

## **Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria**

<sup>1</sup>Atando Dauda Agbu PhD, <sup>2</sup>Shishi Zhema PhD and Yakubu Aboki Ochefu PhD.

<sup>1</sup>Department of History & Diplomatic Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo.

<sup>2</sup>Department of History & Diplomatic Studies, Federal University, Wukari.

<sup>3</sup>Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi.

### **Abstract**

Entertainment industry has been integral part of the African culture. There are socio-cultural and economic activities that have the potential of improving the socio-cultural and economic lives of the Nigerian people. It is in order to examine how the youth can harness their social, cultural and economic potentials through the leisure and entertainment industry that this paper is positioned. By isolating the Jukun youths in Taraba State of Nigeria, the paper adopts the historical and multi-disciplinary methodology which include oral interview and secondary sources to reach a conclusion that through leisure and entertainment activities, the modern Jukun youths have a bright chance to harness the social, cultural and economic potentials in them for their benefit and that of their society at large.

**Key Words:** Economic, Entertainment, Jukun, Potentials, Socio-cultural and Youth.

### **Introduction**

Leisure and entertainment cannot be separated from the African culture. Leisure and entertainment has always been part of the way the African man lived his daily life, such as songs, dances, games, and sports. These forms of social and cultural activities are so entertaining that, when people want to rest from their daily endeavours, they resort to them for relaxation of their mind, amusement, pleasure, enjoyment, education, entertainment, compensation of energy lost and for economic empowerment.

The problem is that less interest is shown in the examination of how these socio-cultural activities can be used to improve on the people's lives. Until recently, the scope of the people's leisure time was considered as 'private' and cordoned off from serious historical

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria* inquiry (Cross, 1990). It is a fact that leisure and entertainment activities have meanings to the development of people and societies. There are evidences to show that different types of social activities are performed during leisure time for entertainment, education, and economic benefit. Therefore, this paper examines how the Jukun youths can harness the socio-cultural and economic potentials embedded in these social activities performed for leisure and entertainment. Thus, improving not only their economic lives, but their social and cultural happiness. In other words, this paper explores the socio-cultural and economic potentials of the Nigerian youths in the leisure and entertainment industry, focusing on the Jukun youth of Taraba State, Nigeria.

### **Definition of terms**

**Leisure:** The conceptualization of leisure has undergone many changes in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from positivist to post-structuralist paradigms; from Marxism and Feminism to post-colonialism and globalization to approaches that emphasized structure and agency, class and culture, natural and global trends in the creation of and consumption of leisure (Zezeza, 2003). Leisure is conceived differently by different people. Though there is no universal definition of what is leisure, and there is no agreement on the role of leisure for the individual or for the wider society, many scholars (Parr and Lashua 2004, Kraus 2001, Kelly and Kelly 1994) have come up with various explanations of leisure. Zezeza (2003) notes that, it is a phenomenon that is found everywhere, in developed and developing countries, poor or rich communities, yet it assumes different forms and meanings, styles and symbols as it is moulded and marked by the spatial, temporal and social particularities of place, time and society; of geography, history and social structure. To many people, leisure is perceived in terms of time after work, or in relation to particular activities, or with reference to a specific quality of experience, or on the basis of its utility for individuals or societies. That is to say, leisure is conceived residual time, as activities, as freedom or as a functional phenomenon.

As residual time, leisure is seen as that time left over when the necessities of life have been taken care of. It is seen as time when one is not involved in an activity for which he receives money (Bammel 1992 and Godbey 1990). However, this definition seems to ignore or undervalue the leisure of those outside paid work including house wives and the employed. In other words, leisure is structured by other social institutions besides paid work. One can play football both for leisure and as a source of income, and one can go to a football match for fun and out of obligation to watch a child play (Zezeza 2003, p.xiii). This point to the difficulty in defining leisure. Consequently, Dumazedier (1967) sees it as an activity beyond the necessity of labour and the bonds of the family and society, for the improvement of skills and free exercise of his creative capacity. Here, leisure means more than non-working time and goes beyond social obligations to include therapy and compensation. It implies freedom, a state of being that is intrinsically rewarding. Leisure involves many activities that are characterized as playful and pleasurable such as games, sports, dance, and songs and so on. Therefore, leisure can be defined as time and social activities carried out by individuals for their relaxation, enjoyment and pleasure. These activities induce psychological and physiological responses, are educating and contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the individuals and the society. In other words, leisure experiences create room for development through psychological and physiological therapy. It is educational, generates stimulus-seeking behaviour and it is vehicle for socialization, compensation and sublimation for attitudes.

**Entertainment:** The word entertainment comes from the collocation of French '*entre*' which comes from Latin '*inter*', both words meaning 'together' or 'among', and Latin '*tenere*' which means 'to hold'. Thus, literally, entertain means to hold or support together. This means that, when entertaining a crowd or audience, their attention is being held together for amusement. Consequently, entertainment on one hand can be a form of activity that holds the attention and interest of an audience, or gives pleasure and delight (Haecker 2008). Although peoples' attention is held by different things, because most individuals

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria* have different preferences in entertainment, most forms of entertainment are recognizable and familiar. Consequently, in Agbu (2017), entertainment is described as an activity designed to give pleasure and relaxation to an audience, whether the audience participates passively or actively.

Moreover, entertainment can be one of two things, or a combination of both. It can be an experience or it can be a business. As an experience, one can become amused or diverted through performance, or by other means. As a business, one may become involved in an industry known as the entertainment industry to make a living. The entertainment industry, along with the media has become a multi-million dollar business world-wide that show cases the work, services, talents and the creativity of a massive cross-spectrum of the industry. This industry, built on the strength of live performing arts and show business, is expanded into a convergence of three sub-industries such as the traditional live entertainment; mass media and electronic entertainment. It is important to note that the experience of being entertained has come to be strongly associated with amusement, so that one common understanding of the idea is fun and laughter, though many entertainments have a sense of purpose. Therefore, there is the possibility that what appears to be entertainment could also be a means of achieving insight or intellectual, social, cultural and economic growth. This paper defines entertainment as the pleasure, delight and edification which socio-cultural activities give to the audience by holding their attention together.

**Youth:** There is hardly any universally acceptable definition of youth. The continuing debate on who is a 'youth' has not resolved the confusion surrounding the concept. In many African countries, laws define 'adulthood' as commencing from age of 18 to 21 years (Curtain 2000). The boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood are shifting and the Cross-over into each new state is now manifested

in different ways. The changes that young people must pass through today do not occur as predictably as in the past. Therefore, defining youth globally can be a very difficult task. Hence, the majority of youth have been variously defined as ranging from the ages of 10-11 years to 35 years. The United Nations Organization (1995) has come up with a specification of age bracket 15-24years as youth, while the Commonwealth uses the age category of 15-29years. The National Youth Policy says, the youth shall comprise of all young males and females aged 18-35years, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ogunyomi and Oginni (2013) have defined the youth as “young women and men who fall within the age bracket of 15 and 35 years. “Of course according to Ogunyomi and Oginni, anyone who is acknowledged by deed as identifying with and committed to youth development may be recognized as youth”. While the age brackets may differ from society to society, it is important to note that the youth age is the time in life when most young people are going through dramatic changes in their life circumstances as they move from childhood to adulthood. They are energetic, ambitious, creative and promising. They represent the most active and most impulsive. They constitute the most important human resource potential that can contribute significantly to the overall development of a nation. They constitute the driving force of society, the spirit of today and the hope for the future, yet they are the most vulnerable segment of Nigeria’s population. Consequently, they require social, cultural, economic and political support to realize their full potentials.

### **Encompassing the Jukun youth in leisure and entertainment activities**

The Jukun people, found in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, have a very rich cultural heritage which opens a wide avenue for leisure and entertainment activities. These activities are in form of singing and dancing, games and gymnastic displays during cultural festivals, sports, storytelling and traditional social festivals. The Jukun people were involved in these activities during the pre-colonial period and colonialism introduced modern games into their society. In the post-colonial period, they are also involved in them. However, it is very important to inspire the Jukun youths to participate fully in these

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria*

activities in order to bring out the potentials in them for social, cultural and economic benefits. Thus using the leisure and entertainment industry for their socio-cultural and economic benefits.

The *Ado* or *Adzua* is a board game among the Jukun people that survived into post-colonial period. It is a game that is played by both males and females. The mode of playing is discussed by Agbu (2017). This game enhances the mental reasoning and calculative capacity of the players. It also promotes peaceful coexistence among them. The Jukun youth should be invigorated through grass root mobilization to participate in this game so that they can be represented in the games of draft and chess which is today earning money to players. In Eastern Nigeria for instance, the game of draft has become a money earning game where players and spectators put in big sum of money and at the end, winners go home with large sum of money. The Jukun youth can also be successful in this game internationally and earn a living. This would not only improve their economic well-being, but improve their cultural appreciative.

The Jukun were involved in traditional wrestling which played a significant role in their society. However, serious competition among individuals and communities through the wrestling has disappeared in the post-colonial Jukun society. Only the little children are seen involved in wrestling and not in a competitive way. In this case, the Jukun youth should be invigorated to re-introduce the wrestling and compete among each other. Champions can represent or participate at the national games and the Olympics, thus projecting not only the players, but the Jukun culture and improving their economic well-being.

The Jukun are also good swimmers due to their fishing capabilities. Therefore, swimming competition should be a periodic thing among them in order to not only entertain spectators, but project their culture and get the best among them to compete at international swimming competitions such as the Commonwealth or Olympic games.

Since 1960, the Jukun youths have become very active in the games of football and tennis. They have produced players that played both national and international games. Thereby contributing to their social and economic well-being. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Jukun youths can be invigorated to do more in the games of football and tennis. Football and tennis matches should be organized periodically to raise revenue from tourists, spectators and for the entertainment of both the players and the fans. Government and individual clubs should scout for these players who can become professionals even abroad.

In the area of music, the Jukuns are not left behind. They have been involved in music since the pre-colonial period to the post-colonial period. Information on their social and cultural history suggest that they are lovers of music and music is part and parcel of their everyday life (Awudu, 2016). Their traditional religion used music for thanksgiving, reparations and petition. Music inspired worshippers to express their loyalty to their gods and goddesses. Music was used during communal farming and warriors used it during warfare. Music played important role in their traditional society and in the post-colonial period they got involved in modern music. “People such as Philip Adati, Otis Nyaga, Manasseh Zakariya, Solomon Ishaya, Amik Adams, Lordswill Angulu, Nuhu Ashu, Danji Kejas among many others were and are involved in both religious and secular music” (Agbu 2017, p177-181). Several young Jukun men and women are involved in music from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, selling their ideas to the world and earning a living. The youth can be invigorated to do better through support for their products to get to the international stage. This would not only promote the Jukun social and cultural lifestyle, but improve their economy and that of the nation. Musical concerts and festivals should be organized among them where they would perform to improve their economy. Their music can be digitally recorded and distributed for social and economic advantages.

Music goes with dance, and the Jukun youths should participate in the different kind of dances for socio-cultural and economic promotion. The Jukun have the Goge dance, the Akishe dance and different social masquerades that perform during social occasions. In the

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria*

21<sup>st</sup> century, their participation in these activities will not only harness their potentials, but through cultural tourism, their social, cultural and economic lives would be empowered. Moreover, traditional festivals such as the Puje cultural festival, Jukun youth cultural festival and the Nwonyo fishing festival are important social events among the Jukun society that the youth can explore in order to harness their social, cultural and economic potentials. They can through these festivals, showcase their cultural heritage through the activities discussed and raise revenue from tourists for their economic benefits. In summation, through games, music, dance and social festivals among other socio-cultural activities, the lives of the Jukun youths in Taraba State, Nigeria can be improved for better living.

### **Sway leisure and entertainment industry would have on the Jukun social, cultural and economic subsists**

In this era of globalization, creativity and innovation in the leisure and entertainment industry has impacted seriously on global economy. Nations and non-governmental organizations have embraced creativity in the forms of leisure and entertainment activities to generate significantly higher revenue and provide greater stability into the future of their youth. Culture is increasingly finding a route to the market, which is leading to radical transformation in the way people create, consume and enjoy cultural products. Digital distribution in industries such as sports and music has transformed global markets and allowed new industries and consumers to emerge in developing regions such as Africa (Atando 2016) and the Jukun society can swiftly embrace this to their advantage. It is projected that licensed digital distribution of recorded music will rise from \$653 million in 2005 to \$4.9billion in 2010, representing 49.5% compound annual increase (PWC 2007). The Jukun musicians, through encouragement from the governments and private organizations/individuals, can key into digitalization. This would create employment opportunities and improve the revenue base of their society, their State and Nigeria at large.



In Europe, entertainment and leisure show that the arts enrich the social environment with stimulating or pleasing public amenities. Works of arts and cultural products are a collective memory of a community and serve as a reservoir of creative and intellectual ideas for future generations (Council of Europe 1997). The arts and cultural institutions improve the quality of life, thus, the development of cultural tourism in the Jukun society is very essential in order to achieve economic growth, social cohesion and human development.

There is a significant nexus between social festivals and cultural tourism development. Therefore, the Jukun people, policy makers, the Federal, States and Local governments, together with non-governmental organizations can provide support for the various socio-cultural festivals to hold. They should also ensure that the youths are in forefront during these festivals. This will attract both foreign and local tourists. The Taraba State government in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism should come up with viable policies that will promote the development of cultural tourism generally and the Jukun cultural festival in particular. This will improve the socio-economic development of the Jukun society and the State at large. It will also contribute to their cultural awareness, because during these cultural festivals, traditional music, dances and other cultural products will be showcased. This will promote their culture and improve revenue generation for the State and organizers.

In order to put Taraba State on the world tourism map and make it a tourist destination, the State government should invest rapidly in recreational facilities development. There should be upgrading of the Atoshi Recreational Center in Wukari, provided with modern sporting facilities to enable tourists and other people to have access to exercising themselves so as to reduce stress, depression and anxiety after work or while on holiday and to produce positive moods, facilitate social interaction and increase their general physio-psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Particularly now that the Nigerian society is involved in Democratic Party politics, there is the need for positive moods. Furthermore, more

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria*

recreational parks should be established in major locations of the Jukun society to generate more revenue through tourism and other social activities. More tourist attractions in the area need to be rehabilitated and upgraded such as the Crocodile pool in Wukari, Missionary sites at Ibi and Takum, the Jukun Supreme temple and other historical sites for tourists to visit while around during their leisure time.

Cultural and creative commodities such as traditional dances, music, artistic displays and modern entertainment activities should be provided by the youths for the tourists and locals.

Finally, through participation in the leisure and entertainment activities, the socio-economic base of the people will improve, there would be more job opportunities and the governments would have expanded revenue generation base. This is because the entertainment and leisure industry had a growth estimate from \$1.3 trillion in 2005 to \$1.8 trillion by 2010 globally (PWC, 2007). In the 1990s, the creative economy of the developed world grew at an annual rate twice that of service industries and four times that of manufacturing. The growth of the creative sector in the European Union from 1999 to 2003 was 12.3% higher than the growth of the overall economy. Turnover of the culture and creative sector in the EU which comprises television, cinema, music, performing arts and entertainment generated £654 billion and contributed to 2.6% of the EU's GDP in 2003. The industry employed at least 5.8million people in Europe in 2004. The quality of jobs generated in the creative industries provided higher levels of job satisfaction, and gave a strong sense of commitment to the sector and involvement in cultural life (PWC, 2007).

Through the leisure and entertainment activities, societal values, social norms and ideas that stress harmony, fairness, equity, appreciation of oneself and others, co-existence, responsibility and justice would be inculcated in the minds of the young Jukuns. It is apparent that leisure and entertainment activities can be used to harness the social, cultural and economic potentials in the Jukun youths, particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

From the discourse so far, it is evidently clear that the entertainment industry and its activities have become a source of generating significant revenue and stability of the future of the youths. Through the digital distribution of sports and music, the global market has been transformed via emergence of new industries and consumers in the developing countries such as Nigeria. The Jukun society can swiftly embrace the innovation in order to create employment opportunities for their youths and to expand the revenue base and that of the country at large.

Also, since cultural tourism is very vital for achieving economic growth, social cohesion and human development, the Jukun society can provide support for the organization of their various social festivals such as the *Puje, Jukun Youth Day, and Nwonyo* among others to continue to take place in its area. This will attract both foreign and local tourists; traditional social products such as songs, music and dances will be showcased and this can promote their culture in addition to improving revenue realization for their society and the nation at large.

It is also revealed that, through participation in the entertainment activities, the socio-economic base of the people will improve, thus creating more job opportunities and expanding revenue base for the government. Also through the entertainment activities, societal values, social norms and ideas which stresses harmony, fairness, equity and honesty; appreciation of oneself, coexistence, responsibility and justice would be instilled in the minds of the young Jukun people. Consequently, it can be used to harness the social, cultural and economic potentials in the Jukun youths.

Of course, leisure and entertainment activities are part of African culture. Through these activities, they were and still able to get entertainment, amused, educated and compensated for the energy lost during work. Through leisure and entertainment activities also, the Jukun youths can improve their socio-cultural and economic well-being. Based on the facts presented, stakeholders in the Jukun society should navigate towards the direction of leisure and entertainment industry particularly in the segments of music, dance, cultural festivals, sports and recreational activities in order to support the Jukun youths particularly

*Socio-cultural and Economic Potentials for Nigerian Youths in the Entertainment Industry among the Jukun of Taraba State, Nigeria* and the Nigerian youths in general to create employment opportunities, reduce poverty rate and improve revenue generation base of the Federal, State and Local governments. More importantly, to create cultural awareness among the Jukun people, it is apparent that through the leisure and entertainment industry, the Jukun youths can harness their social, cultural and economic potentials.

## References

- Agbu, D.A., (2017). "A History of Leisure and Entertainment Among the Jukun People of the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C.1850-2000", *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*, Department of History, Benue State University Makurdi.
- Atando, D.A., (2016). "The Leisure and Entertainment Industry as a Vehicle for Youth Empowerment" Paper Presented at G9 Summit, organized by OBBUTIV Peace & National Reconciliation Organization, at NAF Conference Center, Abuja, 29<sup>th</sup> Nov.
- Awudu, L.D. (2016). *The Missiological Impact of Jukun Christian Music on the Jukun Society*, Wukari: Unique Printers.
- Bammel, B. (1992). *Leisure and Human Behaviour*, USA: W.C Brown.
- Council of Europe (1997). *From the Margins: A Contribution on the Debate on Culture and Development in Europe*, European Task Force on Culture and Development.
- Cross, G. (1990). *A Social History of Leisure since 1600*, Oxford: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Curtain, R., (2000). "Concept Paper: Identifying the Basis for Youth Employment Strategy aimed at Transition and Developing Economies", United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Dumazedier, J. (1967). *Towards Society of Leisure*, London: The Free Press.
- "Entertain", *Online Etymology Dictionary*, at [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com).
- European Commission, (2007) "Communication for European Agenda for Culture in Globalizing World".
- Godbey, G. (1990). *Leisure in Youth life: An Exploration*, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing Inc.
- Haecker, S. (2008). *The Meaning of Leisure*, Munchin: GRIN Publishing.
- Howkins, J. (2001). *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, London: Penguin.
- Kelly, J.R, and Kelly, J.R., (1994). "Multiple Dimensions of Meaning in the Domain of Work, Family and Leisure", in *Journal of Leisure Research*,

Vol.26,No3.

- Kraus, R. (2001). *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Sabdury: Jones and Barlett Publishers.
- Ogunyomi, P.O. and Oginni, B.O., (2013). “Youth Self-Reliance Programmes and Unemployment Challenges in a Developing Economy: A Nigeria Case” in *Global Business and Economic Research Journal*, Vol.2, No3.
- Parr, M.G. and Lashua, B.D. (2004). “What is Leisure? The Perspectives of Recreation Practitioners and Others” in *Leisure Science*, No.26, Pp1-17.
- Price Water House Cooper (PWC) (2007). “Global Entertainment and Media Outlook: 2006-2010”, [www.pwc.com/entertainmentmedia](http://www.pwc.com/entertainmentmedia).
- United Nations Organization (1995). *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, New York: UN.
- Zezeza, P.T. (2003). “The Creation and Consumption of Leisure: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations” in Zezeza P.T and Veney, C.R. (eds.) *Leisure in Urban Africa*, Trenton NJ: African World Press.