

# **SUBVERTING ECONOMIC RECESSION IN NIGERIA THROUGH STERLING DESIGN IN THEATRE PRACTICE: THE VENDOR, AKSU 2017 COMMAND PERFORMANCE IN FOCUS**

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## **Abstract**

*From its inception through its deferent ages, theatre practice has been highly identified with its enormous contributions to the sustainable development of a given country or nation though not readily acknowledged by some, perhaps due to their bias perception of the arts in favour of the sciences and engineering. This research endeavour on "Subverting Economic Recession in Nigeria Through Sterling Design in Theatre Practice" is aimed at bringing to the limelight the need for the wealthy citizens, the private sector as well as the government of Nigeria to get involved in the sponsorship of theatrical activities in furtherance of sterling design in theatre practice. This would in turn enhance audience patronage thereby invigorating the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as the Gross National Product (GNP) of Nigeria to the extent of subverting economic recession in the country. In doing justice to this topic, both the primary and the secondary sources of data collection were utilized. At the end, the conclusion that economic recession in Nigeria could be subverted through sterling design in theatre practice in furtherance of improved standard of performance and by extension improved audience patronage as well as improved gross domestic product was arrived at. Sequel to the above postulation, this research recommends that there should be joint sponsorship of theatre activities between the private sector, the wealthy citizens and the government in Nigeria.*

## **Introduction**

The economy of any country of the world is highly dependent on the various activities of the citizens of that country. These activities are usually grouped as either Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP). While Gross Domestic Product (GDP) refers to the total values of goods produced as well as the total services provided in a

country within a specified period of time, the Gross National Product (GNP) on the other hand refers to the total value of goods and services produced and provided by a given country plus the net income from foreign investments within a specified period. These may be assessed either quarterly or yearly. This is regarded as the “best way to measure a country’s economy” (<https://www.thebalance.com>). In Nigeria, the activities in theatre practice in which Theatre Design and Technology forms a significant part contribute immensely to both the GDP and GNP of our dear country.

Since Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, the country has witnessed different economic experiences through mixed regimes of military and civilian rules. The present government came into power on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015. Within the period of two years, the country has experienced severe economic hardship that has resulted in what is generally referred to as, “recession”, in economics parlance. The survey of world theatre shows that from the inception to the contemporary era, it is quite glaring that theatre practice has contributed immensely to the economy of different countries in diverse ways. Theatre practice is noted to be a virile tool of liberation, employment and wealth creation. It is a veritable agent of subverting economic recession through its veracity in presentation, hence the significance of this study.

### **The Concept of Economic Recession**

The world is filled with ups and downs; a time of plenty and a time of need. Economic recession therefore is not in any way a strange word in English vocabulary. A close examination of the concept of economic recession reveals that the concept is made up of two key words – *economic* and *recession*. Economic as a word has to do with trade, industry and the activities relating to the management of money within a given society. Recession on the other hand, relates to a difficult time in a country when there are less trade, investment and other business activities.

Based on the above discussion, the concept of economic recession can be seen to refer to the period of a significant decline in general economic activities in a country. Economic recession therefore refers to:

A period of general economic decline and is typically accompanied by a drop in the stock market, an increase in unemployment, and a decline in the housing market. Generally, a recession is less severe than a depression. The blame for a recession generally falls on the federal leadership, often either the President himself, the head of the Federal Reserve, or the entire administration (<http://www.linkedin.com>).

During the period of economic recession, the citizens face a whole lot of hardship due to the level of inflationary rate. Economic recession is always caused by some factors as enumerated below.

## **Causes of Economic Recession**

In any given society, economic recession is hinged on certain factors and some of the causes of economic recession are high interest rates and increased inflation resulting in general rise in the prices of goods and services over a period of time (<http://www.linkedin.com>). Amongst the known causes of economic recession also include difficult economic policies resulting in decline foreign investment and low economic activities. This is the case in Nigeria from 2015 till 2018 in which the country is still struggling to grapple with the phenomenon.

## **Economic Recession in Nigeria**

Economic recession in Nigeria set in after the change in the mantle of leadership at the federal level in 2015. The new Federal Government that took over leadership in 2015 changed policies and structures to conform to the policies of the party and this consciously or unconsciously resulted in economic recession that has lasted till date in 2018. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), a recession is defined as, “a significant decline in economic activities spread across the economy lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale – retail sales” ([www.educinfo.com](http://www.educinfo.com)). Based on this fact, and considering the duration in which all these indications and factors of recession have prevailed in Nigeria, one is therefore correct to say, without equivocation that there is economic recession in Nigeria but the question is, how do we subvert this economic recession in Nigeria?

However, before an attempt is made to proffer answers to the above question, it is worthwhile to examine the concept of design in theatre practice, the different areas of theatre design and technology, the relevance of technical aids in theatre practice as well as how to subvert economic recession in Nigeria through sterling design in theatre practice.

## **Design and Technology in Theatre Practice**

In contemporary theatre practice, theatre design and technology occupies an esteemed position as it plays salient roles in aesthetic and mood creation as well as the revelation of the setting of the play thereby adding value to theatre practice, communicating volume to the audience. Let us now examine the concept of design for clarification.

### ***Design***

Design as a word in isolation attracts a good number of meanings to itself depending on the user's intention. Generally speaking, design is a problem solver because it is “the creation of a plan or convention for the construction of an object, system or measurable human interaction” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). In this sense, design is seen as the planning and making of decisions about something that is to be created or built. It is based on this understanding that Jacob asserts that, “design is a concept that has attracted momentous attention, because virtually all the facets of the economy make use of it in one way or the other” (277).

Design therefore is an art of purposeful planning for an intended result, that is, “the purposeful visualisation and planning on how something is to be made or done” (Jacob 2).

In theatre practice however, Olaide opines that design is contextual because of “the context of its use in that the designer is faced with that problem his design is supposed to solve: for whom and at what point in time?” (102)

What this means is that in theatre practice, all the technical aids applied for diverse purposes are the products of design of one form or the other. Without the product of design, theatre practice would be virtually impossible and meaningless. In this contemporary theatre practice, design is closely aided by technology as examined below:

### **Technology**

Technology generally is concerned with the application of scientific knowledge for practical purpose with a view to solving an identified problem. Technology is “the purposeful application of information in design, production, and utilisation of goods and services, in the organisation of human activities (<https://www.useoftechnology.com>). Etymologically, Ibe-Bassey says that “technology derives its name from Greek and Latin words. Greek form, ‘techne’ and ‘logos’, referring to the ‘study of art/craft’. Latin form, ‘texere’, referring to ‘weave/construct’. Most of us erroneously believe that technology involves machines and men. Far from it, rather it refers to any practical art using scientific knowledge (5). This is perhaps the reason why the five specialised areas of theatre practice that constitute the technical aids are intertwined with design and technology as examined thus:

### **The Different Areas of Theatre Design (Technical Aids)**

Theatre practice mostly in this modern (contemporary) era revolves strongly around the efficacy and potency of design and technology. The design and technological application in theatre practice is generally referred to as, the “Technical Aids”. Speaking comprehensively on the issue of technical aids, Ododo asserts:

Technical aids are elements used in theatrical presentation usually to give depth and meaning to the artistic fare. These are either manually, electronically or mechanically employed. They include stage set and property, lighting, sound, effects, costumes and make-up. Though essentially visual elements, where meaningfully handled with the oral aspects of theatre production, they help the understanding of the audience apart from their aesthetic values (154).

From the words of Ododo above, technical aids are quite essential in theatre practice. Examining the virility of these components, Jacob opines that:

All different areas of technical theatre are welded to the concept of design. This is why design as a concept is attached to all of them. These different areas of technical theatre are:

Scene /set design  
Lighting design  
Sound design

Costume design  
Make-up design (*An Introduction to Theatrical Design 2*).

It should be noted that the above five (5) mentioned different areas of technical theatre practice though seemingly independent, are professionally synergized because the success of one area is highly dependent on the effective functionality of others, hence Parker, Wolf and Block say, “many things influence the form of a final design for the theatre..., however, design does not stand alone.... The preparation of any production requires the close cooperation and collaboration of many specialists” (7).

The above five (5) recognised different areas of technical theatre practice are briefly examined for the purpose of comprehension thus:

### **Scene /Set Design**

In the design process of theatre practice, scene/set design seems to command priority because every performer needs space to exhibit his/her actions. Irrespective of the style of production adopted, this performance space must be consciously, intentionally and deliberately arranged to conform to the nature or style of the performance as well as the overall production objectives. This intentional and purposeful arrangement of the performance space for the performers is simply referred to as scene/set design.

Based on this exposition, Asomba opines that “scene design is the art of conceptualising, planning or conceiving suitable environment to house a dramatic action. A dramatic environment in this context is the totality of all pieces of sceneries including stage properties that culminate in defining the locality of the action” (6). Examining scene design and the designer in detail, Wilson expounds:

The scene designer creates the visual world in which a play unfolds. Together with the playwright and the director, the scene designer determines whether the scene is realistic or in the realm of fantasy. He or she decides on the colour, the shapes, the visual style which the spectators view and the actors inhabit. The set indicates the kind of world we are in – outdoors or indoors; an affluent environment or a humble one; a time period long ago, today, or in the future. When different locales are called for – in a play with an episodic structure, for instance – the scene designer must ensure that we move smoothly and quickly from one locale to another. Designer must deal with practical as well as aesthetic consideration. A scene designer must know in which direction a door should open on stage and how high each tread should be on a flight of stairs (279).

From the above discourse, it becomes quite clear that scene design is necessary in theatre practice as it determines how freely or otherwise the performers exhibit their actions. Besides this, scene design creates mood, aesthetics and visual metaphor for a given production.

## **Lighting Design**

After successfully determining the performance space taking into consideration the comfort of the performers, the next task before the design team is how to ensure perfect visibility by the audience members and realisation of the requisite special effects that relate to lighting. These fall within the ambience of lighting design in which the lighting designer is saddled with the responsibilities of actualising these objectives.

Pilbrow clearly asserts that, “Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig were the prophets of modern stage lighting and production” (14). Lighting design is an aspect of theatre practice that takes care of the task of ensuring that the actions of the performers are clearly seen by the audience members irrespective of where they sit in the auditorium. Without the activities of lighting design, theatre practice finds it difficult to actualise the set objectives. “A theatre lighting designer (or LD) works with the director, choreographer, set designer, costume designer, and sound designer to create the lighting atmosphere, and time of day for the production in response to the text, while keeping in mind issues of visibility, safety and cost” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/stage\\_lighting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/stage_lighting)).

Summarising the above, Wilson concisely says that the following are the primary functions and objectives of stage lighting:

- Provide visibility.
- Reveal shapes and forms.
- Provide a focus on stage and create visual composition.
- Assist in creating mood and reinforcing style.
- Help to establish time and place.
- Establish a rhythm of visual movement.
- Reinforce a central visual image (329).

Lighting design therefore is an important aspect of theatre practice and requires both the artistic and technical skills coupled with functional equipment, materials and tools for the actualisation of the production objectives.

## **Sound Design**

Sound design in theatre practice refers to the art of acquiring or generating, specifying and manipulating audio elements for theatrical productions taking into cognizance the holistic production objectives. It is the duty of a sound designer to generate and provide appropriately the required musical requirements as well as the requisite sound effects for a particular performance.

With the above postulation on sound, Robert D. Taylor and Robert D. Strickland, explain the basic functions in which sound fulfils in the theatre. They say that,

sound fulfils three distinct functions in the theatre: it amplifies speech, provides special effects, and supplies music to enhance the mood and meaning of a play. You can manipulate the sounds you produced by changing the tone, intensity, or balance of sound through the speakers (232).

Sound design in theatre practice therefore deals with the audio components of productions.

### **Costume Design**

Costume design is another very important area of technical theatre practical. Costume in theatre practice refers to what the actors or other performers put on during their presentation. Costumes range from exotic fabric and non-fabric materials worn by performers according to the requirements of the script. By this definition and by extension, costumes are so broad to cover even nudity in stage only if that nudity is what the script requires for a given action. Based on the above, Geddes and Grosset assert that costume is “a style of dress, especially belonging to a particular period, fashion, etc., clothes of an unusual or historical nature, as worn by actors in a play” (126).

In support of the above, Frank Whiting states that:

To one gifted with a knack for designing clothings, the theatre offers an exciting outlet, for stage costumes can be bold, colourful, and striking. They can display a theatrical flair, a dramatic imagination, and a streamlined simplification not possible in ordinary dress. In addition to a feeling for style in clothing, the costume designer must know period styles and be able to reflect character. Obviously, everything he does must spring from the needs of the play (206).

Also analysing costume as a salient component of theatre practice, Russell opines:

Costumes are the moving scenery of a production, and when worn by the actors, who are the centre of all dramatic action, they are the strongest elements of the visual scene; they project personality and individual motion and obtain the strongest audience focus. Costumes usually are the most pronounced accents of colour, line, and texture on stage (7).

From the above explanation, it is clear that costumes indicate both tone and style of a production. It also indicates the period and locale of a play. Costumes also identify status as well as personality among other notable functions of costumes. With sterling design in costume, the need of a given performance is likely to be met.

### **Make-Up Design**

On the list of the different areas of technical theatre is makeup design. Makeup in theatre practice refers to the cosmetics and other substances used on the face, hair, nails and other parts of the actor’s body during a performance in order to give the actor the required look in conformity with the spirit and the overall objectives of the performance. According to Griffiths,

Make-up can range from the grotesquely heavy to none at all and still be right for a particular production. There are four basic types of make-up:

straight, character, stylised and fantastic. Which of these is used depends completely on the show and the type of make-up will be decided upon as part of the show's overall style (127).

The above therefore means that a make-up designer is also expected to interpret and analyse the script based on the requirements. If properly applied, make-up, in collaboration with other technical elements are capable of enhancing the quality of theatrical performances in Nigeria in which when applied to specified storylines are capable of subverting economic recession.

### **Technological Implications in Theatre Practice**

As earlier on defined in this work, technology has to do with the application of scientific knowledge in the process of doing things or solving a problem. In theatre practice therefore, mostly in recent times, technology seems to occupy an esteemed position because virtually all the technical aids are technological oriented. In scene design, for instance, revolving scenery, multimedia, flying system, the art of measurement and scale drawing and so on all require the application of one form of technology or the other. In the same vein, lighting design is strongly linked to electrical engineering as it deals with electrical principles and theories like the Power Formula, Ohm's Law and Law of Charges. It also deals with electricity and distribution such as basic electricity, the electrical path, dimmers, circuitry, manual and computer control system, lighting instruments and colour perception among other technical issues.

Furthermore, sound design and technology is an integral aspect of physical science as it deals with sound and sound re-enforcement, the nature of sound, the issue of frequency and intensity, basic acoustic and acoustic balancing, basic sound system configuration as well as the sound system equipment and digital recording. All these and many others are domiciled within the ambience of science and technology as applied in theatre practice with immense implications

In costume design also, the technological implications are enormous beginning from the basic shop tools and equipment to both the fabrics and non fabric materials used in costume constructions. Fabric dyeing and painting also have technological implications in theatre practice. Finally, in makeup design, there are technological implications because the different types of makeup and makeup materials are chemically based. Makeup design and application also have technological implications with regard to the different types of makeup such as the cake makeup, the crème makeup, the liquid make-up, the dry make-up, the grease paint makeup as well as the makeup removers and many others.

Taking into consideration all the above discussed issues in respect of technological issues and the application of technical aids in theatre practice, it is easy to assess the relevance of technical aids as examined below.

### **The Relevance of Technical Aids in Theatre Practice**

Theatre practice from its etymological point of view belongs to the progeny of arts, but technology has been brought to impact on the noble profession and the products, hence the relevance of technical aids in theatre practice. Looking closely at the functions and roles

of the different areas of technical theatre practice, it becomes obvious that technical aids are relevant to theatre practice in Nigeria because through effective application of technical aids to theatre practice, the tasks of the personnel of the theatre have been made easy, accurate and less time consuming.

Technical aids therefore are relevant to theatre practice as they provide the following, among others:

- Make available conducive environment for both the performers and the audience.
- Reveal form on stage and ensures audibility.
- Create the mood of performance.
- Create the locale.
- Reveal the style of performance.
- Enhance theatre communication.
- Enhance safety
- Prevent reverberation.
- Enhance realism/naturalism.
- Create special effects and aesthetic.

### **The Place of Theatre Practice in National Development**

Right from the early days of modern theatre practice in Nigeria, theatre has always been impacting on the citizens and the economy of the country in one way or the other. The origin of theatre practice in Nigeria could be traced to the “Yoruba Travelling Theatre, which appeared to herald documented contemporary Nigerian theatre practice” (Ayakoroma, [www.nico.gov.ng](http://www.nico.gov.ng)). The champion of Yoruba Travelling Theatre was Chief Hubert Ogunde. According to Barclays Ayakoroma, “Chief Hubert Ogunde, sometimes referred to as the father of contemporary Nigerian theatre, was influenced by the Alaarinjo tradition and Egun masquerade” ([www.nico.gov.ng](http://www.nico.gov.ng)).

From the earliest days of theatre practice in Nigeria till date, the profession has metamorphosed through different composition and nomenclatures. This cut across what is generally referred to as the National Theatre, the state-owned theatres like the Cultural Centres and Centre for Arts and Cultures, the educational theatres like those of the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, the religious theatre and the privately-owned theatres.

Different people view the theatre in different ways but the major reason that people still practice theatre in spite of the negative impression is for the people to discover themselves. “Theatre has a culture of its own that many people do not understand. To those that do understand it, they often make it a very large part of their lives. Plays are sometimes attempts to spread awareness about problems like racism, sexism, homophobia, and other types of persecution” (<http://www.youtube.com>).

Theatre is always seen as the most collaborative form of arts because many people with various skills come together to work as a team towards the realisation of common objectives. As a result of the numerous advantages accruable from theatre practice, we have different forms such as theatre for development and theatre-in-education. Churches now evangelize through theatre and politicians also campaign through theatre activities.

In spite of all these, most people do not still see the reason why theatre practice should exist because in their ignorance, they think that theatre corrupts the minds, but the truth is that, theatre is only the mirror of life x-raying the ills and virtues of the society.

### **Subverting Economic Recession in Nigeria through Sterling Design in Theatre Practice**

To subvert in this context means to strive and join effort with other forces or agents to put an end to economic recession in Nigeria using theatre approach, via sterling design in the different areas of technical theatre practice discussed earlier in this work. Documented evidence abound the world over testifying to the potency of theatre usually being used as a tool to fight against racism, oppression, tyranny, tenure elongation and even recession. During the colonial era in Nigeria, Hubert Ogunde used theatre to sensitise the citizenry against colonialism. In South Africa, during the period of Apartheid regime, renowned playwrights like Athol Fugard, John Kani, Gibson Kente, Winston Ntshona and many other playwrights used their works to sensitize the citizenry. This is clearly seen in the plot of Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and other plays preaching vehemently against racism and unemployment. In the Northern part of Nigeria, it has also been documented that theatre practice in the form of Theatre for Development (TFD) has been used as an effective tool to fight against poliomyelitis and Guinea Worm.

Saddled with the success story of using theatre to solve different problems in the society, these researchers are therefore convinced that the current economic recession in Nigeria could be subverted through theatre activities garnished with sterling design in scene/set design, lighting design, sound design, costume and makeup design. Theatre is communication; and communication is the essence of human existence. No matter the negative remarks made against theatre practice by the uninformed and the misinformed, theatre remains a virile tool of communication and sensitisation. However, one of the major factors militating against the success of theatre practice as a profession in Nigeria is hinged on substandard design resulting from poor funding and sometimes total neglect. Below is the method to be adopted in furtherance of subverting economic recession through sterling design in theatre practice in Nigeria and by extension other African Countries.

### **Subverting Economic Recession through Sterling Design in Theatre Practice: *The Vendor in Focus***

In theatre practice, theatre design is the bedrock of technical aids and technical aids are the underpinnings of the success in theatre profession. Any theatrical performance without proper application of technical aids is not good enough for humans as such a performance lacks the vital ingredients of communication/information, education and entertainment. Dwindling patronage to theatre performances in Nigeria in recent times has been traced to unsatisfactory application and utilisation of technical aids.

However, for economic recession in Nigeria to be subverted through sterling theatrical design, there should be change of attitude in many dimensions in theatre practice. First and foremost, there should be a massive awareness creation with regard to the potency

and virility of theatre in tackling and preferring solutions to societal vices. Where this approach of theatre practice is packaged with storyline woven around economic diversification, emphasising agriculture as a significant means of livelihood and employment generation, deemphasising over dependent on oil, the people's psyche is likely to be influenced positively thereby changing their way of reasoning, motivating them to wake up and do something for themselves instead of over dependent on government. For this approach to actually succeed in subverting economic recession in Nigeria, there must be appropriate application of technical aids through sterling design in set, lighting, sound, costume and makeup in order to attract the people's attention to the theatre performance.

This approach is a sure way of subverting economic recession in Nigeria because, according to Vincent Diakpomrere,

The physical development of an environment is informed by the psychological and physical development of the individual or group of individuals within that given environment, while the environment influences the psychological development and often the physical development of the individual. The whole concept of development revolves around the pivot of culture and various constituents of cultures, as well as sense of value impact negatively or positively on the ability of a given society to develop (*The Parnassus* 172).

Another way of subverting economic recession in Nigeria through sterling design in theatre practice is by organising a vigorous drama campaign within cities, schools (both secondary and tertiary institutions) Churches and other residential areas using dramas with storyline on danger of over depending on mono-economy being oil and showing the advantages of waking up to do something good for the country such as farming of different magnitudes, trading, skills acquisition and entrepreneurship. These dramas should be made attractive through ensuring that all areas of theatrical designs of scene/set, lighting, sound, costume and make-up are properly handled to make live performances more attractive. This is quite necessary because, for theatre to compete favourably with other media and fulfil the functions of communication/information and education, there must be an entertaining components made possible through the appropriate sterling designs for the actualisation of the much needed special effects being a solid foundation in which the contemporary theatre practice is anchored on. Consequently, Emmanuel Emasealu explains that:

Nigeria is a developing nation that is plagued by conflict between the traditional method and the modern method of governance. Similarly, conflicts have arisen from such diverse areas as religion, class consciousness, economic considerations and political interests among others. Various experts have proffered solutions from different dimensions. The dramatist has equally mirrored these problems in his craft and, sometimes, suggested the way out (*In Parnassus* 64).

The above confirms the position of this paper that theatre, backed up with sterling design has the potentials of proffering solutions to some national problems in Nigeria, economic recession and corruption inclusive. This was tested and ascertained when these researchers studied the vendor, being the command performance of Akwa Ibom State University for the second and third convocation ceremonies held on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. This performance was staged by the Department of Performing Arts.

### **The Synopsis of *The Vendor***

The vendor is a contemporary drama written in the 21<sup>st</sup> century setting in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. It is a play that mirrors the ills of the society with a view to proffering solutions in furtherance of the much needed change for the better. Some of the societal ills mirrored in this play under review include politics, corruption, child trafficking, poor educational standard, inflation, religion, maladministration, leadership misdemeanour, cultism, drunkenness, prostitution, insurgency, juvenile delinquency to mention but a few of the topical issues.

The play is structure into seven (7) sets and has thirty two (32) characters. Different sets in the play deals with various themes. At the end of the play, resolution or catharsis is arrived at for the ones possible while some issues are left for the audience and the society to come out with their diverse opinions. The vendor has the structure of a total theatre loaded with spectacles. It is a didactic play that is suitable or presentation in a wide range of situations and occasion depending on the directorial approach and the event in question. The vendor can be fine turned to embrace other topical issues in the society.

### **The Appraisal of the Performance**

As mentioned earlier, The Vendor was staged as a command performance for Akwa Ibom State University in 2017. The Technical Director was Okon Udofot Jacob, the Acting Head of Department of Performance Arts, Akwa Ibom State University. The venue of the production was the newly built edifice with complete state of the arts equipment for ebullient technical theatre practice. The set was effectively designed with the requisite sceneries and props. The lighting was efficiently and professionally rigged taking into consideration the different acting/lighting areas. The sound was properly designed and cued to conform with the requirements of the scripts as well as the production objectives. In terms of costumes and make ups, the designers embarked on thorough analysis and interpretation of the roles of the characters and designed accordingly.

As a result of the sterling design in the different areas of the technical aids, the performance was rated high in terms of standard and communication efficacy. The auditorium was filled to its capacity and the audience members were satisfied. The following day, the critics wrote positively about the production in different media of mass communication within and outside the campus. Based on this primary source of data collection and analysis, the result of the finding showed that subverting economic recession in Nigeria through sterling designed in theatre practice was a sure way in this direction.

## **Conclusion**

In spite of the enormous challenges plaguing theatre practice in Nigeria, it is not out of place to assert without fear of contradiction that theatre practice has enormous potentials of subverting human maladies in which economic recession in Nigeria happens to become one of the latest. However, one of the major hindrances militating against the potency of the theatre being a virile means of subverting human problems is “the gradual disappearance of some vital technical aids from the Nigerian theatres” (Ododo in *NTJ* 158). If there is an improvement in the standard of design in the different areas of theatre design of scene, lighting, sound, costume and makeup, there is every assurance that theatre practice in Nigeria would rise up to its task of subverting societal problems including economic recession in Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

Having identified the factors militating against theatre fulfilling its responsibilities of societal transformation, it becomes worthwhile to proffer the following recommendations among others:

Since economic recession has affected virtually every facet of the economy thereby making importation of theatre design equipment difficult, we recommend that Nigerian theatre designers should fall back on the ideology of fabrication whereby essential scene/sceneries, lighting and sound equipment are locally fabricated in furtherance of sterling theatrical design for theatre practice in Nigeria. This fabricated equipment may be used side by side with the few available foreign ones for appreciable outcome.

We also recommend that Nigerian theatre designers should develop positive maintenance culture and repair the abandoned scene/sceneries, lighting, sound equipment and pick them to use instead of endlessly waiting for new ones that may not soon come.

Theatre designers must not completely abandon the manually generated sound effects. Ododo buttresses this point when he says, “experience has also shown that some sound effects manually produced are more effective than most of the electronic ones though somewhat limited in scope in terms of variety but when used, one gets a sense of authenticity” (Ododo in *NTJ* 161).

Costume and makeup designers should also endeavour to look inward by utilising local materials for the designs. Ododo also support this position when he posits:

Theatre makeup could also be simulated from the avalanche of local body adornment materials and beauty accessories such as cam wood, white chinks, shea butter, charcoal, red powder stones and even hair pieces from the barbers shop. Powdered white chalk mixed with body oil for instance is very effective for ageing actors, the powdered form of the red stone is very effective for face foundation and sometimes could be used to accentuate the actor’s facial features (Ododo in *NTJ* 161).

Private partnership initiative should also be encouraged where private sector partners and sponsors theatrical performances so as to ensure that adequate funds are made available for the purposes of sterling designs in theatre practice in furtherance of subverting economic recession in Nigeria.

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