



MUSEUM IN THE CHANGING WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Museums are cultural institutions in which heritage is preserved and promoted. Several types of museums are in existence these include: Museum of Antiquities — in which are housed ancient pieces of furniture or objects of art such as Sculptures, paintings, ceramics, textiles and other crafts. Others include public record office, War, Maritime, Architecture, Local and Indigenous Technologies, Science and Engineering and National history Museums. This work therefore is an attempt towards the exploration of museum. In the changing world, the prospects and challenges and how this can be repositioned in the interest of reaping the gains of museum for the good of all and sundry globally.

INTRODUCTION

It appears that the notion for collecting is rooted in human nature. In its most basic form, a museum has come to mean a collection of something. According to ICOM (The International Council of Museums) in Gheorghilas, Dumbraveanu, Tudoricu and Cracium (2017), "museums have mainly been perceived as cultural institutions in which heritage is being preserved and promoted. However, their roles and functions have significantly changed in the last 50 years alongside with their definition, mostly in accordance with the realities of the global museum community." Several types of museums are in existence, these include: museum of Antiquities - in which are housed ancient pieces of furniture or objects of art such as sculptures, paintings, ceramics, textiles and other crafts.

Others include public record office museum serving as collection centre for famous document; War museum containing relics of national wars; Maritime museum for maritime history; museum for architecture, with types, structures and styles of building, and so on, Museum for Local/Indigenous Technologies, Science museum - with objects depicting history of science and engineering as well as, Natural history museum.

It has therefore become fashionable to talk

about museum development in the world of today. This is because of the renewed vibrancy of museum in economic advancement of communities and the regeneration of cultural heritage of communities.

Museums are therefore buildings, which preserves and exhibits objects illustrating antiquities or relics of the past specimens of scientific interest (Lasebikan, 1991).

Contrary to most believes many people consider museums have the singular role of providing attractive and stimulating displays in halls or galleries. Although such displays are often enjoyed by the public quite often many people do not even appreciate what lessons are to be derived from such displays. Apart from the fact that museum is primarily aimed at enlightening and educating the public, it still performs function of ensuring the regeneration of cultural heritage of communities. "The need for culture is very important, and the cultural products have become increasingly diverse, marking the change from an era when production drove consumption to the consumer society where consumption drives production" (Richards in Gheorghilas, Dumbraveanu, Tudoricu and Cracium, 2017).

This work therefore is an attempt towards the



exploration of museum in the changing, the prospects and challenges, and how this can be repositioned in the interest of reaping the gains of museum for the good of all and sundry.

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The English 'museum' comes from the Latin word, and is pluralized as "museums" (or rarely, 'musea'). It is originally from the Greek word *Mouseion*, which denotes a place or temple dedicated to the Muses (the patron divinities in Greek mythology of the arts) (Findlen, 1989).

A museum according to the Merrain- Webster online dictionary is a place where collections of things of artistic, scientific or historic interest are set out for display. A more comprehensive definition of a museum is provided by the international Council of museums. The rCOM, (2012) defines a museum as:

A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purpose of education, study and enjoyment.

A museum is therefore seen as an institution that cares for a collection of artefacts and other objects of scientific, artistic, cultural or historical importance and make them available for public viewing through exhibits that may be permanent or temporary (Tony, 1995).

HISTORY OF MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

Museums have a lot long history, springing from what may be an innate human desire to collect and interpret and having discernible origins in large collection built up by individuals and groups before the modern era. Strictly speaking, the word museum has classical origins. In its Greek form, *mouseion*, it meant "seat of the Muses" and designated a philosophical institution or a place of contemplation. Use of the Latin derivation, *museum*, appears to have been restricted in Roman times mainly to places of philosophical discussion. Thus the great Museum at Alexandria, founded by Ptolemy I Soter early in the 3rd century BC, with its college of scholars and its library, was more a prototype university than an institution to preserve and interpret material aspects of the heritage.

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economic advancement of communities and the regeneration of cultural heritage of communities. Museums are therefore buildings which preserve and exhibits objects illustrating antiquities or relics of the past specimens of scientific interest (Lasebikan, 1991). There are also several types of museum. These include: museum Antiquities-in which are housed ancient pieces of furniture or objects of art such as sculptures, paintings, ceramics, textiles and other crafts. Public record office museum serving as collection center for famous documents; War museum containing relics of national wars; Maritime museum for maritime history;

museum for architecture, with types, structures and styles of building etc., Museum for Local and Indigenous Technologies, Science Museum, with objects depicting history of science and engineering and Natural History Museum. Contrary to most believes many people consider museums have the singular role of providing attractive and stimulating displays in halls or galleries. Although such displays are often enjoyed by the public quite often many people do not even appreciate what lessons are to be derived from such displays. Apart from the fact that museum is primarily aimed at enlightening and educating the public, it still performs function of ensuring the regeneration of cultural heritage of communities This work therefore is an attempt towards the exploration of museum in the changing, the prospects and challenges, and how this can be repositioned in the interest of reaping the gains of museum for the good of all and sundry.

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The word museum was revived in 15th-century Europe to describe the collection of Lorenzo de Medici in Florence but the term conveyed the concept of comprehensiveness, published in 1656, rather than denoting a building. By the 17th century museum was being used in Europe to describe collections of curiosities. Ole Worms collection in Copenhagen was so called, and in England visitors to John Tradescants collection in Lambeth (now a London borough) called the array there a museum; the catalogue of this collections, published in 1656, was titled Museum Tradescantianum. In 1677 the collection, having become the property of Elias Ashmole, was transferred to the University of Oxford. A building was constructed to receive it, and this, soon after being opened to the public in 1683, became known as the Ashmole, was transferred to the University of Oxford. A building was constructed to receive it, and this, soon after being opened to the public in 1683, became known as the Ashmolean Museum. Although there is some ambivalence in the use of museum in the legislation, drafted in 1753, founding the British Museum, nevertheless the idea of an institution called a museum and established to preserve and display a collection to the public was well established in the 18th century. Indeed, Dennis Diderot outlined a detailed scheme for a national museum for France in the ninth volume of his Encyclopedie, published in 1765.

Use of the word museum during the 19th and

most of the 20th century denoted a building housing cultural material to which the public had access. Later, as museums continued to respond to the societies that created them, the emphasis on the building itself became less dominant. Open-air museums, comprising a series of buildings preserved as objects, and ecomuseums, involving the interpretation of all aspects of an outdoor environment, provide examples of this. In addition, so-called virtual museums exist in electronic form on the Internet. Although virtual museums provide interesting opportunities for and bring certain benefits to existing museums, they remain dependent upon the collection, preservation, and interpretation of material things by the real museum. In Nigeria however, because of the great diversity of people and culture, Nigeria has distinguished herself over the centuries in the field of arts. Nigerian versatility in art is so great that it is generally felt that all African nations should view Nigeria as the principal trustee of the most durable fruits of black artistic genius. It is not precisely known when the first works of Nigerian art reached the outside world, but in 1897, following a British punitive expedition to Benin. Over 2,000 Benin bronzes and ivories were shipped to England and later dispersed all over Europe and America.

The oldest sculptures found in Nigeria were from the Southern Zaria and Benue areas of central Nigeria. They consist of terra cotta figures and figurines made by a people who achieved high degree of cultural sophistication. These sculptures, together with other cultural elements, have been named the Nok Culture. Evidence shows the Nok people had knowledge of iron smelting and adorned themselves with tin and stone beads, earrings, noserings and bracelets (Swann, 2001). The Nok Culture is dated between 500 B.C. and 200 A.D. The next known phase of Nigerian cultural evolution was Igbo Ukwu bronze casting. Found in the small village of Igbo-Ukwu, near Awka, the casts date from the 9th Century A.D. They first came to light in 1938 and consist of staff heads, crowns, breastplates, pendants, ornaments, anklets, wristlets and chains. About the same time the Igbo-Ukwu people were casting bronze, the ancient Ife people were also producing works in bronze, copper, and terracotta. In the first quarter of this Century, Ife works caused a great stir among world art critics and historians who were unaccustomed to such naturalism in African art. The best known Nigerian artworks are the Benin Antiquities. Legend recounts how the Benin people learned the art of bronze casting from Ile-Ife around 1400 A.D. Oba Ogunta, the sixth King of Benin, is credited with having encouraged this art in Benin.



Nigeria's cultural heritage is woven from threads of history and diversity, legend and conquest. Tourists visiting the country will gain insights to a glorious past as well as a promising future, set amid the natural beauty of this diverse country. From rain forests in the south, broad savanna woodlands in the center to a semi-desert region in the north, Nigeria offers a remarkable range of physical beauty in her land and hospitality of her people, ready to be enjoyed by the tourist fortunate enough to choose this land of ancient empires as their travel destination.

The richness and diversity of the Nigeria culture is a manifestation of the socio-cultural differences of the over 250 ethnic groups that inhabit the land for ages. The country offers a wide variety of attractions in museum and traditional ways of life preserved in local customs; rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly attitude of many in the Nigerian population. This provides investment opportunities as people come from far and near to pay and watch the country's cultural collection (Babian, 2006). The International Museum Day is a celebration that is held each year on or about 18th May each year was 'established in 1977 to provide awareness on the importance of museum in human development and the need to keep with this development.

MUSEUM IN THE CHANGING WORLD: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

In the days of old, museum was not considered seriously in terms of its contribution to the development of the communities. However day, the role of museums has changed over time as the collection, preservation and sharing artifacts, arts, antiquities, and other cultural symbolism, become central in supporting the development of communities. Museums help in creating community identity and bringing different community groups together for the creation of new venues and civic spaces, and resource for developing the skills and confidence of members of those communities.

Museums provide the basis upon which social issues are addressed, with all sections of the community having a voice in the social issues affecting them. Through programmes like internships, apprenticeships and work placements they are proving to be a valuable resource for the development of basic and specialist job skills (Ptolemy, 2008).

Our museums have reach and resonance. By working with local partners museums engage communities with their cultural heritage right across the

UK. Museums are spaces in which identities are understood, formed and shared. They provide a stimulating public space in which people can come together and be inspired (NMDC, 2010).

Cultural institutions provide the glue that binds communities together. Culture attracts people to a place, just as much as good schools, housing or transport and creates an environment in which other industries, goods and services can grow (ibid, 2006). However, this does not go without saying that, some challenges have over the years militated against museum development. The earlier efforts are made to overcome these challenges, the better since museum offers new inspirations in the world today.

PROSPECT OF MUSUEM DEVELOPMENT

Museums and Education is critical for development. Education that is devoid of the cultures of the people in the society is empty and incomplete. One of the fundamental objectives of the museum is to educate, and it is only the museum that has the capacity and the ability to impart cultural education effectively as it houses the tools and materials for doing so in its collections. In modern society, the museums enrich the educational process by exposing children and indeed the public to their history in a positive way; they assist our future generations to understand and appreciate their history and culture and take pride in the achievements of their fore bearers. Museums possess materials and information that can and should be used in enriching and improving the school curriculum in various disciplines.

Museums and the Promotion of Unity

For a people to live in peace and happiness there must be unity. Museums do promote unity in the society by using their resources to ensure understanding and appreciation for the various groups and cultures that exist in that society. Peace is essential for happiness and joy in the family, in the community, in the society, in the nation and in the world. Our world is troubled in many ways today and peace is threatened so often because people do not understand their neighbours. Conflict resolution and reconciliation are essential elements for the attainment of sustainable peace and unity. Museums should use their collections in promoting a better understanding of the collective heritage of the people of Guyana, which will have the effect of fostering the commonality of those things that unite the nation and its people. They can, through their programmes and activities, reconcile the various



interests in the society for the collective good of the nation; they can use their unique positions to reach the conscience of the nation and to foster dialogue, and they can become rallying points for the country in ensuring that peace is enthroned. On a broader perspective, museums can promote cultural diplomacy that will engender greater understanding between peoples and nations. A properly packaged cultural diplomacy programme will promote the best of Guyana to the wider world and foster a free flow of knowledge and a wholesome exchange of cultural materials and ideas with other nations of the world. This programme will also create a sense of pride and purpose among the people of Guyana, who will better appreciate the fact that they too have a contribution to make to encourage peace, unity and understanding in the communities of the larger world.

Museum and Tourism

In the developed countries, museums are providing the prime function of offering enjoyable and rewarding stimulation for individual minds in their hours of freedom from their daily chores. It is not surprising that such museums in Europe and America now make millions of Euros and dollars yearly either through admission charges or and sales of books, pamphlets, paintings, casts and other souvenirs.

In many developed countries today, the excessive growth of cities with their supermarkets, skyscrapers and network of roads and cars and almost complete disappearance of nature reserves for wild life have lowered the opportunities for observation and exploration in nature, all of which is now confined to natural history museums and zoos. The very rich and diversified fauna and flora and other natural history resources in tropical Africa provide readily available materials for exhibition in our museums. The impact of this to tourism which is an important service-offer to the outside world is then obvious.

Museum and Cultural Heritage

Museums are spaces in which identities are understood, formed and shared. They provide a stimulating public space in which people can come together and be inspired (NMDC, 2010). Cultural institutions provide the glue that binds communities together. Culture attracts people to a place, just as much as good schools, housing or transport and creates an environment in which other industries, goods and services can grow (NMDC, 2006). It is obvious that, the World is changing faster than ever; new technology

delivers new ideas, gigabytes of information. Again, we live in a world where our culture is faced with rapid changes, museums allows us to obtain a perspective on these changes by being able to engage with our past. Museums are therefore important in the continuous quest to wield cultural exchange that unites geo and socio-political history, appreciation of cultural diversities embedded in our history. This allows us a window into the lives of Nigerians, how they have started and where they are heading to. Using the past to build the future, museums ensure they are the intergenerational guardians of the world's heritage and create an ongoing link to the past. Museums, therefore, enable us to discover our diverse heritage and help us to know who we are and what brings us together, in a changing world.

Museums and the development of the local economy

Culture is at the heart of public places and museums can help raise the profile and quality of life in urban centers. The museum sector is support a large workforce. There are many museums around the world employing many who otherwise would have been jobless.

THE CHALLENGES OF MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Stating that museums face unique challenges related to their social, political and ecological environment is but stating the obvious. This is the case of Nigeria that has sickened her museums through plundering or looting by the west. This has cost the country her dignity as a nation. Examples of African arts, or antiquities that have been looted include: the Royal Messenger, which represent the envoy who carried the emblem of authority from Ife to Benin when a new king was installed; the Nok Head; the Esie Soapstones; and Jenne Terra-Cotta among others. The effects of this has been revealed by one of the Nigerian finest poets, Chinweizu Ibekwe through a poem titled "*Ancestral Anger*" (edited by me) as could be seen thus:

*Oh scavenger dogs from white heartlands
The dog of the crescent sword
The dog of the militant cross
Listen, Listen, listen and listen!
They have gang to rape Africa!
Black Lady Forced to wear
A white shoe of shame
Ah, this land
The father to the Tablet of Moses,*



*And grand uncle to the Cross of Jesus,
 And grandfather to the Crescent of Mohammed,
 And great-grandfather to the Red Star of Marx!
 They have bleached their black identity,
 Scraping it off like shit from their fine skin;
 They have scrambled from their black identity
 Like a man fleeing his menacing shadows!
 Oh Black, hear and heed!
 The final war begins,
 To drive white predators from our land,
 Across hot sands and burning seas,
 If you let them,
 With greed in their hearts,
 Will dash forth to exterminate you
 They will caress your ears with lovely lies,
 Numb your minds with white religions
 Distract your eyes with flashing wonders,
 If you let them,
 They will drug you with delusions,
 Mad, suicidal illusions,
 With fairy-tales of good,
 White heavens, with lies about white benevolence;
 If you let them,
 They will use your fears against you
 Your lack of daring against you
 Your respectability against you
 Your sweet reasonableness against you
 Woe to them who forget their
 history
 And drug their hearts with
 false memories.*

The Way Forward

As we approach the millennium, museums must show leadership in the promotion of the heritage of the nation. As custodians of the cultural soul of the nation, they must have the capacity to broker peace, unity and understanding in times of conflict and disorder and they must speak out when there is fear and danger in the land. They must tackle current problems in society, be they the problems of drugs, street children, prostitution, or lack of appreciation by the citizens in their involvement in the preservation of the heritage and the cultural property.

In our society today, our museums must promote exhibitions that are topical and challenging; they must broaden their scope and not restrict themselves solely to objects and materials in their collections. Museums must be proactive in their approach to the execution of their mandate and it is important that they clearly explain their vision and mission, which will guide them in all that they do. In a

changing world, museums have become very important institutions that are respected and valued. As we approach the turn of the century, museums must be innovative, people-oriented, community-minded, programme-oriented, professionally solid with well-trained personnel and above all, children-friendly, for them to play a major role in the development African society in the world in the 21st century (Edward, et al 2007).

What is important is for the educational planners to work closely with museum experts on how the educational resources that are available in the museum can be integrated into the curriculum and the learning process at all levels. On its part, the museum should develop educational programmes for the various tiers of the school system, namely, primary schools, secondary schools, teacher training colleges, technical colleges and universities, among others. A properly articulated museum education programme will become an essential component in the overall educational system of society. Educational visits to the museums should be developed and encouraged to cater for all interest groups, and as we approach the turn of the century, it has become very necessary and important for our museums to ensure that they become children-friendly. We can no longer continue to ignore the role our children can and should play in our society as they too are part of our collective humanity. Our children should be given a voice in the museums; special educational and cultural programmes should be developed for them and they should be allowed to be involved in discussing programmes that are made for them, as they do have ideas that will enhance such programmes if given a chance to contribute and speak out.

Above all, we must not be afraid of being blacks. Let us conduct our struggles 'on the high planes of dignity, as we respect and uphold our cultural heritage. This, as Azikiwe (1937), has it:

*Africans are capable of achieving their place in the sun.
 provided that they discard the spirit of individualism
 which has so far prevented social cohesion. It cannot be
 doubted that one reason why Africans seem destined to
 serve other races for ever is because they have no sense
 of oneness . . . Are Africans not doomed to
 extermination from the face of the earth because they
 are self-centred and self-satisfied and selfish? Do
 Africans not deserve extirpation because they have
 proved their incapacity to carry on and to disseminate the
 torch of civilization which their ancestors handed to
 them in the dim past? ... Black men and*



women, when will you cease to drift along the way
which leads to the extermination of the black race?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the practical history and material evidence of the human race, activity and the natural world would have been shrouded in obscurity if not for museums and their zeal to meet the challenges of a changing world, in terms of cultural regeneration. New technology, increasable unstable climate, rapid changes in cultures and lifestyles, there is urgent need for our museums to meet up with these challenges and that of security and protection of our cultural heritage. Although, there are challenges but the new inspirations are overwhelmingly intriguing. This is also a heartfelt call on the various levels of government, communities, corporate organizations and individuals to attempt to patronize works of arts especially the antiquities and also join hands in the fight to protect, secure and preserve our valuable arts, artifacts and cultural displays; for these are our cultural heritage and symbols of Nigerian identity. It is by so doing that Nigerians and indeed Africans would have a place on the surface of the earth.

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