concern of those who argue that Nollywood has impacted negatively on Nigerian indigenous cultural values is in the area of language, which they consider a core component of culture. The thinking here is that language should bring movies closer to the grassroots (audience). However, the major concern is that indigenous Nigerian languages are rarely used in Nollywood movies. Unfortunately too, some of these movies present the traditional societies long before the advent of colonialism yet English language is the mode of communication. Films made in Nigeria with national and international themes could use local languages and subtitles in any desirable language. The use of subtitles helps to transcend ethnic, cultural and linguistic barriers such local languages could have imposed in the international market for the films.

The second line of argument, which this chapter highlights, is that Nollywood industry has impacted positively on Nigerian indigenous cultural values more than it has impacted negatively. There is also the argument that the Nigerian indigenous cultural values have also impacted on Nollywood productions. This argument stems from the fact that Nollywood is today a success story. The success is linked to audience acceptance of the products of the industry (Ekeanyanwu, 2009). Nollywood outputs go beyond the Nigerian borders selling Nigerian values, peoples and culture. This means that Nigeria can no longer be regarded as obscure, unknown and unsung. Those who watch those movies are invariably watching Nigeria. Therefore, if the argument of the relationship between culture and communication is sustained especially as it relates to communication being a carrier of culture, then, Nollywood is helping to also transfer our cultural values to the outside world. Those persons who are influenced begin to see Nigeria from a positive light. This is the major reason the overriding argument of this chapter is that Nollywood must function as a partner to Nigeria's development agenda.

The third line of argument is that Nollywood has impacted both negatively and positively on the Nigerian indigenous cultural values. It is also argued here that the Nigerian indigenous cultural values have rubbed off on the themes of Nollywood movies. Beyond this, proponents of this line of argument, which this author endorses, submit that Nollywood should be Nigeria's mirror to the world; and the world's mirror of Nigeria. It is also expected that Nollywood should portray global themes if Nigeria hopes to integrate into the global

village. This does not also mean a neglect of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage; rather, both local and global themes could be adequately reflected in the themes of the movies. Sometimes, global cultural norms could be given local content interpretation to make them more meaningful for local consumption while at other times local cultural values could be portrayed in a way the global audience could appreciate them better (Ekeanyanwu, 2009).

Nollywood has the potential to project positive indigenous cultural values and identities and foster mutual understanding of different ethnic groups. If it does this, it demonstrates its capacity to promote national integration. As with its precursors in the media, the cultural expectation is that Nollywood will promote positive behaviour patterns and social development. This expectation finds its roots in the didactic nature of traditional storytelling. It also explains the emphasis on the morality tales. As it finds support in the international market, the industry now helps to champion the African identity to those in the Diaspora. This is consistent with Nigeria's foreign policy in which Africa is the centerpiece (Esan, 2008).

#### **Nollywood and Nigeria's Indigenous Cultural Values: the Development Imperatives:**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 2003, the United Nations (UN), during its convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention) took cognizance of cultural heritage and adopted the principles that support the recognition and respect of cultural plurality and heritage. The term intangible cultural heritage was defined as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects and artifacts associated therewith that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their heritage. This marked an important milestone in the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization's programme on cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2002 cited in Ajayi, 2009).

Prior to this time in 1972, the World Heritage Convention was adopted by UNESCO to encourage international cooperation for the protection of the cultural heritage of mankind and called upon the international community to help in the identification, protection and preservation of such heritage and not to take any deliberate measures, which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage situated on the territory of other states, societies or people (Ajayi, 2009). According to Paul (2006) cited in Ajayi (2009), this was necessitated by the concern that cultural heritage and natural heritage were increasingly being threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions, which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction. There was also the recognition that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world (Ajayi, 2009).

The issues of identity, preservation of cultural heritage and resistance of dominant Western influences are clear factors that should contribute to the success of the Nigerian culture industry, and these deserve further attention. How distinct must Nollywood be from Western fare for it to remain appreciated by the audiences? Given the dynamic nature of identity, it will be useful to study how widespread are the sentiments that require Nollywood to be distinct so that it could perform the expected role of a major channel of Nigeria's development agenda. Ajayi (2009) is of the view that the need to integrate cultural activities and values in all spheres of life has been very loudly pronounced in the post-independence

development of Nigeria. He observes that the communalities of traditional cultures as Africans (Nigerians) have been eroded in the years when communities raided one another for war captives, and sold them to Arabs and Europeans as slaves and this tendency towards ethnicity has been reinforced in the competitive bidding first, for colonial favours and now for government contracts and financing. Nigeria has therefore, remained a country of plural and diversified cultures. The more serious problem, according to Ajayi, is that education, which should be a factor of cultural integration, has become within each culture a factor of alienation, disaggregation and disorientation; alienation in the sense that the educated elite become are alienated from their traditional cultures and values; disaggregation in the sense that Western education places premium on individualism in place of communal values and individualism in an alienated group promotes selfishness in place of social responsibility; disorientation in the sense of being confused and lacking a sense of direction as a result of their being alienated from traditional values, with nothing concrete in its place.

These make it imperative that Nollywood restructures so that the industry becomes a vehicle of cultural transmission, protection and growth. It is imperative to stress here that the state of development in any society is the result of the historical experience of the people, which could help to retard or accelerate the level of development in that society. In the case of Nigeria, her historical experience should metamorphose through Nollywood productions so that we are constantly kept aware of where we are coming from. The craze to portray Western norms and values through Nollywood should be jettisoned. There is so much in our cultural history that is yet to see the light of the day because of "intellectual myopia" and "directors' distorted lens". It is not late for Nollywood to make a change.

The argument here is based on the fact that there is a strong connection between culture and development. Many people often fail to see this relationship and this is the missing link in the use of Nollywood for development purposes. Development implies healthy growth of a society and culture is the life of the society. This was clearly stated by the economic and social council of the UN in 1962. In other words, development is all about people. It implies social change, affecting the entire society, the complete way of life. Although, there are occasional references to the people, but that in the externally-driven top-to-bottom concept of development, it is the people (that should be at the center of development) that are left out (Ajayi, 2009).

No country can achieve national development, whether it is scientific and/or technological, if it is pursued as an end in itself. In essence, there is cultural factor in technological development. According to Ajayi (2009), when science and technology are imported from outside, they remain strange and may never drive development until integrated into the culture of the people. Some aspects of other people's technology cannot grow in a self-sustaining manner outside the context of their way of life - their culture. "This is, because the growth of science and technology may be assisted by experiments in laboratories, as well as by studies, inventions and patents in the universities, but these do not grow and become sustainable development except within society and within particular cultures".

In the fourth quarter of 2010 (October 3 to 9 to be precise), over 300 film makers, scriptwriters, directors, stakeholders and industry operators gathered in Akure, Ondo State of Nigeria, for the year's edition of the annual, Behind the Screen Festival of Indigenous Languages, now known as, Festival of Indigenous African Language Films. They later



released a communiqué that roots for Nigerian indigenous languages to be preserved and saved from extinction. There is an urgent need for the government at all levels to encourage the production of indigenous language films. They also asked the government to begin to pay more attention to the motion picture industry, which according to them, has not only brought global recognition to the country but also, is capable of becoming a veritable alternative to oil economy.

Professor Tunde Babawale, Director-General of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), also noted the need for government to support film makers, noting that indigenous language films are critical to the development of any nation. He commented on the steady relegation of these languages, arguing that out of the 500 languages spoken across the ethnic groups in Nigeria, only 84 of them are still in use. Arguing further, Professor Babawale said the use of African indigenous films is also a means of propagating African tradition, culture and norms. "Promotion of our indigenous languages is the manual for development. There is no better way to market our country and our culture other than through film. It has a two-fold way of communication: audio and visual" he emphasized.

This statement supports our earlier submission that Nollywood must rise to be counted amongst those projecting Nigerian cultural values to the outside world in a positive way. We must also note here that language is a core component of a people's culture. Language is of special consequence in the analysis of culture because it is a community-based art form that serves as the link to understanding a culture. Without language we cannot truly understand the traditions of a culture because language holds knowledge about the identity of a people. Therefore, once we start to lose our ability with our languages, we begin to lose knowledge - indigenous knowledge that is important for sustainable development - about ourselves (Sado, 2007). Therefore, Nollywood must take cognizance of this in productions that aim at cultural exchange. Fear should not be entertained on whether such productions will sell in foreign markets. Of course, they will. In the early 1980s, Indian and Chinese films did well in the Nigerian market. They even outsold their American rivals. The Nigerian cinema houses and home viewing audiences patronized these Indian and Chinese films with passion. However, the point here is that most or all of these Indian and Chinese films of the early 80's were produced in their indigenous languages and subtitled in English language, Arabic etc. depending on the country of export. So, the language of communication cannot be an obstacle for Nollywood projections into the world market (Ekeanyanwu, 2009).

## Conclusion

It is unimaginable to think of Nigeria without Nollywood anymore because its productions have become part of entertainment and relaxation menu for most Nigerians. From the discussion so far, it is also obvious that people and their culture cannot be isolated from their development objectives or agenda. And because Nollywood is a cultural instrument, it therefore becomes an instrument for development. This is the major reason the arguments of Ajayi (2009, p. 409) becomes pertinent here:

*Development is growth plus change. Change in turn is social and cultural as well as economic. The key concept must be improved quality of people's life. It is obvious that Nigeria has so far failed to develop during the five decades of development. There is the need to identify what can be done*

*about it. Although, it is all right for the cynics who say that the whole idea of development is illusory, we cannot however because of that abandon the hope or stop making the effort to grow and improve the quality of life of the people. Without exerting the own internal effort to develop, we are doomed to be perpetual servants, former slaves, in the global society. First, we have to identify, where we have failed. We have failed in the extremely driven top to bottom approach to development, development that ignores the people. More than that, we have created a cultural void and a moral crisis. Perhaps in the approach to development, we have been too hasty and tried to cut too many corners and the most dangerous consequence of this action was the cultural and moral void we have created. It is in filling this cultural void that lies the solution.*

In conclusion, we cannot have growth plus development conscious economy, good governance, public officials with legitimate principles and businessmen and women with moral integrity, without having a culture that stresses virtue, love for one another, integrity, diligence and resourcefulness. These are in existence but are dwindling by the day. Nollywood should serve as an instrument to help reinforce these values that our generations of ancestors have built up within each separate culture in Nigeria. This means we must build up a Nigerian culture that will sustain our internally generated momentum for development. The submission here is that culture remains a vital tool for development, and Nollywood remains a vital means of sustaining such a culture that will mature our development goals and objectives.

In his conclusion in a related discourse, Ekeanyanwu (2009, p.79) notes thus: *The discourse so far shows that Nollywood has impacted on Nigerian indigenous culture greatly. However, this impact is both negative and positive. The negative impact could easily be addressed by the industry. This could be done by stopping the current rush to portray Nigeria as a society of ritual killers, morally depraved beings, looters of public treasury who go unpunished, cultists, witches and wizards, etc. My argument here is not that these issues do not happen in Nigeria, they do. But to portray them in eight out of every ten movie made is not reflective of Nigeria's true cultural heritage and values. The borrowing of negative themes from outside of Nigeria, just to impress some section of the public is also taking its toll on the Nigerian indigenous culture. Sexually explicit displays that are prevalent in Nollywood productions today are definitely not part of Nigeria's cultural heritage. It may be regarded as a negative cultural transfer from the West through television and of course, Nollywood. Therefore, if this trend as described above could be reversed, Nollywood would have been seen as portraying Nigeria in her true light. There are lots of rich cultural themes yet to be fully exploited by Nollywood. Producers, directors and scriptwriters could look inwards and see that evil is not more in Nigeria than it is in Mexico, South Africa, India and other South American societies whose movies speak well of their societies. India,*

for instance, is well known for occultic practices but you hardly see such themes portrayed in their movies. Rather, what we often see is themes of love, loyalty, family values and indigenous cultural beliefs.

The call for Nollywood to be a true purveyor of Nigeria's cultural values and heritage is a development imperative that cannot be wished away. This could be done by the creative portrayal and juxtapositioning of Nigerian rich cultural heritage with positive global norms. When this is done, many foreigners, especially those who want to do business with or in the country, will see Nigeria for who she is. The development implications of this cannot be overemphasized.

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