
International Communication

Addressing Restiveness through Theatre-for-Development: The Gbuji Paradigm

Azunwo Eziwho Emenike¹

Abstract: The quest to bring education to global standard and for it to compete favourably in the international space remains a challenge in today's Nigeria. Theatre Arts as a discipline accommodates all ideas that make society functional, because it is progressively becoming a more functional tool for sensitisation, and mobilisation and thus, resulting into massive development. Theatre-for-Development (TfD) is an aspect of theatre which is highly applied in solving societal problems. TfD however applies the interventionist approach in sensitising and conscientising the people; nevertheless, it is anchored on the search for appropriate means of addressing the issue of industrial disharmony in Nigeria especially between ASUU and FGN. Consequently, advocacy crusade which is more fashionable and focal in social engagement and critical discourses has emerged in scholarship more than ever as an alternative forum for community dialogue and action. The aim of this study is to address the issue of industrial disharmony in Nigeria especially between ASUU and FGN using "Gbuji" TFD workshop experience. Hence, it will encourage collective participation in decision making with the use of "Gbuji" production workshop. The realities of the state of Nigerian universities are pressing demands for all hands to be on deck in order to get it redeemed. The study interrogates the use of strike actions by ASUU in confronting the Federal Government of Nigeria on issues that affect the Ivory Tower. This study adopts Paulo Freire's "Teaching Theory" (Critical Pedagogy)". This research discovers that theatre can always be taken as an alternative means of conflict resolution. "Gbuji" graphically demonstrated efficient and effective ways of attaining peaceful resolution between the ASUU and FGN without any blood bath or closure of the universities for a second. The research therefore recommends that henceforth Nigerian government should take the issue of funding university education seriously, as constant nose-diving of her budgetary provisions in this sphere will forever portend doom.

Keywords: Interventionist Theatre Theatre-for-Development; Gbuji; ASUU; Strikes; Restiveness

¹ Eziwho Emenike Azunwo, is a playwright, performer and Theatre Teacher at the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, Address: University of PMB 5323 Choba, East-West Rd, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Corresponding author: eziwho.azunwo@uniport.edu.ng.

Introduction

Nigeria has in recent time become a land of unions with multiple of stories given that no day passes without a mention of one story or another. As a nation, Nigeria has recently witnessed massive increase in the number of industrial actions in almost all spheres of her endeavours. It is no longer news and new that no day goes by in Nigeria devoid of strikes or threats of strikes in one form or another, in one sector of the economy or another. Strikes or industrial action which was once thought to be a 'British disease' appears to have become an incurable or grave Nigerian disease. In reality, strikes have become so prevalent in Nigeria that even the courts should gear up to take judicial notice of them. The rapid rise of industrial disharmony of course, is not and can never be classified as very healthy development in our nation. Industrial actions destroy the preferred intensification and development in the economy as, Nigeria's craving or yearning to woo or encourage foreign investments and dares to become the largest economy in the sub-region will remain only in the realm of dream, a fleeting illusions to be pursued, but never to be attained, as no serious foreign investor will be enthusiastic to put down funds in a country that is completely bedevilled by acidic industrial disputes and strikes over wage increase, conditions of service, payment of fractions/non-payment of salaries; non-payment of earned academic allowances, non releases of operational license of Nigeria University Pension Management Company (NUPEMCO); non implementation of the provisions of the 2014 pension reform act with respect to retired professors and their salaries, removal of universities staff schools from funding by government, funds for the revitalisation of public universities. The insinuation of extraction of foreign investments may appear as another signal of a collapsing economy. It is no longer news that there subsists a solid global compromise that the right to freedom of association allows the workers to aggregate and form trade unions for the safety of their economic and other interests. Freedom of association, of course, allowed by the Constitution, is the enabling right and the access to the implementation of a variety of other rights of workers. Therefore, when workers unite and form trade unions they are at liberty to the recognition for the purpose of collective bargaining with the employer with a view to improving the terms and conditions of the engagement of workers. Thus, in recognition of the workers right to liberty or freedom of association carries with it the identification of the right to collective bargaining, as one of its essential components. Davies and Freedland express in their book, *Kahn Freund's Labour and Law* that collective bargaining is the chief objective of workers thus:

By bargaining collectively with management, organised labour seeks to give effect to its legitimate expectations that wages and other conditions of work should be such as to guarantee a stable and adequate form of existence and as to be compatible with the physical integrity and moral dignity of the individual, and also that jobs should be reasonably secure. (21)

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) on the other hand, is a trade union that is anchored within the framework of Nigerian Universities. The universities, on the other hand, train the specialists that will initiate development and change process in their countries. Lale holds that “Research, one of the cardinal obligations of Higher Education institutions, can provide relevant knowledge and develop appropriate technologies that fit local needs. (3) However the universities play pivotal/traditional roles of teaching, research and community development that will lead to sustainable human development. Janetzke and Scheidtweiler upheld the words of Kofi Annam on the university thus:

I believe that the universities must become a primary tool for African’s development in the new country. Universities can help develop African enterprise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights; and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars. (iii)

The university education which over the decades has remain the most virile mechanism for the utmost transmission of ideas, skills, history and culture from one generation to another all over the globe for the continuation of socio-economic development, human endurance and survival and self-improvement as well as man’s ability to surmount and overcome his antagonistic and unsympathetic milieu and accordingly, improve standards of living and life expectancy. Lale submits in his *Vested Interest and the Mission of Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria* that: “The value of our knowledge in the areas of medical science, agriculture, engineering, technology, law, political economy, to mention a few and its impact on human welfare, orderly living and overall development can hardly be overstated”. (3) How can the foregoing be achieved in a nation whose academic sector is at a regular log ahead and constant struggle with both governments at the centre and at the state levels? ASUU as a trade union over the years is responsible for the welfare of academic staff in all Nigerian universities, as such; the union has the last straw that could break the camels’ back whenever there is an industrial dispute between the union and her employer. It is indeed no longer news that ASUU may be warming

up for yet another strike as a result of numerous failures by the employer in honouring already reached agreements. The Federal Government of Nigeria, on the other hand, has perceived that ASUU is at war with it. Therefore, it is not out of place to state that from a historical point of view, it is palpable that the Academic Staff Union of Universities is at war with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). It is not a war of option, it is a war characterised by inevitability and has been ongoing since ASUU entered the Nigerian national consciousness in 1978. The obvious truth, however, is that ASUU as a trade union has over the years, battled and is still battling with the Federal Government of Nigeria on obvious issues. In paraphrasing this war on obvious issues, Akaruese cites Segun Gbadegesin thus:

ASUU's war is a war against the entrenchment and glorification of ignorance as a national attribute. It is a war for the restoration of the glorious days of the academy in Nigeria, with a clear understanding that many positive changes are bound to follow because they are interconnected. (99)

With all the struggles from the unions, it is obvious that the human race is daily plunging into various predicaments, challenging its tranquillity and existence in the quest for stability and survival, developmental efforts are needed in this expedition. Thus, a creative approach to development through the theatre as an interventionist medium in ensuring harmony must emerge which make the FGN to see reasons to respond to ASUU demands while ASUU on the hand must keep working in the universities to hold Nigerian youths studying in order to avoid breaking of law and order, resulting into one form of terroristic activity or the other. This interventionist medium is hinged on practice-based Theatre, which Theatre for Development (TfD) is perfectly fitted as Hagher holds that:

Community Theatre for Development is a theatrical style which stresses participation, dialogue, critical conscientiousness committed to social transformation through cultural action using the theatre...through its practice...hope to involve the peasants and workers in finding solutions to their common problems, through research, dramatization, analysis and follow-up activities. (59)

Conceptual Clarifications

Interventionist Theatre: This is the process of using drama or the theatre in assisting people or organisations experiencing difficulties or challenges in managing their crisis which in turn restores order through a peaceful means.

Theatre-for-Development: Tfd: This is that participatory theatre whose focus and ideological standpoint is strictly tied to the services it provides, such as social transformation, change, restructuring and above all, overhauling of the society through the direction of entertainment, education and information. Nogueira explains the idea of Theatre for Development with this postulation thus:

Essentially or ideally a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more dialogical process, where theatre is practised with the people or by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and then encouraging them to voice and solve their own problems. (4)

“Gbuji”: this is the paradigm of this particular study created out of data collated in the course of this research, practical scenarios, experimentations and improvisations which resulted into the dissertation play. It is equally a metaphor used in describing the relationship that exists between ASUU and FGN.

ASUU: The acronym ASUU stands for the Academic Staff Union of Universities. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was officially formed in Nigeria in 1978 following the dissolution and collapse of the then National Association of University Teachers (NAUT). Its aim is to rescue and restore the already diminishing, disintegrating, dying quality of Nigerian University education. Makosa submits that “The History and Struggles of ASUU were at the beginning of the decline in the oil boom when the country faced the consequences of the failure of its rulers to use the oil wealth to generate production and a social welfare system”. (8) ASUU therefore is a focused trade union within Nigeria universities with sole aim of combating and compelling the government to restore the stand of education in the country by providing the essentials for the universities.

Strikes: This is a period when workers protest against their employers, demanding for better work conditions, etc; this can be demonstrated by sitting at home, sitting in the offices without working, in most cases, the establishments are shutdown.

Theatre for Development: the Conceptual History in Context and Perspective

The exceptionally eclectic and complex nature of Theatre for Development makes it challenging, if not problematic to define. A glut of nomenclatures, pointers, tags, even brands have been allotted to the endeavour by diverse reviewers, researchers, intellectuals, critics and even theatre practitioners. These nomenclatures include Theatre for Integrated Development, Community Theatre, Popular Theatre, Participatory Educational Theatre, Theatre in Education, Alternative Theatre, Campaign Theatre, Resistance Theatre, Revolutionary Theatre, Protest Theatre, Liberation Theatre, Oppositional Theatre, etc. Many efforts have grappled and tussled seriously with this subject. The phenomenon is generally a popular theatre form, aimed at conscientising and sensitising the society through research, performance and dialogue for positive action. Despite the fact that the classification seems to fluctuate, the fundamental nature of all these variations remain the same, which is looking ahead to the idea of theatre whose focus and ideological position is strictly tied to the services it provides, which is social transformation, change, restructuring and above all, overhauling of the society. An informal examination of the pointers and demonstrations of the different variations, illustrations abound on this: the Kwanga project which was supported by Women in Nigeria (WIN), adopted by the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) NGO, and the Population Programme of the philanthropic MacArthur Foundation. Ngugi Wathiong’O had his marvellous experimentations with Popular Theatre in Kamiriithu; while Penina Mlama coordinated projects with the aid popular theatre in Tanzania; the Jane Plastow’s case was not different too because of the adaptation of Theatre in Education project in Eritrea: in Ethiopia, Carin Asplund’s Advocacy Theatre was equally in display; Ngugi Wa Miri’s Community Theatre equally made waves in Zimbabwe and Augusto Boal’s combustion with his Forum Theatre transverse the length and breadth of Brazil, affecting the whole nation and beyond. All these point to and highlight the role of education in a nation and social change. Dale Byam in an overall submission holds that: Theatre-for-Development is conceived as transcendence over the less interactive styles of popular theatre. (12) Byam is of the view that the area of the increased participation of the target audience in the theatrical process is key and fundamental. As a result, she proposes that “theatre for development must aspire to give confidence to the spectators in an examination of the social environment using dialogue”. (12) Zakes Mda, argues that Theatre-for-Development can be described as “modes of theatre whose objective is to

disseminate messages, or to conscientise communities about their objective and social-political situation”. (48) Penina Mlama sees the concept as Popular Theatre and expresses its purposes swiftly thus:

It aims to make the people not only aware of but also active participants in the development process by expressing their viewpoints and acting to better their conditions. Popular theatre is intended to empower the common man with a critical consciousness crucial to the struggle against the forces responsible for his poverty. (67)

It has become quite realistic that even the most untailored commitment with these definitions provided here divulges their frequent denominators as intensification and interactive audience participation and the expected resultant empowerment of those involved in the programme, which is the target audience. In this particular study, the researcher shall adopt the expression: Theatre-for-Development (TfD) as the operational concept. This is so because the term replicates its description as theatre in the service of community. Aesthetic performances, expressions and forms which include pantomimic dramatisation of poetry, dances, narratives and plays are all slackly considered as theatre in this research effort; agreed that in nearly all Theatre for Development endeavours, the boundaries between the different performance genres are not only liquid but also tremendously shallow. Yet, different cultures and traditions react differently to artistic forms of transmitting messages. Very truly, Theatre for Development frequently aspires to be the form that will communicate the aesthetics and worldview of the community in the most efficient and effective manner. No wonder TfD provokes people to be constantly aware of the forces which determine their living conditions and those active participants in the development process, in this manner, increasingly expanding their point of views, thereby developing their critical thinking, their perceptions and actions to improve their living conditions.

Theoretical Framework: “Teaching Theory”

One area in which post-colonial thought has been particularly rich and suggestive is the “Teaching or Popular Theory”. Foremost in this field is the work of the Brazilian Paulo Freire, especially his seminal book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire aligns political oppression with oppressive pedagogy.

In the view of this work, the “Popular Theory” of Paulo Freire (1972) and Augusto Boal (1974) to mind. Their approaches, according Doki and Igbaba (347), is influenced by Marxist theory of social realism which is a viable tool for social transformation of the people in developing nations.

Boal’s approach, as published in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* aims at educating the masses to jointly asses and realise their common problems and come up with action plans that would alleviate them precarious circumstances. Earlier, Freire’s pedagogical experiments as published in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* advocates for conscientisation of the masses towards self-assessment, discovery and efficacy to enable them see their disadvantaged position and something about it. All these situate Tfd within the ambience of participation which entails that people are not mere recipients of a prepared product, but are equally involved in the process. Going by this, the people’s active participation in any empowerment scheme becomes imperative, hence, Tfd motivates the people to question their situations and work out modalities of ameliorating them. This is an empowerment process. Nwanmuo affirms this when he submits that Community theatre has been used to mobilize the people towards solution of problems in the interest of the nation building. (78) Tfd is thus considered a more friendly approach in negotiating Nigeria’s our nation’s educational sector, because it employs the people’s idioms and allows them become part of the process.

Traditional, oppressive pedagogy is learning by rote, in which teachers who know deposit their information and ideology into the passive minds of students taken as knowing nothing on their own. Such a practice posits students - especially the oppressed - as incapable of thinking for themselves or taking up action. It also instils a sense of the unquestioned inevitability of the oppressive status quo. Against this model, Freire calls for a dialectical pedagogy in which all are thought capable of active contribution - so-called teachers can learn from so-called students. Here the oppressed bring their own experience and understanding to the pedagogical process, solving problems for themselves, and thereby training themselves to take an active role in changing the world. Freire and Henry Giroux have also developed the idea of ‘border pedagogy’. Like Said’s hybridity, border pedagogy takes account of patterns of migration whereby people develop a comparative sense of the relations between different environments and ways of knowing. Again like hybridity, border pedagogy calls for us to distance ourselves from our own subject positions in order to see things as others might.

An Overview of Tfd's Experiments

Theatre-for-Development workshops organised in different communities over a long period of time has helped in changing the status quo of some communal settlements. The exploration and success stories of some cases will indeed reveal details of the workshop's impacts and explain how communal engagement was measured in post-workshops.

The uncomplicatedness of applying the Tfd option in tackling communal problems cannot be overemphasised, as consulting the archives; materials of great value will indeed chart the way forward in this area. Onyuwei for instance, is a village in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State in the North-Central, Nigeria, and this particular experience in 1992 with the workshop which was spearheaded by Tfd practitioner Hansel Eyoh was indeed wonderful. Samson submits that this village is an agrarian society that depends on its fragile agricultural produce. This dependency was particularly troubling, as the village is cut off from surrounding markets by a lack of roads and bridges. Such issues according to Eyoh were discovered during pre-workshop research and discussed throughout rehearsals. (32) The workshop commenced strictly with a period of interviews and research before the rehearsal process; consequently, practitioners encouraged local relationships prior to the workshop. Samson submits that the "practitioners determined that corruption, lack of bridges, perishable food crops, the futility of agricultural investment, and health issues were prominent". (137) For the duration of the workshop, community members were given generous opportunity to draft the script and there was the high use of improvisation throughout the rehearsals which led to the drafting of the main script and improvisation was finally used with the audience in the final performance. At the end of the workshop session, practitioners noted that the analysis of communal issues and potential solutions continued in homesteads and following these conversations in homesteads, the community reconvened to devise solutions to the issues.

Ultimately, Samson added that the community was definitive and secured funding from the Canadian NGO Casu in order to construct a communal farm which increased the efficiency of the agricultural system. (138) Agriculture as a special target was seen as the inability to produce crops which became the root cause of copious issues-malnutrition, lack agricultural investment, poverty, etc.-in the community.

The Mazah village experience was not different from that of Onyuwei, as a community, there were no roads leading to the village and rough terrain surrounds the valley. This according to Abah makes it difficult for the women to sell their agricultural products, as they are unable to reach the markets themselves. (61) The primary concern of the workshop was the construction of a road and lack of fertilizer, which limited the agricultural output of the community. Finally, women's health was a concern; very few doctors were willing to live in the village and operate clinics when the village was so hard to reach. The same principles were applied as such, their system of objectives were achieved. This particular workshop studied a variety of problems afflicting and troubling the community and produced numerous skits. Abah submits that practitioners attempted to implement community script drafting and improvisation in the rehearsal process and the same practitioners felt that the level of community drafting was insufficient; too much time was spent amongst the practitioners developing the skit before the community members contributed input or engaged in improvisation. (65-66)

Bokalaka region of Botswana adopted the TFD workshop in solving their problems. (13) Kid and Byram uphold that this workshop was initiated by one community leader and two émigré adult educators; Laedza Batanani was conceived in an effort to incorporate the community in the development process and understand their perspective. (92) The above-mentioned workshop, according to Mda shared concern among development workers in Bokalaka and it was the noticeable indifference of the community towards the process of development. (13) Kidd informs that one of the techniques used was community script drafting; community leaders were consulted through two workshops prior to the performance. (93) Additionally, community leaders were present during the writing process to ensure that scenarios accurately portrayed their own village life. Follow-up discussions were also included in the programme as well, to help drive the message home. This, therefore, motivates Kidd to aver that:

Following the conclusion of the performance, the actors would disperse among audience members and ask them to congregate into small groups; these groups engaged in a discussion regarding the issues presented during the performance and potential solutions. Improvisation was used among practitioners and a select few community leaders during rehearsals. However, during the actual performance, the audience was not invited to engage in improvisation; thus improvisation was only used to incite critical thought in rehearsals. (93)

Hence, community drafting, follow-up discussions, and improvisation were the most utilised techniques at that period. Attempts to nurture local relationships before the workshop were not adopted in the process. Whereas the community leaders were used in the planning process while the practitioners implemented the workshop in these villages without visiting first and establishing a relationship with participants and the workshop integrated three of the four procedures or techniques. Bengé was of the opinion that:

Community members were consulted at the beginning of the workshop to identify development issues prevalent throughout the community and from these informants; a smaller group of community members was assembled to write the script. During the script writing process, improvisation was utilized to explore various plotlines.... More importantly, during the final performance, there were points where the action of the play was paused and the audience was invited to explain how they might respond in a similar situation.... While audience members may not always have taken the stage, they were still given the opportunity to improvise by expressing how they would play out the situation in reality.... At one point, an actor even spoke directly to one of the community leaders and forced him to join the performance. (114-116)

Finally, there was no follow-up interaction and the practitioners were of the view that involving members of the community was satisfactory to produce results. Undeniably, the Tfd programme created an increase in communal concern with development issues.

Tfd workshops as a professional practice have transverse or criss-crossed multiple communities and countries, leaving experiences and expectations behind for the improvement and betterment of those areas touched. It was observed by Eyoh that inside Kumba, Tfd workshops were conducted in the Kake, Kurume, and Konye villages (9). It was discovered that lack of a bridge to cross the river which separates them from other villages was one of the most imperative or burning issues the villages encountered. Eyoh sustains that:

A Tfd project was organized by Hansel Eyoh and Penina Mloma in December 1984 for Kumba, Cameroon; the practitioners began by speaking with individuals in each of the villages and cultivating local partnerships. It became clear that the main obstacle inhibiting the construction of a bridge was the inability of the village councils to cooperate. Workshop practitioners convinced the three councils to convene and staged a show about three brothers who destroyed themselves by

fighting for the councils with community members. Therefore, local partnerships and community script drafting were utilized. Improvisation was also incorporated through the rehearsal process, although it was primarily for practitioners and community members did not participate. Finally, the performance was followed by a post-show discussion between the councils who agreed to form a committee to discuss the bridge. (9)

Whereas the community's definite goal of building a bridge had not been realized ten years later due to an unexpected drop in the price of their products which limited the village's funds, an administrative unit had been formed along with a rural council and a secondary school built. This administrative unit and school built point toward communalism or collectivism consequential from the TfD workshop which the establishment of organizations at the communal level.

Scenario Formation and Improvisation

Script drafting is a major technique which practitioners may attempt to integrate community members in the research process, depending on the willingness of the community to participate. This process can be categorised into a pre-written script, or practitioners consult community members to write the script. Integrating community members in the script drafting process is particularly important, as it allows them to practically give in their best in information supply. Community members were involved in building and developing the blueprint which later metamorphosed into the script, having produced the raw materials for the play from the analysis stage, it is now time to search for the story that will highlight and link the issues and problems in a dramatic world, such that will provoke more discussion and challenge the people to take positive action. As the researchers waited, they met and interacted with variety of characters from the host community. The people with whom they interacted reveal themselves as they relate their stories, aspirations, dreams and fantasies. Through these interactions, the experience mutually became a journey into self-discovery as well as an opportunity for knowledge and appreciation of the other. At this point, all hands were on the deck to carefully allow the story to evolve from the susceptibility of the people. This type of communal reflection on developmental issues became vital to the process of conscientisation to initiate communal reflection. The scenario which is an executive plan of action became acquiescent and agreeable to change at anytime, according to the changing standpoints of the community. At this point, the team leader facilitated the process

of the story creation. Personal life stories of members of the community were used to illustrate the problems identified, building an imaginary story around it as long as it was the people who are involved. The inclusion of the community in the script drafting became an essential characteristic of TfD and it was encouraged. This technique required the incorporation of community leaders and members in the brainstorming and script writing process. This drafting of scripts became very vital because it touched the foundational linkage with the community, as such; this process drew on the experienced perspectives of key members of the community and it helps incorporate familiar elements in the show which will engage the audience. These participants were volunteers who were invited to participate by the practitioners and their local partners. Principally, community script-drafting facilitated the incorporation of familiar characters and cultural elements. Again, engaging community members into the drafting process encouraged them in the area of conscientisation. Gathering community leaders together to articulate developmental issues and challenges initiated social networking which is exceptionally imperative. Consequently, this ideological standpoint contributed positively to the efficacy of the “Gbuji” workshop.

Copious TfD workshops all over the world have seen that community drafting of scripts facilitates audience engagement with the workshop and the outcome which is the production. Historically speaking, the Community Environmental Forum Theatre in Texas USA started with interrogating members of the community to share their views and problems in their community and the assorted features or players which underlie these problems. Sullivan argues in 2006 that:

“The goal was for these perceptions to contribute to the parameters for playing out a scene. This brainstorming facilitated an opportunity for community members to initiate their involvement in the project. (20)

Community involvement in the script drafting also encourages engagement by guaranteeing that familiar characters are infused in the production to all for easy recognition. In a related development, Quinlan opines further that “community script drafting is a key element which contributes to the creation of realistic and familiar characters”. (21) Additionally, the field of entertainment education discovered applicable and significant characters as a medium through which art may connect an audience. In the same vein, community script drafting results in the engagement of applicable characters which are extremely useful in TfD workshop sessions, thus, resulting in conscientisation. Quinlan volunteers in TfD workshops examinations

that multiple projects using community script drafting is result oriented in many ways:

Here community script drafting contributes to the identification of communal issues, it provides an understanding of 'larger social and political forces' causing these issues and empowers the audiences to discuss and seek for solutions. (84)

Importantly, improvisation is an imperative strategy often employed in Tfd workshops. This method is often executed during the writing process or the actual performance. Conversely, improvisation characteristically persuades audience members to discover a specific actor then conclude playing out the hypothetical situation based on how they might react to similar situations in their individual lives. The key ingredients of improvisation involve the audience members interacting and interfacing critically with the material presented on stage, identifying with a character, and exploring potential resolutions to the issues posed in the production. Playing out hypothetical situations stimulates the audiences towards collective action through audience engagement, conscientisation, and social networking. Once the audience members wear the personality of a character, they are instantaneously engaged as Papa holds that:

Essentially, improvisation enables audience members to experience parasocial relationships with characters. (55) He further argues that "this relationship is critical to changing audience perspectives; as identification with characters draws the audience into the performance and encourages them to consider how it emulates their own experiences. (55)

This relationship that exists between members of the audience and characters is essentially the key ways which the work of art might incite or provoke the audiences to take up new mannerisms, which cultural political theory according to Ahmed, provides that art is effective at inciting conscientisation. (4) As a means which engages the audience in the artistic process, improvisation makes possible reflection on communal issues among participants. Consequently, research has proven improvisation very effective at sorting out development problems and their causes. This heightened awareness is the essence of conscientization. Improvisation supports social networking, no wonder studies of Tfd workshops in Canada and other areas have proved this as effective. Scholarly observations volunteered by Quinlan indicate that playing out hypothetical situations enabled participants to work cooperatively with each other. (30) In the research, Quinlan submits that "Drawing audience members into the scene incited discussion between audience members

regarding the best route to resolution; thus, improvisation initiated socializing between audience members”. (32) Improvisation, therefore, affords a forum for community members to speak openly and exchange ideas, essentially for the development of the, leading to. This, of course, leads to the type of networking required for collective action for change. Improvisation in most cases is not only applicable in Tfd, however, it is always integrated into most theatrical exploits.

Consequently, improvisation takes a multitude of formats to be implemented. This research adopted the most popular method of improvisation which involves circumstances where the participants set up the general guidelines for the context of the scene, leaving the conclusion indeterminate, allowing the actors act out the scene based on their own natural inclination. Improvisation in most cases occurs during the rehearsal process. In improvisation, those on invitation to take on a character are given the opportunity to share their sensitivities, discover the underlying causes of communal problems and issues, and do experimentation with probable clarifications for these causes. Although there may be benefits in integrating improvisation at specific points in the Tfd workshop, either before or after the performance, this research is principally concerned with the participants giving afforded opportunity to express their experience in improvisation and subsequent production.

The Drama Skit

Year after year, the government wilfully enters into several sweet talking agreements with organizations, which include ASUU. The government changes her ideologies and presents reasons why they cannot live up to expectations, with too many discordant tones; the students, the unions and the entire society are affected by government’s irresponsibility. This goes on for a while until the union decides to down tools; the students mobilized themselves and staged a protest against the industrial action, parents, government officials, critical stakeholders and the press are on ground to register their presence against ASUU’s position. Other ineffectual lecturers engage in too many sexual adventures in different cities with their students, thereby debasing the sacredness of the ivory tower before the eyes of the public and abandoning the ethics of the profession, some even go as far writing examinations for some of the students, just to make the ends meet. The protest almost resulted in a fiasco, suddenly, the students become aware that the government delegation ably led by the president of the federation is in the university to commission the university

administrative (Senate) building, and they cease the opportunity and move their protest to the president immediately.

The above performance was presented distinctively in English language since the residents of the university community who ordinarily constitute the audience members speak and understand the language. The play encouraged the people to confront their problem head-on through community and communal self-examination, especially following the Socratic aphorism of man know thyself, for an unexamined life is not worth living. The performers' movements, gestures, facial expressions, the use of solidarity songs, etc in between the scenes of the play gave the spectators the satisfaction they desire, deserve and unique opportunity to relish the holistic nature of Tfd.

During the post performance discussion, members of the audience who spoke were amazed how the long battle between ASUU and FGN in trying to revitalise the nation's universities were captured in the play-let by those who played roles such as the ASUU president, Prof. Andrew, Prof. Festus, the SUG President and his students, parents, critical stake holders and the government officials. Members of the audience marvelled how they blended in their roles. Some members of the audience confessed that the resolution of the play was quite realistic, since the play told us what is going on in the society. They informed that what destroyed the world is communication, "The Tower of Babel" and that it is only communication that can still bring us together to remove rebellion from ASUU, students or whatever because if a student has a wrong impression of why the lecturers strike, the purpose may be defeated. There is inadequate communication but clips like this will orientate and re-orientate the minds of the parents, the students, the lecturers and everybody can come together to build the educational sector. This is because the piece is an advocacy technique and it is one of the strongest weapons one can use to get the government to do what is right and what can advance the nature and restore a peaceful atmosphere in the nation. It was observed that the play informed the audience about the plight of the lecturers and gave reasons why the government should invest more on education and funding public universities. And the audience informed that it is important that the university community become innovative and find ways of raising funds to run the university. Some audience members informed that the play mentioned Harvard University, Harvard do not necessarily get funds from the United State government. Harvard has become innovative in all sense and it does not only get funds from the Alumni, it also has other programs where they raise funds from like the summer

school, etc. The advised that the university should become innovative and look for other ways of raising funds rather than waiting for government.

The Interventionist Dimension in Gbuji Production

There has been a growing world view that dialogue is the best strategy for resolving conflict. This view may want to flourish in this analysis as the experimental production under consideration adopts this hypothesis as its interventionist strategy. Having expressed their grievances and differences in this case, the separate bodies; ASUU, Nigerian University students, parents and the F.G.N resolve to sit down and dialogue in a bid to settle the issue at hand. Following precedence, it is often noted that ASUU and government usually meet alone and in most cases closed door meetings. This sort of strategy only involves two worrying parties leaving behind other critical stake holders thereby limiting and short-changing the process. Reversely, the Gbuji interventionist strategy is a welcoming idea being that it allows for a transparent process where everybody will be well represented and carried along without bias or prejudice. It is unheard of for an aggrieve individual to sit in a gathering where his case is being discussed without airing out his view. This approach is what *Gbuji* subjectively dwells upon.

Typically, the Gbuji interventionist view is in fact idealistic in that it has never been tried before and so is still a virgin. This unverifiable case of *Gbuji* interventionist strategy makes it explicit as a visionary movement in approach and result. Since the relevant offices and officers on education matters has proven failure in their job due to politics and other anti reasons it becomes necessary that the president personally takes the bull by the horn and resolve the problem in the academic sector. There may be no need for too much hide and seek, the problem is clear and the source is even clearer so from the Gbuji perspective the President himself may be the chief corner stone that education is looking for to hit the required ivory. It is a common sense to say that “nothing will work unless you do” This phrase may as well bring to limelight a Chinese proverb which state that “the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now”. The academia may wish to speed away from the rotten state it is now and if that be the case then the Chinese proverb above may wish to be taken into consideration.

Finally, it is a relative truth to say that there is a break of communication amongst ASUU, students and even the general public and that is the simple reason why ASUU seems to be misunderstood and fought against by even the same people she fights

for. Relatively, the *Gbuji* production is an experimental attitude towards addressing the loopholes by bringing all relevant stakeholders (ASUU, students, parents and F.G.N) in the fore of the dialogue together on the negotiation table in order to comprehensively, collaboratively and effectively address the worrying issue on ground. Adequate communication is key to bringing to limelight unknown and unattended problems as well as understanding and learning different bodies and opinions with an aim of equalizing the worries of all. And if all these are applied, the university doors will not be shutdown, and if the universities are ever functioning, the students will be busy handling their academic works, none will go into serious prostitution, armed robbery which will later climaxed in national terrorism.

The Way Forward

Sequel from the above discussion on the Tfd, it is proposed and understood the Tfd is a veritable advocacy tool for addressing restiveness in the country and it therefore advanced the following recommendations:

Since whenever ASUU declares her indefinite strike actions, the union punishes the sons and daughters of the poor Nigerians who cannot afford attending private universities, leaving the children of the politicians to wallow in their stolen wealth, carelessly gallivanting and luxuriating in foreign universities. Henceforth, the people should press the national assembly into making a legislation that will clearly define and set the basic condition for holding public offices, such as having all their children and wards school in the public universities or haven attended those institutions for those whose children are already done with university education. This wilful disposition will check the excesses of the politicians and public office holders who flagrantly embezzle the national treasury with impunity and send their children/ward abroad for university education, this act which has in time past, created an inhumane atmosphere that did not engender quality learning and development.

ASUU should overhaul her membership and encourage them to go into intensive cutting edge researches and landmark discoveries which will provide direction, the needs and leadership that is currently lacking in the country. Researches that will revamp the face of Nigerian economy, diplomacy, politics, engineering, medicine, law, education, sciences, the arts and foreign policy and direction, thus, assuming her position as the real giant of Africa, not just in words, but in works, actions, contents and forms, thereby attracting grants, owning patents and at the end, cease from belly based researches. If the needs and directions of the country are carefully

taking care by the aid of the academics, no government whether at the national or state will depend on those political appointees invoked like expatriates, imported from overseas.

The study recommends that Nigeria government should learn how to respect collective bargaining, implement agreements unanimously reached with the unions and recognize the unions in order to circumvent future industrial disharmony and improve Nigerian universities in the world rankings of universities world over.

The research recommends that henceforth Nigerian government should take the issue of funding university education seriously, as constant nose-diving of her budgetary provisions in this sphere will forever portend doom. If the budgetary provisions to the educational sector is sincerely handled, Nigerians will no longer flood her neighbouring countries like Ghana, Kenya, Botswana, Benin republic, Cameroon, etc, wasting multiplied billions of dollars in acquiring university education which would have been easily acquired in Nigeria.

The research recommends that Nigerian government should remember that the engineering sphere of her universities is the face of modern cutting edge technology, as such, FGN should henceforth think of moving the engineering workshops from zinc and under tree sheds to building and equipping engineering workshops and science laboratories.

References

- Abah, Oga S. (1990). The Dynamics of Intervention in Community Theatre for Development. *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 59-78. Print.
- Adesulu, D. (2014). *Incessant ASUU strikes: bane of education sector*. From: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/08/incessant-asuu-strikes-bane-of-education-sector/>. Retrieved on 20th January, 2017.
- Benge, OM. & Kiguli, Susan (2000). Theatre for Development in Uganda: The Case of Makerere Kikoni Theatre Project. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. (2000) 109-118. Print.
- Burns, Elizabeth (1972). *Theatricality: A Study of Conventions in the Theatre and Social Life*. London: Longmans, Print.
- Byam, Dale (1999). *Community in Motion*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey. Print.
- Desai, Gaurav (1990). Theatre as a Praxis: Discursive Strategies in African Popular Theatre. *African Studies Review*, 33, (1990) 65-92. Print.

- Doki, Gowon Ama & Igbaba, Sunday Ogbu (2008). Locating Women and Children within the NEEDS Agenda: The Tfd Approach. *Mukabala: Journal of Performing Arts and Culture*. Eds. Dapo Adelugba, M.I Umar-Burutai and Steve Daniel. 1, 1. 343-354. Print.
- Emmanuel, Emasealu (2007). A Study of Comic Elements in Select Nigerian Video Films. In *The CRAB Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, ed. Emmanuel, Emasealu. No.3/June, 43-56. Print.
- Ewu, Jumai (2002). *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*. Newark: Harwood Academic Publishers. Print.
- Eyoh, Hansel Ndumbe (2002). "Popular Theatre Re-visited." In *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 9-44. Print.
- Flona, Mackenzie (1992). *Development from Within: The Struggle to Survive*. London: Routledge. Print.
- Freire, Paulo(1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder. Print.
- Janetzke, Gray & Schouweiler, Twitter (2011). Facing Africa's Future in a Global Era-Contributions by Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation, 20-23. In Kuhn, M. (ed.) *Facing Africa's Future in a Global Era: The Power of Higher Education and Research*. AvH and KAAD, Bonn. Print.
- Kendall, K. Limakatso (1984). "Cross-Dressing and Theatre for Liberation: Women in Lesotho." In *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 193-210. Kidd, Ross. "Popular Theatre and Non-formal forms of Education in the Third World: Five Strands of Experience." *International Review of Education*. 265-287. Print.
- Kidd, Rose. & Byram, M. (1982). "Demystifying Psuedo-Freirian Development: The Case of Laeadza Batanani." *Community Development Journal*. 91-106. Print.
- Kruger, Loren (1999). Theatre for Development and TV Nation: Notes on an Educational Soap Opera in South Africa. *Research in African Literatures*. 30,4 106-26. Print.
- Lale, Sunday (2012). *Vested interest and the mission of Higher education Institutions in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Printing press. Print.
- Marsh, Cassady (1997). *Theatre: An Introduction*. Illinois: NTC Publishing Group. Print.
- Mavrocordatos, Alex. Tied up in a rope of Sand TFD: Cultural Action for Development Utility. In *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 93-114. Print.
- Mlama, Penina. Popular Theatre and Development-Challenges for the future: the Tanzanian Experience. In *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 45-58. Print.
- Odi, Christine (2012). Theatre for Development in Nigeria (1980-2013): Theories in Relations to Practice. *The Crab Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press. No.7, (2012) 58-68. Print.
- Okagbue, Osita (2002). A Drama of their Lives: Theatre for Development in Africa. *Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences*, ed. Jumai Ewu. Harwood Academic Publishers. 79-92. Print.

- Papa, Michael (2000). Entertainment-education and Social Change: An Analysis of Parasocial Interaction, Social Learning, Collective Efficacy, and Paradoxical Communication. *Journal of Communication* 50, 4 31-55. Print.
- Quinlan, Elizabeth (2009). Contemporary Challenges To Caring Labour And Time-Honoured Transformative Tools: Workplace. *Just Labour: A Canadian Journal of Work and Society*. 1, 7 83-105. Print.
- Quinlan, Elizabeth (2010). New Action Research Techniques: Using Participatory Theatre with Health Care Workers." *Action Research* 8, 2, 117-33.
- Stephanie,Arnold (2001). *The Creative Spirit: an Introduction to Theatre*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company. Print.
- Stuttaford, M. (2006). Use of Applied Theatre in Health Research Dissemination and Data Validation: A Pilot Study from South Africa. *Health: 10,1* 31-45. Print.
- Suleiman, N. (2017). *ASUU Strike: Who bears the brunt?* 2013. From <http://ngex.com/news/public/article.php?>. Retrieved on 29th March.
- Sullivan, J., & Lloyd, R. (2006). The Forum Theatre of Augusto Boal: A Dramatic Model for Dialogue and Community-Based Environmental Science. *Local Environment* 11(6): 627-46. Print.
- Sztompka, Piotr (1991). *Society in Action*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Print.