

MANAGING THE NIGERIAN RECESSED ECONOMY THROUGH THEATRE AND DRAMA: GREG MBAJIORGU'S *WAKE UP EVERYONE* AS A PARADIGM

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Abstract

*There is no gainsaying that the Nigerian economy is recessed. Nigeria is perhaps one of the countries that dropped other means of economic survival avail to them and embrace the oil at its discovery. Since the discovery of crude oil the economy has lived on a mono-economy. Interestingly, it is now looking at the bedevilment of running a mono-economy in the eye. The means of surviving economic recession becomes the concern of many Nigerians. Before, salaries of workers can take them home, but now, it cannot even take them to the gate of their office. The ways to ameliorating this avalanche of problems posed by economic recession is the concern of both leaders and the led. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology and makes use of the content analysis instrument to investigate this menace through Greg Mbajiorgu's *Wake Up Everyone*. Therefore, the paper opines that since the way out of recession is the concern, theatre and drama can help in quashing the menace of economic recession. However, it should be noted and acknowledged that recession is a country's problem, but its correction can begin from individuals to the family level through drama and theatre. The findings show that drama through reading and theatre through gate taking can improve the lots of Nigerians in a recessed economy. The paper recommends that the family's economy can be managed during recession by organising theatre troop and can be extended the nation at large. It concludes that if such is put into practice it will cushion the effects of the recessed economy on the people.*

Introduction

There is no denying the fact that there is economic recession in Nigeria. What is arguable is the way to manage the country's depressed economy. However, Nigeria is not the first country to undergo recession. Countries like America, United Kingdom, Greece, China, Japan and many other Western countries have experienced it; and some are still experiencing worse forms of economic recession. In some of the aforementioned

countries, their recession had metamorphosed into depression, which is the worst type of economic recession. This means that recession can lead to depression if it lasts long or is not well managed. For instance, in a recession, the economy contracts for two or more quarters. Depression, on the other hand, lasts for several years. In a recession, unemployment can rise to 10 percent. In a depression, the unemployment rate could be up to 25 percent. In another vein, a depression is a deep and long-lasting recession. While no specific criteria exist to declare a depression, unique features of the “last U.S. depression, the Great depression of the 1930s, included a GDP decline in excess of 10% and an unemployment rate that briefly touched 25%” (Koo 32).

For purpose clarity, the questions to be answered are: What are the causes of economic recession or depression? What are the frontline signs of economic recession? Unless these questions and others are given rightful answers, there may be no measures to tackle the already existing economic recession in Nigeria and to block the future occurrences of economic recession. Therefore, the current study discusses and opines that recessions generally occur when there is a widespread drop in spending. This may be triggered by various events, such as a financial crisis, an external trade shock, an adverse supply shock or the bursting of an economic bubble. Governments usually respond to recessions by adopting expansionary macroeconomic policies, such as increasing money supply, increasing government spending and decreasing taxation.

A recession has many attributes that can occur simultaneously and includes declines in component measures of economic activity (GDP) such as consumption, investment, government spending, and net export activity. These summary measures reflect underlying drivers such as employment levels and skills, household savings rates, corporate investment decisions, interest rates, demographics, and government policies. Richard C. Koo argues that, under ideal conditions: “a country's economy should have the household sector as net savers and the corporate sector as net borrowers, with the government budget nearly balanced and net exports near zero” (45). When these relationships become imbalanced, recession can develop within the country or create pressure for recession in another country. Policy responses are often designed to drive the economy back towards this ideal state of balance.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that, “global recessions seem to occur over a cycle lasting between eight and 10 years” (76). The IMF takes many factors into account when defining a global recession. Until April, 2009, IMF several times communicated to the press, that a global annual real GDP growth of 3.0 percent or less in their view was “...equivalent to a global recession” (Lall 56). By this measure, six periods since 1970 qualify: 1974-1975; 1980-1983 (www.bloomberg.com); 1990-1993; 1998; 2001-2002; and 2008-2009 (www.bloomberg.com). In April, 2002, what IMF termed the three global recessions of the last three decades, global per capita output growth was zero or negative, and IMF had stated that, “because of the opposite being found for 2001, the economic state in this year by itself did not qualify as a global recession” (Rogoff 10). In April, 2009, IMF changed their Global Recession definition to:

a decline in annual per-capita real World GDP (purchasing power parity weighted), backed up by a decline or worsening for one or more of the seven other global macroeconomic indicators: Industrial production, trade, capital flows, oil consumption, unemployment rate, per-capita investment, and per-capita consumption (Davis 86).

By this new definition, it is surmised that, a total of four global recessions have taken place since World War II: 1975, 1982, 1991 and 2009. All of them only lasted one year each; although the third would have lasted three years (1991-93) if IMF had used the normal exchange rate weighted per-capita real World GDP as criteria rather than the purchase power parity weighted per capita real World GDP (Davis 87).

According to Melbourne, “another recession – the most recent one to date – came in the 1990s, at the beginning of the decade. It was the result of a major stock collapse in 1987, in October”, referred to now as, “Black Monday” (43). Although the collapse was greater than the one in 1929, the global economy recovered quickly; but North America still suffered a decline in lumbering savings and loans, which led to a crisis. The recession was not limited to only America; it also affected partnering nations, such as, Australia. The unemployment level increased to 10.8%; employment declined by 3.4%; and the GDP also decreased as much as 1.7%. Inflation, however, was successfully reduced.

Theoretical Framework

The catastrophe theory underpins this study. The theory, in Mathematics, is a set of methods used to study and classify the ways in which a system can undergo sudden large changes in behaviour as one or more of the variables that control it are changed continuously, a variable like a nation’s economy. If some elements or major derives of the economy: employment, reserves and others are not well managed, they experience sudden changes thereby leading to economic recession. The theory is generally considered a branch of geometry because the variables and resultant behaviours are usefully depicted as curves or surfaces, and the formal development of the theory is credited mainly to the French topologist, Rene Thom.

Thom is best known, however, for the catastrophe theory, an attempt to model abrupt behavioural changes, such as, the transition from farming to oil, liquid to gas; or, in human events, from peace to war; and now from stable or progressive economy to economic crisis or recessed economy; or from stable economy to dwindling economy, as a result of mismanagement (like the Nigerian economy) with functions on surfaces that have folds and limits. The mathematical insight was valuable; but the subject became controversial when some of Thom’s friends and colleagues made rather extravagant claims on the applicability of the theory. In addition, it was realised that many of the associated ideas, under different terminology, had already been employed by applied mathematicians.

A simple example of the behaviour studied by catastrophe theory is the change in shape of an arched bridge, like crude oil, as the main stay of the economy, and as the load on it is gradually increased. Like a stable economy, which is not well managed, it

will be embedded with too many policies like the Nigerian experience. As the policies increase, the economy begins to metamorphose and if care is still not taken, it degenerates into a recessed or depressed economy. Nigeria as a nation is currently facing recession because of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds and money laundering. As a result, the bridge, like the economy, deforms in a relatively uniform manner until the load reaches a critical value; at which point the shape of the bridge changes suddenly and it will collapse. While the term, catastrophe, suggests just such a dramatic event, many of the discontinuous changes of state so labelled are not. The reflection or refraction of light by or through moving water is fruitfully studied by the methods of catastrophe theory, as are numerous other optical phenomena. More speculatively, the ideas of catastrophe theory have been applied by social scientists to a variety of situations, such as, the sudden eruption of mob violence. We shall see the application of the theory in the analysis later in this study.

Conceptualising Economic Recession

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines recession as, “a business cycle contraction which results in a general slowdown in economic activity” (309). Under this phenomenon, “macroeconomic indicators such as GDP (gross domestic product), investment spending, capacity utilisation, household income, business profits, and inflation fall, while bankruptcies and the unemployment rate rise” (*Encarta World Dictionary*). Put simply, a recession is when the economy declines significantly for at least six months; that means there is a drop in the following five economic indicators: real GDP, income, employment, manufacturing and retail sales. Furthermore, people often say a recession is when the GDP growth rate is negative for two consecutive quarters or more. But a recession can quietly begin before the quarterly gross domestic product reports are out. A recession is usually underway when there are several quarters of slowing but still positive growth. Often a quarter of negative growth will occur, followed by positive growth for several quarters, and then another quarter of negative growth.

A recession is destructive. It creates wide-spread unemployment, sometimes as high as 10 percent; that is when it affects most people. As the unemployment rate rises, consumer purchases fall off even more; businesses go bankrupt. In many recessions, people lose their homes when they cannot afford the mortgage payments. Young people cannot get good jobs after school; that throws off their entire career. The impact of recession can be long-lasting, even if it is short (nine to 18 months). Economic statistician, Julius Shiskin suggests that, “several rules of thumb for defining a recession, one of which was two down consecutive quarters of GDP” (54). Some economists prefer a definition of a 1.5-2 percentage points rise in unemployment within 12 months (*HM Treasury*).

In the United States, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) defines an economic recession as: “a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real GDP, real income, employment, industrial production, and wholesale-retail sales” (Eslake 90). Almost universally, academics, economists, policy makers, and businesses defer to the determination by NBER for the precise dating of a recession’s onset and end. In the

United Kingdom, recessions are generally defined as two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth, as measured by the seasonal adjusted quarter-on-quarter figures for real GDP (*BBC News*). It has also been stated that, recession is “a significant decline in activity across the economy, lasting longer than a few months” (*NBER Business*). This is visible in industrial production, employment, real income and wholesale-retail trade. Emmanuel Ebo corroborates the above when he argues that, “a general depression in the economy affects every other aspect of the national economy” (109). Ebo argues further:

...a depressed economy where salaries are meagre and apart from being meagre, are irregular, one does not expect a favourable theatre going culture. A depressed economy where businesses cannot flourish and businessmen live from hand to mouth does not encourage theatre going culture ... gate takings in a depressed economy are low because most people cannot afford the money to pay for leisure (112).

Recession is a normal, albeit unpleasant, part of business cycle as can be viewed apparently from Ebo’s position above. However, one-time crisis events can often trigger the onset of a recession. The global recession of 2007-2009 brought a great amount of attention to the risky investment strategies used by large financial institutions, along with the global nature of the financial system. As a result of the wide-spread global recession, the economies of virtually all the world’s developed and developing nations suffered significant setbacks. Numerous government policies were implemented to help prevent a similar future financial crisis as a result. Typically, a recession lasts from six to 18 months; and interest rates usually fall during these months to stimulate the economy.

About the Play, *Wake Up Everyone*

The play, *Wake Up Everyone*, is one of the works of Greg Nnamdi Nnadike Mbajiorgu, who teaches at the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria. Greg, as he is fondly called, is an accomplished solo actor and dramatist, who has written several other plays, including *The Prime Minister’s Son* (a solo drama), *Hands of Fate* (a drama), and *Wata na Wata* (a drama and poetry on water), to mention a few.

The play, *Wake Up Everyone*, opens with Professor Aladinma and the Local Government Chairman discussing the plight of the people of the Local Government, as it regards environmental threat and the problem of climate change. They discuss the urgent need for precautions and to take drastic measures against the environmental disasters and climate change. As a result, Prof. organises and engages some youths in rehearsals for a play performance in the quest to enlighten the people of the danger of climate change and the abuse and misuse of the environment, while the youths were making livelihood from the rehearsals and performances. As the play progresses, it is revealed that Professor Aladinma has been sensitising the people on the disaster that looms over them if care is not taken. Some of the farmers in the Local Government

welcome Professor Aladinma's idea, which yields good result when the disaster came. On the other hand, those who blatantly refused to heed to his advice suffer greatly when the flood came.

Professor Aladinma predicted flood, which later came to past. The effort by Prof. Aladinma to convince the Local Government Chairman to approve the money needed for him to carry out his research on climate change fell on deaf ears. At the end of the play, all the predictions by Prof. Aladinma materialised: the flood swept and swallowed their farmlands and their farm produce. The farmers eventually wake up and march to Prof. Aladinma, who reveals to them that the chairman had refused to heed to his advice; that he had failed to approve money for his proposed research on climate change. The chairman had also failed to attend to the people's plight and ordeal. The play ends with the farmers marching to the Local Government chairman's house to register their grievances, issuing all sorts of threats.

Managing Nigeria's Economic Recession through Drama and Theatre

Having given a synopsis of the play, *Wake Up Everyone* by Greg Mbajiorgu, which serves as a background to the study, it is necessary for us to analyse it within the context of Nigeria's economic recession. Jenny Armstrong argues that:

If there's a crisis, one can be sure there is always someone prepared to turn it into a drama, and increasingly it is playwrights who are ready to do so. The curtain is set to rise on a number of plays that tackle the global recession and entertain audiences with grim tales of greed, bankruptcy and bankers high on power, drugs and money (1).

In line with the above, Peter Hall notes that, "theatre is well-suited to respond to the crunch. Theatre is fast on its feet, quicker than film" (cited in Armstrong 3). Consequently, we are going to examine Greg Mbajiorgu's play, *Wake Up Everyone*, and raise issues of economic recession and how they could be managed.

Prof. Aladinma: You see Mr. Chairman, when the drummer changes beat, the dancer must change his steps. Things are no longer the way they used to be, and even a child must have noticed the changes... (*Wake Up Everyone* 13).

This explains the axiom that, change is the only thing that is constant in this world; although the change could be in a negative or positive form. One may want to see the change promised by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria as the negative one. It is negative because since the 2015 election that Nigerians shouted change, we have not known any rest, especially, from the angle of the nation's economy. From the lines above, it is apparent that maybe the Nigerian government paid deaf ears to the drum of economic recession since it started looming though it may not have started from the current administration. But the government rather turned her back to the predicted economic recession that is here with us.

Chairman: Stupid old man. Who does he think he is? I, Edwin Ochonkeya, the Crocodile that guards Ndoli creeks, the unsterilised knife that cuts the thick balls of Oyibo, release money for such useless project? Nonsense, nonsense... (18).

The above exposes the attitude of some of our leaders when they see those who give them constructive advice on the way to lead the people and better their lives. They insult such people and call them all sorts of names. But they are always ready and prepared to accept and accommodate those who mislead them and perhaps lead them astray. It supports the view that when it comes to spending on irrelevant things (projects that are not important to the people), there is money; but when it comes to projects that will benefit the people, there is no money. Imagine the amounts of money being mentioned on radio, television and on the pages of newspapers; see the monies being recovered every day; perhaps monies that were misappropriated and recovered. But when those leaders were in power, there was always no money to execute meaningful projects. We see the chairman praising himself and beating his chest to the fact that he will not release money for such useless projects.

Chairman: Yes, Jango, I was only angry with that troublesome and restless octogenarian professor who just walked out of my office.

Jango: You mean Professor Aladinma? (19).

It is obvious from the exchange between the Chairman and Jango, his old friend, that the Chairman does not even like the presence of Prof. Aladinma. He tells his friend that he is angry with Prof. Aladinma simply because he had told him to bring money to complement the money the Oyibo will bring for the project. As the play progresses, it is discovered that the rehearsal group managed by Prof. Aladinma is the way forward for the amelioration of economic recession. It is no longer news that recession is here with us and every one of us is feeling the heat. However, the issues to investigate are how to manage it and how to get out of it. Greg Mbajiorgu succinctly captures that in the play thus:

Ekene: (*To NWEKE*). What about our feeding allowance?

Nweke: Prof. is coming with the money.

Ekene: Okay, okay, let's continue. Spread your legs. (*NWEKE spreads his legs. EKENE does the same as he issues out command*). Hands up. (*With their hands up, EKENE intones another song. They exercise as they sing.*) (*Wake Up... 32*).

Ekene: What about our feeding allowance?

Adaora: He will answer that question when he arrives. He has gone to the motor park to pick up a visitor.

Nweke: No rehearsal until he comes. We must wait for him, the three thousand naira he gave us last week has finished. Last night, I rehearsed on an empty stomach, now you want me to start work without food (*Bitterly*.) Is that possible?

Ekene: No food ...

Nweke: No rehearsal ... (33).

Obioma: Eu-u-u Ewo-o- POVERTY! Poverty of the flesh has degenerated to poverty of the mind, and the spirit of poverty has cast it spells on us. What is left now is for man to become the predator of fellow man (*Moves to EKENE*.) My dear brother, release yourself like a gunfire and stray into your memory lane... (36).

When one engages in rehearsals, in the time of recession like this, there would be a way out to cushion the effect of recession because he/she gets stipends from the rehearsals. From Nweke's line in the above dialogue, we see that if you engage in theatre activities during recession like this you have no cause to complain like other citizens as one gets stipends that will survive him during this period. In the time that people are craving for how to put food on their table, Nweke is talking about rehearsal allowances to keep body and soul together. As the exchange progresses, Nweke makes the point that without the allowances there would be no more rehearsals. And that is in line with the catastrophe theory, which underscores this study: Nweke wants to manage the situation so that it does not degenerate to depression, as aptly suggested by the theory.

Therefore the question could be asked: A person who gets allowances from rehearsals, will that person not earn more than that during and after the production? This is particularly if the same person is engaged in different rehearsals and productions. Obioma's line in the interchange opens one's mind to the reality of economic recession. One of the resultant effects of economic recession is poverty, as it is clearly seen in the play. The poverty that sets in as a result of the economic recession, if not well managed, can lead to man becoming the predator of fellow man. This explains further the position of the catastrophe theory as even if the poverty created by recession is not well managed it will equally degenerate. And the end, Obioma's wakeup call was re-echoed to our hearing, so that we can look back and see where we have missed our steps which precipitated economic recession in the country. Thus, one can borrow a leaf from Prof. Aladinma, who organises a theatre troupe and engages the minds of the youth to

organise plays and rehearsals, where they get paid to manage the effect of economic recession.

Another interesting aspect of the play is the conversations between Prof. and Desmond. Their discussions espouse more on the challenges embedded in economic recession; challenges like increase in crime wave as was witnessed by both Desmond and Prof. in Lagos. This is aptly captured by the playwright thus:

Prof. Aladinma: What is your impression of Lagos? I hope you didn't have any sad experience there?

Desmond: I lost one of my bags there; it's alright, it's nothing to worry about ... I wonder how people survive there.

Desmond: But it's quite a pity that the nation has not changed much after fifty years of its birth. I was shocked to go through the airport, the same ordeal my father and I went through five years ago when we returned to bury my grandmother (*Wake Up...* 43).

Desmond's experience in Lagos reveals the true state of the nation if the people can no longer put food on their table. It was equally revealed that after fifty years of age, Nigeria is still crawling to grapple with development and upliftment. Catastrophe played out here because the economic crisis was not managed and it degenerated to what Desmond experienced in Lagos.

Another issue that was exposed during the reading of the play is the quest to leave the country when situation is no longer friendly. This alone can lead the country to a more catastrophic and deadly situation. This can succinctly be found in the play with Prof Aladinma's wife who is not a Nigerian citizen. She had to leave the country when the country became unbearable to her. She took her children and ran away from the country. The question to be asked is: will running away from the country solve the country's problems? Rather, it will compound the problems. Let us hear Prof. Aladinma and Desmond as they talk:

Prof. Aladinma: I married a foreigner who, after a few years of struggling to endure the country's condition with me, decided to return to her country with our two children.

Desmond: Was there a prior notice?

Prof. Aladinma: Oh yes, she had pleaded that we leave this "God-forsaken county", as she calls it, but I refused, insisting that since the country obviously needs help, someone has got to help it, even if God has forsaken it. Since she left me, I've devoted my time and passion to helping my country. She has returned to

her country where she believes things work; I've got to remain in mine and make things work (41-42).

It is obvious that running away from one's own country can never in any way contribute to the development of the country as people are going out of Nigeria. Rather, it will help degenerate the prowess of the people of the country thereby leading to brain drain syndrome.

The conversation between Prof. and Desmond continues till it was revealed that Prof. studied theatre in his first degree before he later switched over to agriculture. And later in agriculture he finds out that theatre is a viable means to disseminate knowledge and information to the people. That was the main impetus behind him organising a theatre troupe. And the troupe became a means of livelihood to many people. Here the researchers make bold to say that despite economic recession and its attendant challenges, it can be managed through the organisation of theatre troupes. They perform for the audience to relax their nerves and the performers make their money either through gate-taking or through appreciation. Hence, using this medium to manage and cushion the effect of economic recession in the present Nigeria.

Desmond: Thanks. I would be glad to know why you switched from theatre to agriculture as a career?

Prof. Aladinma: Well ... in our school days, scholarships were awarded mainly in education and agriculture. Frankly speaking I had passion for theatre. I studied it in my first degree, but seeing that agriculture was the force driving the nation's economy at that time, unlike the present day oil economy, I decided to pursue additional degrees in agriculture in order to be more useful to the nation.

Desmond: Oh! I see.

Prof. Aladinma: Today, I am a proud retired Professor of Agricultural Extension. But theatre did not leave me. It haunted me; it followed me everywhere I went in pursuit of excellence in agriculture, like a hunch on its bearer's back.

Desmond: That is interesting (44).

Theatre and its haunting spirit did not allow Prof. Aladinma to run away despite his switching over from theatre studies to agricultural science. How will a juicy profession like theatre leave you to go when it is a discipline that can rescue one from any form of economic challenge like the economic recession the country is facing presently? It did not stop at that but went further reveal to Prof. Aladinma the interconnectedness or synergy between agriculture and theatre. As Prof. Aladinma tries

to run from theatre which is his first degree he gets weaved into theatre, thus leading him to discover that theatre is a viable means to pass his message to the people:

Prof. Aladinma: Yes. And over time, I've grown to see the relationship between theatre and agriculture. It may not be like the union of a man and his wife, but it is not far from that of the native doctor and his fetish amulet. (*They laugh.*) (44-45).

Desmond: I understand what you mean.

Prof. Aladinma: Agriculture is my profession no doubt, but theatre is the only way I have learnt to relax myself outside my profession. Call it my greatest hobby if you like (45).

Desmond: It's more than just a hobby for you. From your recently published play, *The New Dawn*, which I bought online, you seem to be neck-deep into experimental theatre (45).

Prof. Aladinma: Good, you got it right. That is driven by my search for an approach that is flexible and accommodating; an approach that can give the audience a broad vista... (45).

The exchange espouses our minds that these are many issues that bedevil a country that is looking at recession in the eyes, just like Nigeria. As can be seen again from the following dialogue, Prof. Aladinma and Desmond expose one of the challenges that confront a country as a result of economic recession. This can be seen from their lines:

Nweke: Yes, tell me, when was the last time you had a decent meal?

Adaora: I can't remember (45).

To make it worse, Prof. Aladinma does not stop at the discussion; he goes further to reiterate the reason why there is recession as a result of sleeping country. The principle of the catastrophe theory is already being played out. Hence, the authors ask: can a country go to sleep? Rather, it is the leaders that are sleeping and not the country. Therefore, if the leaders turn their back and turn their faces away from the realities of economic recession, there is no way out. As suggested by the catastrophe theory, you will rather manage your situation rather than running or turning your back against the reality. The call for diversification of the economy was obvious at this point:

Prof. Aladinma: Look, Desmond, this country is asleep. Great leaders in other parts of the world are busy embracing serious ideas like how to produce alternative energy sources that will replace

fossil fuel. Here, our leaders are busy sharing oil well and buying fuel tankers (57).

Prof. Aladinma: in this country, we have done nothing, absolutely nothing and our leaders who should show more concern are completely nonchalant (60).

Desmond: Yes, he refused to see us, preferring the company of a whore. I can't imagine why a harlot should be more important to him than the safety of his community (72).

It is glaring and can be deduced from the comments above that, one of the causes of economic recession is the sharing of oils well and the buying of fuel tankers, as succinctly captured by the Professor. Apart from that, our leaders seem completely nonchalant about the welfare of the people. This is confirmed by Desmond when he refers to what the chairman did to them when they visited him in his office. The chairman had blatantly refused to attend to them but preferred the company of a harlot; a replica of what the Nigerian politicians do. They abandon matters that affect the state and give attention to matters that have no positive effect on the state and the people.

However, this study opines that we have heard enough of praise-singing on the challenges and prospects of economic recession. Rather, we should think of how it can be managed and how we can completely get out of it; so that it does not degenerate as opined by the catastrophe theory. The study proffers and maintains that the way forward on how to manage economic recession instead of allowing it to degenerate into economic depression is the theatre and drama. Despite the recession, people love going to the theatre or watching plays, at least to relax their nerves. Therefore, an individual can go into the organisation of a theatre troupe, which will see the engagement of so many people; and this can go a long way in helping to manage the recession, even starting from the family level. This can be borrowed from Prof. Aladinma's initiative. He organised the youths and used them to conscientise the people through rehearsals and performances. Here, theatre can be organised to engage people in the time of economic recession, while using the same theatre medium to educate the people on ways to manage, control and cushion the effects of economic recession. This can be adopted at the government level if the organisers make the leaders to see the reality of what they do as was seen in the case of the local government chairman. He realises it at the end because, despite his being adamant on the proposal Prof. brought to him, Prof. ignored him and used his money to organise the theatre troupe.

Recommendations

It must be acknowledged that economic recession is not restricted to the family level; rather, it could be an entire country and sometimes a global phenomenon. Perhaps, efforts may be generated from the microcosm (the family) level to manage the phenomenon through families having small theatre troupes that can help in generating funds that such families can use to survive the recession because of the gate takings at

the box office attached to theatre practice. This is because the theatre industry engages more people and creates jobs. The Nigerian Government can look inward and encourage theatre and arts practitioners to be ingenuous in order to cushion the effects of the current economic recession before it metamorphoses into economic depression.

Again, theatre practitioners should persistently engage the audience, such as, performing in unconventional venues like motor parks, warehouses and other such places. This approach will further give practitioners the visibility to showcase themselves. With this, more money could be generated when practitioners create the right form and content. Government will then see the viability of theatre as a venture that can rescue us from the endemic grip of economic recession.

Theatre is a commercial enterprise in a more profound way than many other creative pursuits. Each play is a business re-invented: it requires capital, a business plan, premises, staff, a unique marketing strategy and sales. Consequently, when government gets involved in the business of theatre and drama, it will go a long way in ameliorating the retrogressing or retrogressed economy.

Jerzy Grotowski's concept of "poor theatre" may be adopted in the time of recession to managing spending as it deemphasises elaborate costumes, make-up, design, light and other elements of the theatre ensemble, as there is not much money to spend in the time of economic recession. Therefore, maximising profits and bringing in money to enable dramatic personae and crew survive in the time of economic recession or depression should be encouraged.

Conclusion

From the discourses above, it could be deduced that, we need to invest and recognise the place of theatre and drama and the entire entertainment industry, as an alternative revenue-generating source to the government, community and the family in the bid to overcome economic recession. Theatre will not only boost the economy, but it will also create jobs for the teeming youths roaming the streets. But the question to be asked here is: does the government and in some places the family give recognition to the theatre and the artists? This may affect the soaring of the theatre during a time of economic recession like this.

It must be stated clearly that the role of theatre and drama cannot be underestimated. Whereas other sectors of the economy are struggling under the bite of the economic recession and depression as the case may be, even in the most unreceptive environment we find ourselves, the Nigerian theatre and drama professionals continue to creatively and ingeniously put out shows that continue to amaze the people and bring naira to the people in the creative realms. Therefore, while other sectors concern themselves with the economic recession, drama and theatre artists and crew members are busy putting food on their tables; and they are enjoying themselves in this time of economic recession; thus, making drama and theatre salutary options to managing the economic recession.

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