

Research Article

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## Rural Women's Apathy towards Creative Industries: Navigating the Ecology to Leverage on Rural Entrepreneurial Advancement and Development

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### Abstract

Creative industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in developed countries and preponderantly promotes creative activities and cultural values. In Nigeria, rural women creative activities centered on informal crafts for tactual exploration of traditional ideologies and agricultural sectors. However, policy pillars designed for financing Nigeria's creative industries pretermitted rural women's core cultural and creative industries out-rightly and this elicited phlegm to their practices. The policy condition postulates the new perspective cum redirection for cultural expression recognitions and promotion of entrepreneurship among rural women. The study examines Nigerian policy on creative industries and impassiveness of the rural women effect on core cultural and creative industries. It equally leveraged on review of existing literatures to censoriously explicate the advantageous qualities of providing funds and capital for rural women's core cultural and creative industries. The study therefore, proposes leveraging framework to re-orientate rural women's perception towards creative industries and implementation of these supporting structures will encourage explorations and possibilities of harnessing the ideologies for contemporary industries and socio-economy needs.

### Keywords

Creative industry,  
cultural values,  
entrepreneurship,  
leveraging,  
rural-women.

### Introduction

Rural-women's inclination towards core cultural and creative industries are intensifying declension of cultural impulse values in Nigeria and equally hampering job creation in rural areas. This impassiveness can be colligated to financial constraints, promotional materials, patriarchate, vendible frighten off and poor patronages of their products. Further evidence on this phlegm is persistence of gender imbalance in empowerments

which have intrigued women development. Women are *per se* endowed with entrepreneurial skills and if examined censoriously, creativity and innovations played key roles in their exceptional activities. Rural women's creativity and innovation are not well recognized in Nigerian economic policies as government refused to boost the women entrepreneurial activities of the informal sectors in rural areas. Conversely, without supplement with

leverage on rural women innate potentials, there cannot be new products, new models or designs where they are very active (Alese, 2011).

Rural-women have been participating in small scale industries and other self-firm's enterprise Nigeria from ways back (Ayevbomwan, Popoola & Adeoti, 2016), producing and marketing 60-80% of food (Manuh, 1998). Unfortunately, despite the stated roles of women in agriculture and rural development, more than two-third of the poorest who inhabited rural areas are women (Madeley, 2008). However, regression analysis models from several contextualized studies on human ecology shows that financial supports skewed towards men in spite of female gender mainstreaming-pace and the latter touch every aspect of human sociology especially politics, professional practice and industrial activities (Mba, 1995; Damisa & Yohanna, 2007; Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2009; Kavr, 2013; Trent, South & Bose, 2013; Babasanya, 2013; Akpan, 2015; Ayevbomwan, Popoola & Adeoti, 2016).

In Nigeria, in spite of the contributions of rural women to household welfare, agricultural productivity, and economic growth, they continue to be marginalized and undervalued in many agricultural and economic policies while men's contributions remain central, often the sole focus of attention (Okunlola & Owoade, 2016). Although, rural-women activities mostly centered on the informal crafts and agricultural sectors, and recognitions were not given to these activities at the centre of policy and extant programmes. For this reason, policies hardly placed rural-women at the centre of developmental agenda. These have extirpated myriad rural-women's creative centres for promoting cultural construction and creation activities such as cloth weaving and dyeing, calabash carving, fashion making, pottery, food processing, leatherwork, basket weaving, raffia works, dress making, bead making and mat weaving on account of failure to acknowledge their contributions towards rural development as part of the conventional economy. In point of fact, the inability of rural-women to heighten confidences as potential large-scale producers and entrepreneurs entrapped their creative tendencies, development of the informal sectors and growth of the nation's economy. Creativity and innovations should be the salient factors in rural-women's empowerment and their involvement can hasten the development of the society at large. This will aid promotion of entrepreneurship among rural women and encouraging economic growth.

In reality, the idea of creative industries can be provoking in a country like Nigeria that majorly depends on oil as a source of foreign exchange and importation to meet domestic consumption needs. With rapid social transition, this conception drops the concern on evanesce of cultural values and switches to rural areas' economic rationale. The protection for rural areas' creative industries demands leveraging linchpin from both government and non-governmental organizations for cultural expression recognitions. No wonder, creative industries are still perceived as having a strong connection with tradition and core culture of the nation and the creative government ought to invest in talented people and creative ideas for supporting the richly diverse cultural values (ICAEW, 2015). This has spurred many nations and organizations to delineate creative industries based on peculiarities of their culture and environment. Culture is a vantage of indispensability for the promotion of national values, technological activities and industrial ventures and this perception needs to be broadened in order to maximize future diverse economic development.

Every social group have diverse cultural attributes seen as a valuable quality and recognition of their unity and this valuable recognition are mostly exhibited in rural areas. For these reasons, creative industries with aim of cultural promotions and recognitions should become a discourse amidst of policy makers and industrial sectors. Policy for leveraging women's creative industries in Nigeria's rural areas urgently needs the new perspective and redirection from the government framework, as well as rural social and educational status benefits for strong cultural sectors. The redirection of the policies will ameliorate informal sectors vision through provision of finance, information and good market opportunities that serves as gains of risk-taking in enterprises. For in developed countries, creative industries are being used as public body to supports the talented people in arts, screen and other creative activities across all part of their nations. Majority of these bodies funding focuses are on strategic sectorial growth and co-partnership creative industries that delineate on cultural and economic success as intrinsic. Examples are: Creative England, Creative United, Northern Ireland Screen, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland, and Innovative UK (ICAEW, 2015).

As part of master key to unlock depressive economy, Nigeria has long acknowledged creative industries as one of the major sectors to transform industrial sectors, exterminate unemployment difficulty, and meet socio-economy needs. Uzor (2019) reports the claim of Nigerian Minister of State, Industry, Trade and Investment at a creative entrepreneurs' summit entitled "Creative Industry in Nigeria: The emergence and opportunities for entrepreneurs" that Nigerian creative industry has the fastest growth rate in the world and if properly supported has the potential to transform the economy. Despite the functions on national economy and GDP, Nigeria's rural areas remain very poor and deeply neglected (International Fund for Agriculture Development, 2011). The pace of the development has not been felt genuinely among the rural-women in terms of financial supports and promotional materials. This is obvious in the four pillars of Creative Industry Financing Initiative (CIFI) namely: fashion, information technology, movies and music (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2019). The strategy in collaboration with the Bankers' Committee to address unemployment rate and promote creative industry predominately boost job creation among youth pretermitted core cultural activities of rural women in creative industries.

The study therefore, examines Nigerian policy on creative industries and the effect on the rural women in core cultural and creative industries. The specific aim of the paper then focuses on the leveraging and promotional material campaign and proposes probable ways to address the gender imbalance and re-orientate rural women's perception towards creative industries. The specific objectives are: To analyze rationale for leveraging creative industries among rural areas' women in national economy policy; to examine possible ways of promoting core cultural activities in creative industries for women development and wealth creation in rural Nigeria; and to explicate the benefits of navigating the ecology through leveraging-oriented- programmes and promotional materials for entrepreneurial advancement. For the reason, the paper leveraged on existing literatures to censoriously discusses the following conceptual issues: Creative industry; Nigeria's rural development and impact on women; entrepreneurial promotion among rural women; ways to re-orientate rural women's perception towards creative industry; and rationale for leveraging rural women's core cultural and creative industries.

## Creative Industry

Creative activities require mental sequence of conception, excogitation, fecundity and innovation for generating new ideas and promoting construction. It equally demands intrinsic motivation for greater input through progressive exploration and innovation to conceive new ideas that can complement emerging ideologies for people survival. Creative industries have struggled with ostensive definition and the existing studies have suggested diverse contextual definitions in cultural perspectives. The extant literatures have promulgated cultural impulse as integral values of creative industries to promote national identities, symbolic meaning and heritage related nature. No doubt, creative industries are informal sectors where brain power is preponderant for skills acquisition through study and experimentation. The distinct mental ability to deliver greater values through construal of the visionary ideas into products and services exemplified creative industries (Rigic & Hannerger, 2009).

Howkins (2002) and United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (2010) affirm that the term "creative industries" should encompass activities where brain powers are paramount and where the resultant is intellectually inclined to embrace activities ranging from traditional folk art, cultural and performing arts to the technology intensive. Horkheimer & Theodor (2002) opine that creative industries definition should be referred to the culturally and industrially activities that are producing commercial goods and distinctly subsidized for cultural promotion. World Intellectual Property Organization (2003) sees creative industries as where the creation, manufacture, production, broadcast, distribution, and consumption of copyrighted works that promotes cultural values and artistic heritages.

UNESCO (2006) asseverates that creative industries are sectors that produce, promote and commercialize goods and activities of cultural, artistic or heritage related nature. O'Connor (1991) & Throsby (2001) argue that the term creative industries should explain the activities that deal with creativity, symbolic meaning, intellectual property and goods whose primary economic value is derived from their cultural value. In the same vein, Department of Culture, Media and Sports (1998) submits that creative industries are sectors that patronize individual creativity, skill, talent

with the potential to create wealth creation and jobs through developing intellectual property. All the studies recognized creative industries as an essential constituent or characteristic of cultural activities. For national identities therefore, creative industries should be culturally inclined both in visions and products to enable cultural expression recognitions amidst other nations.

On the other hand, Nigeria is still blighted with strategy to ensure dividend for creative industries, particularly rural areas' creative industries as a result of structure, funding, policy formulation and infrastructure (Onyeator, 2019). The aforementioned plagued hampering rural activities owing to the investments of physical, social and economic infrastructure that have been largely focused on the cities. Latterly, the emergence of information technology in modern world has equally overridden the focus of Nigerian government and the activities of Nigerian Creative Industry Financial Initiative (CIFI) have shifted to movies production and distribution, music, modern fashion, information technology and software engineering pretermittting provision for core cultural and creative industries in rural areas (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2019)

The egression of cyberspace may prove to be a significant driving force in the creative economy in terms of speed publicity, nonetheless, in local adaptation, core cultural and creative industries remain fastest way to grow rural economy in terms of business opportunities, employment generation and earnings if leveraged and given promotional materials. Therefore, emphasis should place on leveraging the rural area activities through monetary fund and industrial infrastructure to increase the economic opportunities of those with farming skills on one hand and those who are more craft oriented in innovations on the other hand.

### **Nigeria's Rural Development and Impact on Women**

The development of rural areas has been the focal point of discourse among Nigerian tiers of government, world organization and non-governmental organization to ameliorate the quality of living, social opportunities, physical facilities and human development. The approaches for the development often centered on structural demands and cultural peculiarities in terms of resource to transform socio-physical activities of the environment for

equitable distribution of needs and betterment of life. Agbonifo (1987) sees rural development as widespread advancement in the life of rural dwellers both in their income, health and intellect to sustain the improved living conditions.

With physical evaluation of Nigeria's trends in development hitherto, rural areas remain poor and highly under-developed owing to failure of most alleviation programmes. Also, majority of rural development programmes heretofore were centered on agricultural productivity pretermittting other creative activities that can contribute to socio-economy development. Nigerian government policy agenda only recognized the rural areas as the source of food for the urban dwellers. And based on Nigeria's rural-urban disparity development datum analyses, the inequalities are widened in terms of massive poverty, absence of physical, social and economic infrastructures, poor human capital development and poor status of rural-women (Akpan, 2015).

Rural-women started to gain attraction and credence in the national policy agenda in late 1980s with many developmental initiatives. These initiatives brought forth many policies and developmental programmes with intention to reduce poverty among rural-women. This includes Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW-1987), People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN-1989), Community Bank (CB-1994), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP-1998), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP-2000) and National Poverty Reduction Programme (NAPEP-2001). The programmes were specifically inaugurated for women development and the scope was to reach rural-women for family support, poverty alleviation, economic empowerment and loans and credit facilities. However, factors such as: Corruptions, change of government, poor budgetary allocation and critics queries, poor policy plan, poor implementation coupled with faulty backgrounds and political interference militate against full actualization of integrating women into these initiatives.

The emergence of the National Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) were also offered substantive vision to streamline the rural women into development agenda. The platforms were to provide financial-gain-product opportunities in small scale industries and agricultural sector and incorporate rural-women into national development

plans and educational training policy. In spite of the vision, the policies have not achieved the results which the government anticipated and heavily flawed structurally as a result of inability to synergy with other traditional craft-oriented sectors.

### **Entrepreneurial Promotion among Nigeria's Rural Women**

Rural-women's perceptions and dispositions towards entrepreneurship have posed a threat to core cultural and creative industries as a result of values placed on their products. Nigeria's rural are known for diverse economic activities that often depend on lineage skills as responsiveness to emerging technologies (Ajadi, 2019). The underestimation of these practices' contribution is as a result of their informal nature since most of the operations are small and medium economy. The atmosphere of this distrust has pervaded rural-women's creation and extraction of values, limit enthusiasm for production and ability for expansion due to lack of funding, lack of market demand and economic crisis.

British Council (2010) avouches that entrepreneurship, knowledge building and sharing should be identified as requisite devices for wealth creation and competitiveness. Rural-women have a quandary that is quite dismaying; they form larger percentage of the poor and illiterate in Nigeria and often disregarded and underestimated in functional values (Ogunlela & Muktar, 2009). National development strategic plans have been halted with the exception of their perspectives, skills, capacities and dynamism. No wonder, several empowerment programmes designed for rural-women fluffed on account of sterile to the learnt skills and the preferred enterprise activities were not identified and considered. Therefore, their felt needs and ambitions demand careful exploration coupled with leverage supplement to boost their fervor for promotion of entrepreneurship in rural areas. The next section discusses probable ways to orient once again the rural-women's perceptual experience towards core cultural and creative activities.

### **Lee ways to Re-orientate Rural-Women's Perceptions towards Creative Industry**

The rural-women proffer multifariousness of experiences in productive activities at the domestic and resource management levels. They constitute potential and critical agents for rural transformation (Akpan, 2015). In spite of these earnest and

conscientious activities, their contributions at all level are neither leveraged nor placed in regular development policies and practices in Nigeria. As a consequence, the paper suggests the following supporting structures to enable rural-women actively participate in their core cultural and creative activities and influence cultural development to meet socio-economic needs, stimulate rural development, enhance employment and improve their quality of life.

### ***Leveraging***

Policy for leveraging core cultural and creative industrial sector is a strategic approach to stimulate rural-women labour market and avenue to provide specific social and trade protection for their needs. It provides strategic advantage, power to act effectively and vantage for empowering rural economy and growing industrial sector. Extant studies unveiled vulnerability of rural-women to risk and how they often shoulders unpaid care-work burden on account of apathy to engage on self-skill business (Babasanya, 2013; Akpan, 2015; Ayevbomwan, Popoola and Adeoti, 2016). Apathy towards their acquired creative skill as a result of fund increases their risks of exposure to unacceptable form of works and imperils their value evolves in the socio-economic development. If leveraging is considered for rural women's core cultural and creative skills, it will afford them more inquisitive in practice, and entrepreneurship will be entrenched among women in Nigeria's rural areas. Leveraging intervention is urgently needful among rural women to create jobs for them, avail them mainstream opportunities and provides care solution in the informal rural economy.

### ***Promotional Material***

Strategies for products' promotion, packaging and publicity deter rural-women's creative activities despite intellectual in traditional conceptualization and flaunting cultural identities of the nation. Responsive approach of promotion system for formal blurb and explicit approval of rural women core cultural and creative industries are desperately required more than usually thought to sensitize their products for market force. To ensure stand out of business, promotional material is a vehicle to reach target audience, goal effectively and fix any of the scale industry problems. Ahmed (2018) affirms that promotional material is a technique used to ensure a business is highly noticeable among the competitors and opportunities to diffuse the products over a wide area. Due to



peculiarities of many Nigeria's rural areas, creativity and competency of rural-women are difficult to be felt owing to promotional expense, market strategist and distance to cities. A system for advancing rural-women core cultural and creative industries to higher-status position to meet contemporary should be included in national development policy for great fervor of their production.

### ***Subsidization***

Vendible frighten off is another major factor dissuasive rural women from practicing their core cultural and creative activities. They lose courage as a result of lack of confidence on regular costumer and sponsorship. Abnormalities and undynamic for functioning of most earlier Nigeria's rural women empowerment programmes are marketing possibilities of the outputs and financial resource to make the project continue. Agriculturist among them has turned subsistence-farming owing to incertitude of the buyers. To encourage practices and productions, government needs to design financial assistance strategy as a policy for paying part of the cost of their productions in order to partially offset the production costs or losses. Government should design rural industrial subsidization among women to promote entrepreneurship in Nigeria's rural areas. This will equally increase their productions and incentivizing products continuation.

### ***Harnessing Innate Potentials for Contemporary Industries***

Exploration and adaptation of rural-women's mythos and innovations in core cultural and creative industries for contemporary industrial production is another potential way to give an incentive to their creative activities. Contextual interpretation and modern-day adaptation of rural women's ideals to explicate public sphere uses and expression will increase public awareness on cultural heritage. This will equally promote traditional ideologies among youths and bridge the gap between traditional and modern methods of industrial enterprise. Once their creative skills are recognized in contemporary industries, prompt willingness for practice and invention will be boosted for entrepreneurial advancement. And these will re-orientate their perception towards customary way of operation. As a consequence, recognitions should be placed on their practice because the more explore, examine and understand their activities, the better the appreciation of its function and aesthetic

expressiveness. This will increase rural-women's confidence and harnessing their innate potentials for sustainable development.

### ***Multidimensional Economic Empowerment***

Empowerments that integrate rural women equalities in several dimensions of public service are fundamental indicators to spur self-confidence and innate potentials. Multidimensional economic empowerments of rural-women are comparatively insignificant and required attention accordingly (Ayevbomwan, Popoola and Adeoti, 2016). Public segregation and discrimination policies should be addressed to give social protection and advancement of women-rights. The poor state of rural-women, their dependence, intimidation, inequalities or differences in verdict determination, inability to own or control productive resource and lack of needful training are primal factors of their apathy. Their confidence and innate potentials can be stimulated if they were allowed to control accessed assets. For these reasons, earnest attempt should be made by policy maker at enabling rural women to takes part in production activities, earnings and decision makings. Actualization of these will elicit their innovation and self-confidence through indigenous creative concepts to promote cultural activities of the nation.

### ***Rationale for Leveraging Rural-Women's Core Cultural and Creative industries***

The posed questions are gains of concerned parties for leveraging rural-women's core cultural and creative industries since Nigerians are predominately depends on foreign products. This paper therefore discussed briefly, the benefits of providing funds and capital for rural-women's creative activities under five themes:

### ***Revitalization of National Identities and Cultural Values***

With trends of transition and development, Nigeria seems lost cultural heritage and national values as a result of over dependent on foreign creative thinking and innovation as an open sesame for living. Revivification and sustainability of cultural heritage need much attention in order to bring again into activities and prominence the cultural values and national identities. Most prominent Nigeria's creative industry explores Western cultures for their productions owing to lack of knowledge and connection with their cultural heritage. This has

distorted rich values ought to be imbibed naturally by the youths. The financial supports will unveil peculiarities and uniqueness of national identities and bridged the gap between the traditional and western cultures. Spatial renewal of core cultural and creative industries will lead to sustainable development and contribute to cultural heritage for future generation safeguarded.

### ***Entrepreneurial Advancement***

The dispositions of concerned parties have entrained enthusiasm of rural-women towards creative practices and hindered so much what they are capable of in entrepreneurial exploration and innovation. Nigeria needs to manage very well her own type of creative activities that can attend to the country's socio-economy needs at this point of unemployment menace. To that degree as it can be ascertained if they were leveraged, it will be characterized by means of empowering them to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance their employment, improve their quality of life, limit their vulnerability to risk, reduce poverty and promote a culture of peace and freedom.

### ***Gender Equality in Socio-economy Policies***

Comparative analysis on gender employment rates affirm that countries with higher GDP level have higher female in their workforce than countries with lower female economic engaged (Kaul, 2016). Women equally uphold the main pillar of Nigeria's rural development in terms of workforce yet they are not visible in the Nigerian mainstream rural socio-economy development programmes and policies. In perspective, if the analysis were considered to Nigeria's rural employment-related-factors and gender-based-indiscriminating, leveraging rural-women activities will give gender equality in socio economy, opportunities to enter the labour market and the nation economy would benefit substantially from their participation.

### ***Promote Contextual Definition of Core Cultural and Traditional Ideologies***

The historical values of Nigeria's cultural heritage have been hampered with modernization and most Nigerians are not feels any contextual connections with their cultural heritage as a result of these modern times. Traditionally, core cultural and creative practices provide platforms for tactual exploration of

cultural values and flaunt certain concepts, facts or traditions which possess contextual meaning of the culture (Ajadi, 2017). These traditions have helped art historians, archeologists, and ethnographers to trace and classify Nigerians' cultures based on styles and values. To bring these traditions again into activity and prominence, values need to be placed on rural women's core cultural and creative industries for contextual explication of the nation cultural and traditional ideologies.

### ***Functional Values Orientation***

Nigeria's rural women are placed on different pedestals with their counterpart in urban on Nigerian development plans and this has dissuaded them from principles that can afford capability of social group functions. This has restrained their potentials to be integrated in the social, economic and political mainstream of development practices. Their innate potentials were limited due to inability to access the requisite resource for their improvement in sphere of lives and lack of financial support for promoting learnt creative skills. However, leveraging their creative potentials is an avenue to touch-up social and economic conditions for awareness of self with regard and value-system in the society.

### ***Conclusion***

In the recent policy pillars designed for financing Nigeria's creative industries, rural-women's core cultural and creative industries have been pretermitted outrightly and this inferred idea drops the concern of evanesce of cultural values and shifts to rural-women's economic rationale. This conception has truncated innate potential values of rural areas' women for effective rural development and inhibited their self-transformation as a result of inability to function accordingly. Lack of recognitions and low values placed on their innate potentials activities necessitate negative dispositions toward the practice and in order to navigate the ecology, rural-women creative potentials need to be assigned priority in the pillars of creative industries financing initiative (CIFI) plans and fully support with promotional materials. If prioritized in development policy and agenda, core cultural and creative industries should be a line of approach for rural entrepreneurial advancement, cultural values promotion and national identities. Finally, concerned parties should provide fund and requisite attention into their activities for explorations and possibilities of harnessing the ideologies for contemporary industries and socio-economy needs.

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