

YOUTH ADVANCEMENT AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE: THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT PEDAGOGY IN OLABISI ONABANJO AND LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITIES

Olusola Smith Adeyemi (Ph.D)
Department of Performing Arts,
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State

Abstract

There is no gainsaying the fact that social and economic advancements of a nation are dependent on the ability of its youths, as they (the youths) are perceived to be industrious, desirous and critical in thinking for good and positive living. Hence, they are a potential force in the development of a nation. However, the former president of Nigeria, President Mohammadu Buhari described the contemporary Nigerian youth as a lazy entity who lacks the capacity to garner good social and developmental attitudes. This paper counters this description by interrogating how some Nigerian youths who are undergraduates have deployed their energy through the channel of Theatre for Development (TfD) initiatives in achieving social and behavioural change. Adopting the qualitative research method of content analysis for selected universities Theatre for Development (TfD) projects, the paper explicates the approaches to TfD pedagogies and their deployment in social engineering process. Findings reveal that the Nigerian youths are ready to channel their resources and energy into social development actions, if they are properly guided and educated. The paper concludes that the social readiness of the Nigerian youths is not in doubt. They are ready to be part of the nation building effort and for this to come to manifestation, the government must encourage them, and not condemnation, as the former president had stated. The government should allow them full participation in the political affairs and running of the nation.

Keywords: The youth, Development; Theatre for Development; Social change; Behavioural change

Introduction

The place of the youths as the greatest asset to any nation is never in doubt, as they are regarded as the nation's bedrock and future leaders. They are regarded as formidable and critical segments of the total population of any society. Hence, the development of a nation cannot be said to be complete without the measurement or assessment of the potentiality of its youth. Ezeodili and Hillary (2017) assert that “youth of a nation serves as the building blocks that link the past with the present” (p.113). This assertion shows that without the contribution of the youths to a nation's development effort, the future of such a nation is blink. Uzoma, Bello and Falade (2017) had once asserted that the youths are very key to the advancement of the nation due to the fact that they are always “ambitious, enthusiastic, energetic and promising” (p.1). A situation where the above analysis is missing implies a clear indication that there is a gap in the developmental process of such a nation.

The concept of the “Youth” is complex to define; no wonder the definitions vary. Some international institutions describe it from the angle of age bracket while others discuss it from the perspective of social construct. For instance, United Nation World Youth Report (2018) asserts that “there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years accounting for 16 percent of the global population” (p.1). These youths make up the largest proportion of people.

From the above, it is clear that the definers are conceptualizing youth from the point of view of age

bracket. However, Boeck (2005) describes youth “as a socially constructed category defined by social expectations and responsibilities” (p.2). The National Youth Policy classifies youth as persons aged between 18 - 35 years. They constitute the largest demographic group with an estimated population of about 80 million that is rapidly increasing (NPC, 2006). Kenway (1993) further interrogates the concept of youth by asserting that youth is a “slippery concept...when does it start and finish?...some will say, there is a fluidity that transcends demarcation”. This argument situates the idea of youth within the paradigm of maturity of mind. The question that arises therefore, is what happens when people classified as youth put up “childish behavior” while a remarkable and positive behavior is put up by he/she that has risen to the age of a youth?

This paper adopts the National Youth Policy's classification of youth based on the fact that the youths in focus here are University undergraduates in Nigeria, thereby interrogating their engagements in activating social change through the wheel of Theatre for Development (TfD).

Classification of Youth by different International/ National Organisation

S/N	Organisation	Age Grade
1	UNESCO/ILO, UN Habitat	15-24
2	Youth Fund	15-32
3	UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA	10-24
4	UNICEF/Convention Right of Child	0-24
5	African Youth Charter	15-35
6	Federal Republic of Nigeria	18-35
7	National Youth Policy	18-30

Source: Arubayi (2015)

Participation of the youth in development process infers that they act in effective and affective ways to engender social transformation and advancement. Doing this is a by-product for the attainment of sustainable human development. Ogakason, R.O. (2017) asserts that the failure to promote participation of the youth in social development initiative and interventions is inimical as “it will negatively affect countries and the world” (p.196). The age grade of youth is a sensitive and vulnerable period in the development of every human being and human society; this is why this period has a lot to do with close monitoring and sensitisation of those within the age bracket. Otherwise, they may imbibe negative life styles.

In recent times, youth violence and criminality have been on increase in Nigeria and this according to scholars such as Mohammed (2019), Lawanson and Abiodun (2020) and Ogunjobi (2020) is as a result of unemployment, bad governance, poor educational system like incessant ASUU strikes that keep the student at home for a longer period and poverty. It is clear then, that the above mentioned challenges play pivotal role in exacerbating youth's vulnerability and susceptibilities to becoming involved in criminal activities. For instance, in the area of cybercrime, Nigerian youths are part of the numerous users of the cyberspace to commit internet crimes and this has become a worrisome situation. In 2017, according to Ogunjobi (2020) “Nigerians are rated 37% users of online transactions within African countries, 7% of these online transactions are fraudulent in nature” (p.4). To tackle this ugly phenomenon, the Nigerian government, through its security agencies like the Police and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) has taken measures to curb the increase in youth participation in cybercrime.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this paper is drawn from Critical Pedagogy theory whose interest is in the

understanding the level of oppression of individuals or groups within the society, with the aim of facilitating positive transformation and assistance towards emancipation from such social and political subjugations. Critical Pedagogy as propounded by Paolo Freire draws its inspiration from critical social theory propounded by Jurgen Habermas et al of the Frankfurt school of thought. Paolo Freire's idea of critical pedagogy was set to create a sense of critical thinking in the students to challenge what can be regarded as social oppression. According to Uddin (2019) "critical pedagogy is an effective strategy to enhance critical thinking capability of students and to generate positive behavioural change in the student's life. This is a strategy that gives students a voice to speak in the classroom"(p.111).

Through this approach, students are able to develop critical mind to which they can be able to pose questions on issues that are not clear to them in the process of being taught. Critical pedagogy therefore allows for participation and dialogue. Freire asserted that "only dialogue, which requires critical thinking is also capable of generating critical thinking" (65). The application of this theory helps the students and the members of the communities in proper motivation of the people's activities towards advancing their communities, in terms of development and social transformation.

Research Method

This paper adopts qualitative research method with emphasis on descriptive survey which aims at systematic gathering of data from population by applying personal contact and interviews to gather information on certain social problems. With this method, the Theatre for Development concepts such as Homestead and Migrant approaches, and other qualitative research tools such as Participant-Observation, Key Informant Interview, Role-play and Semi-structured Interview were also adopted to engage the study. The two approaches (Homestead and Migrant), Role-play Participant-Observation and Semi-structured interviews were adopted at the level of the Tfd field workshop while Key Informant Interview was applied at the level of follow-up. One of the institutions (Lagos State University, Ojo) adopted Homestead Approach; while the other (Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye) adopted Migrant Approach. The adoption of Homestead approach in the research indicated that the research participants and facilitators resided in the communities, all through the workshop period in order to carry out the research survey effectively, while Migrant approach is the opposite of the Homestead Approach. It indicated that the Tfd facilitators had to reside at the community in the morning and returned to their base at a stipulated time. Specifically, this approach is a non-residential method of carrying out Theatre for Development workshop.

The adoption of these Tfd research concepts was essential because they allowed the participants to observe and carry out the survey by joining and sharing, in the communal activities of the people. In this process, they were able to incorporate the people's view point in order to contribute to the social transformation methods by which the people's challenges can be eliminated.

Limitation of the Study

There is no gainsaying in the fact that research work like this cannot be written without some hindrances that include but not limited to the following:

1. The uncooperative attitude of some of the community members to grant interviews to the Tfd facilitators.
2. Unavailability of documented historical accounts of some of the communities visited thereby resulting into little or no literature about the communities.
3. Time constraints for the student researchers because they had to return to various campuses to resume their classes.

Youth, Theatre and Social Change

The roles of youth in social change express the overall transformation that manifests in a particular society through the active roles played by the youth. This is what Darah in Emesealu (2008) refers to as “the qualitative improvement in economic and social life” (p.66). Within this context, social change implies positive alterations made to advance a community towards a process of development by which the members will have increased awareness of their situations, their needs and then decide on ways of achieving positive solutions forward. As it is generally known that society is a web of connection, hence, a change in the attitudes of a society indicates a process of change in social relationship which applies to change in social structure or manifests in the form of change in norms, values, culture and ways of life in/of a society. Social change has to do with a new approach to doing things either by modifying or replacing the old approach. A change comes after a realization that the old approach is obsolete. MacIver and Page cited in (Onu, Shekwo and Agbas, (2019) give a holistic analysis when they assert that it is a “process responsive to many types of changes to changes in man-made conditions of life, to changes in attitude and beliefs of men and to changes that go beyond human control to the biological and the physical nature of things” (p.17). Many fields of human endeavour such as Sociology, Philosophy, Geography and the sciences have been linked with social change. Then one begins to wonder, what is the relationship between the field of theatre and social change? To respond to this question, there is the need to interrogate the nature of theatre.

The idea of “Theatre” is often interpreted as performance showcased on a conventional stage with colourful costumes and beautiful backdrop, for a specified kind of audience. Theatre is deployed for entertainment, education and socio-economic messages, thereby having effects on the audience and moving them towards a certain kind of change. This shows that the efficacy of the theatre in advancement of the society towards development is never in doubt. Whetmore, (1999) points out that theatre provides us with a giant mirror, a reflection of the values, the half-truths and the ideas of a society”(p.204) while Emeana (2005), claims that theatre is “a potent institution of investigating the imperfections of man (human) in social order, with a view to encouraging and or enforcing change for the better” (p.479).

The contemporary theatre draws its themes from daily experiences of the things happening in the society. Its effectiveness is felt when it portrays issues that are current and relevant to the needs of the society. This then shows the importance in the need to make possible, a kind of theatre that operates based on the emerging needs of the society, as this helps in the efforts towards social change. In the process of investigating the discursive nature of theatre and social reality, Bakare (2013) advances further by assessing theatre from the perspective of its “corrective apparatus, a change agent and a creative mediator in the pursuit of peace” (p.1). Subsequently, theatre is a reflection of social realities as its utilitarian values according to Adeoti (2003) “is undeniable as it more than not yields a greater insight into socio-political events” (p.12). The above assertions are evidences of the functionality and the utilitarian nature of theatre.

The form of theatre that seems more relevant to social change in this case is Applied Theatre, in which Theatre for Development (TfD) is a branch. Applied Theatre is a general term used to describe theatre practices that are conducted outside customary mainstream theatre houses and whose aim is specifically for the purpose of transforming and changing human behavior for the better. Taylor (1996), an Applied Theatre scholar and practitioner asserts that this form of theatre is characterized by “its desire to influence human activity, to raise issue and have members of the audience resolving the issues” (p.3) Applied Theatre is created for specific needs and is motivated by a desire to generate social and individual change. Many of the practitioners are driven by the desire to create theatre for those who might not usually attend mainstream theatre centres, so the performances take place in varieties of settings and communities, from formal institutions such as

schools, prisons, hospitals, Police/Army barracks to informal venues such as community centres, market places, motor parks and streets. The term has become a collective name for Theatre Practices such as Environmental Theatre, Museum Theatre, Theatre-in-Education (TiE), Drama Therapy, Theatre for Development (TfD), Community Theatre, Theatre for Social Development and many more.

Theatre for Development, which is the focus of this study, is a class of theatre practice deployed by its practitioners to highlight certain social problems; and galvanise actions for self-reliance, self-sustainability and participatory development. Mlama (2023) observes that Theatre for Development is:

community-based, whereby the concerned community is the main player in the creation and production of the entire TfD process of identifying the challenges that deter the community's socio-economic advancement; analyzing the root causes of the identified challenges; speaking out their views in the form of a theatrical performance; identifying possible solutions to the challenges and taking actions to resolve them (p.67).

Theatre for Development is purposively designed to engage a particular community with special focus on its perennial challenges and how the identified challenges can be addressed with the aim to proffering lasting solutions. Through the methodological style of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), with sound working relationship with the members of the community, the practice source for ways of collectively advancing the community towards positive social development, using the intervention of drama and role-play. Having a sound knowledge of the Theatre for Development practice, Abah, in Odeh and Aji (2019) assert that the TfD workshop in its full practice “intervenes to motivate or catalyse the people so that they can dialogically question their existing reality, critically determine the roots of their problems and work out strategies for resolving them” (p.121). The functionality and essence of Theatre for Development lies in the awareness it creates for community members to collectively x-ray their past, present and be able to project into the future by ensuring that their social developmental challenges are critically examined. Hence, Igweonu and Okagbue (2013) conclude that these theatrical performances in the form of TfD within the communities, “as both practice and process continue to contribute like other practices to the well-being of community members and the society in which they exist, and sometimes this contribution can take the form of cultural and/or social change” (p.1). Theatre for Development has been deployed by researchers and scholars like Steve Abah (2023), Kamlogera (2019), Dandura Emmanuel (2017) Victor Yankah (2023) Adeyemi Olusola (2019) Komolafe Ayodele (2010) Kotin, Hungbo (2019) and many more to facilitate social and behavior change.

Discussion: Theatre for Development Pedagogy

Theatre for Development (TfD) is a major and compulsory course in any Theatre/Performing Arts Department across the Nigerian Universities. The course is designed to train the students on the application of theatre pedagogy for empowerment strategies and social development. As a practice-oriented course, the students, alongside their lecturer, liaison persons, resource persons and facilitators are expected to research into the development needs of a community, collate the data obtained in the field and finally turn same into a drama sketch to educate the community. This paper takes a cursory study of Theatre for Development pedagogy in two Nigerian universities (Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State and Lagos State University, Lagos State) with the aim of highlighting how this form of Theatre education has been used by the students who are mostly youths, in facilitating social change. By extension, the paper also explores the different Theatre for Development (TfD) projects that have been executed by the students across the two states in terms of comparison of research outcomes.

A total number of one hundred and fourteen (114) (46 females, 68 males) students of the Departments of Theatre Arts in Lagos State University, (LASU) Ojo, were trained in the Theatre for Development pedagogy. After which they were divided into three groups for community research while in Olabisi Onabanjo University, 110 students (50 females, 60 males) from the Department of Performing Arts were selected for the training. They were also later divided into three groups. The students were taught in the processes and methodologies of effecting Theatre for Development in communities. In the pedagogy of Theatre for Development, the students were taking through these processes as means of equipping them with the techniques of addressing the different social issues or challenges found in the communities visited.

The nature of Theatre for Development (TfD) pedagogy is said to be of two main approaches; either, the Migrant approach which is prepared outside of the community and taken back to the community or the Homestead approach that sees the performance done with/within and performed by/for the community. Analysing these two approaches, Byram and Kidd (1977) assert thus:

The first type is that which is created out of researching in the community but performed by the outside artists. The second type is that which is investigated and created with the community and performed jointly by the professional artists (outsiders) and members of the community (insiders). In both cases the presentations take place in the community itself, and the venue does not require any special requirements of the theatre.

Through the adoption of Paolo Freire's Critical Pedagogy which comprises dialogic method of teaching, the student-participants were trained by the lecturers in charge on the processes and methodologies of actualising Theatre for Development engagements with communities; having conversation with the community members, understanding their challenges and collectively working towards proffering solutions to the identified problems. The following approaches were thoroughly discussed through the dialogic method by the students before embarking on the community project:

- a. Training the student participants
- b. Identification of the Target community
- c. Preliminary Research and data collection
- d. Scenario formation and creating the story
- e. Plenary Session and Rehearsal
- f. Play Performance
- g. Post performance Discussion
- h. Follow-up

Training the student Participants: Here the student participants were trained on the rudiment of Theatre for Development and its application on the target or identified communities. Been a single semester course, the first six (6) weeks of classes were used for the classroom teaching.

Identification of the community/Preliminary Visit: The next step after the training of the student facilitators was identifying the target or the host community and this tend to be the most crucial aspect of the whole exercise, as most communities were not willing to allow Theatre artists to use their communities for such practical engagements, they had the notion that their community was just been used by corrupt politicians to score political goals. After identifying the community, the students embarked on a preliminary visit to meet with the stakeholders in the community, such as the village chiefs, the youths, women leaders and other stakeholders. Doing this, was to intimate the people of the intention of the project in the community and not for scoring of political goals.

Preliminary Research and data collection: The aim has to do with the process of collecting information from the villagers by the student-participants through interviews such as key informant interview and face-to-face interview. The questions focused on the major issues and challenges that were encountered by the community both internally and externally. Other forms of information gathering were adopted due to the situation on ground. Effort was also made to draw out opinions on the problems from every available stratum of the community. In this regard, it was necessary to obtain information on the community's problem from members of all social groups, all age-groups, and all economic and religious groupings. Such a wide spectrum of opinions offered a wider perspective to the problem of the village or community. During the research stage, the facilitator became conscious of the beliefs and cultural practices of the host community. This stage promoted direct interaction and communication between the facilitators and the community.

Scenario Formation/Creating the Story: After gathering the needed information, the group engaged in data analysis on the findings. The group then decided which of the problems can make good drama and how these problems can be tied into one story. The information gathered during the research was thoroughly analysed to give a clear picture of what the position of the issues of concerns were in the community. The story created was in the form of fiction but was built on actual life experiences of the community for whom and with whom the play was being developed. There was also a process of sifting and identifying which problem had the right to go first, which issue has precedents over the other and which must be given the utmost priority. Some community member volunteered to act out some principal problems as they occurred in the village, so as to give a more graphic view situation. In developing the plot structure of the drama, high level of creative thinking was deployed to tie the various problems together in order to give a logical sequential arrangement.

Plenary Session and Rehearsal: After each interview and research session, the student facilitators met to discuss the findings and the necessary approach to plot the drama from the findings. During the research stage, the facilitators were conscious with the beliefs and cultural practices of the host community. This stage promoted direct interaction and communication between the facilitators and the community members. At this point, the members of the group immersed themselves into the cosmology of the community under study. Material and information learnt or gathered during the research provided the title of the play, the messages upon which the play was created, the thematic and plot structure of the play.

Play Performance: The drama was presented to the members of the community within the specified performance space. The play was packaged with artistic expressions such as storytelling, music, dance and emphatic listening.

Post-Performance Discussion: At the end of the performance, the TfD facilitators and the members of the audience engaged in discussion on the content of the performance shared experiences and collectively decided on the ways to resolve the challenges identified in the play. The above highlighted processes and methodologies were drawn from the understanding and application of Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy and the approaches enabled the students to have a firsthand knowledge of the challenges the communities were having. This in the end showed that it is only when students grasp the meaning, theory and procedures of Theatre for Development pedagogy that they are able to apply them appropriately in their dealings with community work.

Data and Comparative Analysis of Methodology of Practicing Theatre for Development between OOU and LASU

S/N	Institution	TfD community project	TfD approach	Issues and challenges identified
1	LASU	Topo Community, Badagry	Homestead	1. Absence of a traditional Community Head. 2. Youth unemployment and poverty. 3. Government acquisition of Land. 4. High level of illiteracy among the people
2	LASU	Farasime Community, Badagry	Homestead	1. Health infrastructure: The only Public Health Centre (PHC) in the area has been abandoned by the Local Council Development Area. 2. Low interest in Education: Most of the youths in the community preferred engaging in illegal businesses such as Oil bunkering across the Nigerian border to the Republic of Benin and smuggling of contraband items from the Republic of Benin to Nigeria to education hence, there is high level of illiteracy in the community. 3. Leadership conflict between the two traditional chiefs (Baales) that has however degenerated into the community being divided into two major factions that at some points lead to strained relationship and occasional fighting. 4. The community has also become a sort of hibernating site and a transit point for people involved in illegal migration across the border from Republic of Benin to Nigeria.
3	LASU	Odiolowo/Ojuwoye community, Mushin, Ogun State	Homestead	1. The youth of the community are disenchanted because of government's neglect in terms of the provision of social amenities. 2. The youth could not go to school because of poverty, hence hooliganism is rampant. 3. High rate of unemployment. 4. Early marriage by young females in the community. 5. Street hawking is rampant among children and young adults. 6. Over-population and congestion as a result of lack of social amenities.
4	LASU	Ajgunle community, Ogun State	Homestead	1. Street hawking 2. High crime rate 3. Over-population and congestion

5	OOU	Itamo-Olokuta Community, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State	Migrant	1. Health infrastructure: The only Public Health Centre (PHC) in the area has been abandoned by both the State and Local Government Area. 2. Low interest in Education: Most of the youths in the community preferred engaging motor bike business popularly referred to as Okada hence; there is high level of illiteracy in the community. 3. Intra-ethnic conflict between the two major groups in the community that has degenerated into the community being divided into two major factions that at some points lead to strained relationship and occasional destruction of properties and death
6	OOU	Origbe Community, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State	Migrant	1. Health infrastructure: The only Public Health Centre (PHC) in the area has been abandoned by both the State and Local Government Area. 2. No social amenities such as power, pipe-borne water and access to good road.
7.	OOU	Ijebu-Ode Correctional Centre	Migrant	1.unfavourable bedding and sleeping condition 2. Poor food nutrition and feeding 3. health, medical and unhygienic environment 4. restriction on social contact and interaction
8.	OOU	Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Aro Abeokuta	Migrant	Drug and substance abuse by the youths

Results:

Impact of the LASU TfD projects on the communities

The Post-Performance Discussion at Topo community TfD project facilitated by the students of the Department of Theatre and Film Studies engendered critical issues from the members of the community, as those present, showed their concern on the lessons learnt from the play. The community members commented that the performance really centred on the community and attested to the fact that the people were not united. In the end, they all agreed to collectively work together, set up committees that would look into the issues raised, especially in the area of the selection of the traditional leader.

At Farasime community, the members of the community were elated at the content of the drama, as they saw that it was a show case of their contemporary social realities. Many of the community stakeholders such as the youth president, the Community Development Association (CDA) Chairman and the women leader, used the opportunity to appeal to the two traditional rulers who were in conflict and causing trouble in the land to hearken to the voice of the Zangbeto traditional masquerade and the plead of the Tfd facilitators to join hands and work in unison for the development of the community. Apart from the appeal from the community remembers, the Head of the Department of Theatre Arts and Film Studies also called on the two rulers to unite and allow the community to develop. In the end he asked them to hug themselves to confirm that the conflict between them has become a thing of the past. Two major impacts were made in Odiolowo/Ojuwoye Tfd workshop: 1. The Executive Chairman of the Local Council Development Area awarded 250 free GCE forms for indigent students in the area. The programme was tagged “Special Education Programme” which wastargeted at raising the academic standard of the students populace within the Council Area. 2. Scholarship was also awarded to twenty (20) students to attend the Mushin Skill Acquisition Centre at Mushin.



Figure 1: Theatre for Development Performance at Odi-Olowo/Ojuwoye central market, Mushin, Lagos State.



Figure Theatre for Development Drama performed by the students of Lagos State University, Lagos at Topo community in Badagry, Lagos State

Impacts of OOU TfD project on the communities

The TfD performance at Itamo-Olokuta community focused on the intra-ethnic conflict that has been on since 1999. Through the performance, the community members realized that it was important for them to come together as one entity for the community to move forward in terms of social development. Many of the community stakeholders such as the Baale and his chiefs, the youths, the women leaders and other stakeholders who came from Ago-Iwoye township used the opportunity to appeal to the people to join hands and work in unison for the development of the village. At this point, all and sundry agreed to bury the hatchets and work together for the progress of the community.



Figure Itamo-Olokuta Theatre for Development performance by the students of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State.



Figure Itamo-Olokuta community members and some of the facilitators of the Theatre for Development project from the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State.

From the content of the Tfd performance at Origbe community, it was glaring that the state government seems to have neglected them in terms of access to Primary health care. The people immediately concluded that they have to be responsible for their own health care as they immediately set up a committee that will design the modality by which they could raise fund for the construction of a mini building complex that can serve as primary health centre. To encourage the people, the Tfd facilitators donated a first aid box which included some drugs. The people were also encouraged to hire a visiting nurse that will be visiting the community twice in a week for health care.

The Tfd performance at the Neuropsychiatric hospital, Abeokuta held the audience spell bound as commented on the drama and expressed what they learnt from the play, especially about the need to assert control over drug abuse. Some of the patients shared their experience, noting that the play was more of revelation to them especially the danger of keeping bad friends because many of them indulged in drug abuse through pressure from friends and peer group. The Tfd performance at the Ijebu-Ode correctional centre was quite engaging as every member of the audience exhibited enthusiasm towards the performance. The inmates attested to the fact that their involvement provided them the opportunity to explore and express their experiences and current situation, while also having a change of heart over the crimes they committed and the need to change for the better. The play, then, served as a catalyst for the reformation of characters. The Superintendent in-charge of the prison also commented that the workshop was a success and would continue to be an annual event because of the possibility of transforming hardened criminals into better citizens in the society. The positive effect of the drama, not only to the inmate participants but also members of the audience was that it helped in redirecting their lives by equipping them with the hope that they can survive and make it in life without necessarily going into crimes.

Conclusion

This paper has emphasized that the youths of any nation are part of the assets such a nation could boast of. This is because they (the youths) are always seen as the future on which the nation relies on for further social and economic advancement. Without a good consideration for the youth, the nation has no future. The paper also reflects on the complexities in defining the term “youth”, as its conceptualization varies from society to society. However, the classification given in the National Youth Policy of Nigeria is adopted as the working definition because of the fact that the youths referred to in the paper are the Nigerian University undergraduates whose age bracket falls under the classification. Therefore, the paper interrogates how Nigerian youths can be engaged in Theatre for Development pedagogy for the purpose of facilitating social and behavior change among the people of different communities. To achieve this, two selected Universities, Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ogun State and Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos State in South-West part of Nigeria are deployed as micro study. The paper highlights the various pedagogical methods that these undergraduates can deploy to facilitate Tfd in communities and institutions visited for the purpose of harnessing social and behavior transformation through the wheels of Theatre, research, education and entertainment.

Two major indicators were arrived at the end of the Tfd experiment: The sensitization of the people through drama showed that the members of these communities are ready and willing to collectively resolve their immediate challenges while the government both at the Local, State and federal levels have a lot to do in the areas of improving health facilities, improve in the access to quality education especially in the primary and secondary level and provision of adequate social amenities such access to clean water, creation of jobs especially for the youths and provision of housing facilities particularly in the communities that are over-populated.

The paper has revealed how the strengths of the youths can be channeled towards participating in community development initiatives through the process of Theatre for Development. This is the core of including the programme (TfD) as course of study in the Theatre/Performing Arts Departments across the country. Theatre for Development pedagogy makes the students (youths) engage in community research with the sole aim of understanding the peoples' living condition, thereby collectively interacting and working with them to resolve the identified problems the community is having.

The paper therefore suggests that more universities in Nigeria should adopt Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy approach as part of the methodologies of teaching Theatre for Development in the Department of Performing Arts and Theatre Arts, as the approach seems to be the most appropriate method by which the students (youths) could develop the habit of critical thinking to participate in and address issues concerning social problems especially when it concerns the less privileged in the society.

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