

## **Tiv Cultural Heritage and the Idea of Development in Contemporary Nigerian Society**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The word, culture, is usually associated with anthropological practices like dances, arts and craft, language use, tribal rituals, ethics and values all of which peculiarly identify any given group of people. In this respect, culture is represented as the opposite of modernity. Culture therefore always conotes the exotic, the primitive, the pristine, the primordial, the unsophisticated, the underdeveloped, the uncivilized, the prehistoric, the crude and antiquity. However, there is another sense that the culture is known for. It is about the present too. It is about work in progress. It is about civilization. This is the idea Dzurgha has in mind when he comprehensively defines it in a manner that suggests an affinity between the old and the new in fostering the progress of society:

Culture is made up of the ideas, beliefs, customs or traditions, means and methods of survival, provision of security and protection, individual and collective relationships, institutional organisation and administration, general and dissemination of knowledge, maintenance of health and treatment of sicknesses, production and distribution of foods and goods, clothing and housing, reproduction and socialisation as well as rewards of punishments. These cultural components or ways of life are collectively shared and accepted by an ethnic group or people in a society (9)

For a long time, these two concepts-culture and modernity meant the same thing and were infact used interchangeably. In the West, if you said, someone was a man of culture, you meant a polished man, a refined man, an enlightened man or a well educated man. When the British Philosopher and Literary theorist, Mathew Arnold wrote his 19<sup>th</sup> century classic, *Culture and Anarchy* he was actually contrasting modernity with primitivity. He meant that Western civilization which was meant to introduce orderliness and stability in an otherwise confused universe, had rather aggravated it by unbridled merchantalism, godlessness and moral decadence. It was then the lot of Arnold and other intellectuals of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to rescue the disintegrating moral fabrics of society through high culture, polished living and controlled behaviour.

Still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Karl Marx, while studying the idea of modernity occasioned by the Industrial Revolution in Europe, distinguished between two variants of developments, namely, the infrastructure (material) and the superstructure (spiritual). He however, depended heavily on the idea of infrastructure since he was more interested in the material development of humanity. Since culture has both a material and non-material or abstract existence, it functions like an ideology as well. Mainoma describes it as a “collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (3). It means that culture is a set of beliefs from which members of a given group derive their identity and spiritual fulfilment. These categories could be recognized at different levels in society, at the national, the tribe or ethnic group or at organizational level. We often talk about the Nigerian culture, the Indian culture, the Western culture, the Tiv culture, the Hausa culture and so on. We can also validly recognize something like the Gboko culture, the Bristow culture or the university culture depending on the context of our discussion. The operational definition of most contemporary practitioners of culture is given by UNESCO as encompassing both the ideological and the material aspects as thus:

In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

The European colonialists who came to Africa exploited our material resources and carted them away to develop European infrastructure. They in brought Christianity to us that was critical of our local ideological

and spiritual orientation. The idea was to brainwash Africans to disregard their religions, values, aesthetics and other ways of life and to adopt the European ways of life. Their educational policy was accordingly directed to train Africans more in the liberal arts to fashion them as cultured gentlemen and women in the European sense. That way both the material and ideological processes of culture were effectively controlled by the colonial masters of Europe therefore developed their parameters of a civilized person and strenuously inculcated it his so-called modern world. They created a distinction between culture and civilization by making one look primitive and the other modern. This paradigm has been so corrosive that even modern African intellectuals are finding it difficult to reverse the trend. Consider the following extracts from Baikies report on his first encounter with the Tiv people in 1854 as captured by R.C. Abraham's book:

Wild in look and ruder in dress, greatly tattooed and carrying constantly with them bows and arrows, these men seemed perfect personification of savages. Yet when spoken to, though at first rather shy, they entered freely into conversation with us; they were unwilling to tell us much about themselves. The mitshis as far as we could judge are wilder and less intelligent than any of the other African races with whom we have had intercourse except the Baibai Jukus.

And later in 1934, R.C. Abrahams himself, a foreign ethnographer describes the Tiv in this manner:

Psychologically, one is puzzled by the Tiv mentality at every step for side by side with their accurate classification of living creatives and very high standard of metal wares, we often find complete inability to think abstractly and a simple question frequently produces a blank stare, it is for this reason that Baikie described them as stupid, no doubt...

The Tiv have a deep-rooted conservatism and hatred of innovation of any kind which is so marked in the cases of people who have no objective concept of nature as influenced in its course by human actions.

Both views are predicated on the perceived Tiv inability to conceptualize European normative principles or abstract ideas which formed the basis of European teaching about civilization among Africans. Abrahams however, discovers the Tiv's scientific and technological ingenuity which can only be possible through rational thinking. Modernity is a combination of the development of the abstract mind and the physical environment. Scientists deal with the rules of nature and devise practical technical knowledge of solving problems of the environment. It is gratifying that both of these colonial reports on the Tiv, irrespective of how biased give credit to them as scientific ingenuity of the Tiv. In contrast, artistic knowledge concerns itself with normative principles, values and ideas that give us a progressive outlook. This is the point that has often eluded Tiv intellectuals most of who seem to uncritically fall victim of intellectual stereotypes created by the Europeans. Here I cite the examples of Mvendaga Jibo and Iorwuese Hagher. Jibo says:

A Tiv man does not wish to have another Tiv excel and this *Iyuhe* is only applicable to fellow Tiv. Anything will be done to block a fellow Tiv from achieving fame wealth position prestige land large produce children etc. True, during the *Nande-nande* (arson of 1960) and *Atemtio* (Head crushing of 1964) the non-Tiv living in Tivland (who are called *atoatiev*) were not harmed by the Tiv. (16)

This is certainly a negative way of portraying a group of people, reminiscent of the faulty generalizations the colonial masters characterized African primitivity. It gives no room for anyone to understand how these "fiercely jealous" group of people however worked together to present a formidable opposition to the Northern oligarchy in the first republic. It is rather simplistic to accept that the same group of people who raised money as poor peasant farmers to fight against political and economic domination were in fact jealous of one another. In the same manner, Hagher's description of the Tiv people in his recent book proves we have not drastically abandoned the European characterization of our people as primitive. He says:

The Tiv number about 5 million people, and are traditionally found in Central Nigeria on both banks of the River Benue...They speak a Bantu language and are generally of short and stocky built. They are dark skinned and flat nosed with thick lips. The Tiv are agrarian farmers who devote a lot of energy living on their farms and cultivating yams cassava, etc. (23)

As a writer of culture, Hagher naturally falls into the temptation of believing that culture is synonymous with primitive living, hence his efforts to associate with primitive outlook of the Tiv described in Europeans ethnographic literature, instead of assessing us as we really are.

From the foregoing, this paper recognizes culture both as a synonym of modernity or civilization as well as aspects of both the superstructure and infrastructure. Groups of people exist and develop certain practices and moral codes that give them peculiar identities and help them solve their problems and sustain their livelihood in society.

A discussion of this nature is obviously predicated on Max Weber's (141) theory of cultural determinism which enunciates that cultural practices of a group of people go a long way to determining their conduct even in cosmopolitan circumstances. Although, many radical scholars like the duo of Azaigba and Yie (130) have countered him by advancing a cultural possibilist thesis which expresses the ability of individual efforts to change societal practices otherwise imbibed through cultural practices, the sheer fact that our society is reversing from its pan-Africanist and nationalist orientation models back to its atomistic ethnic background,

shows the efficacy of the cultural determinist viewpoint. This position is further reinforced by Brandel in his very persuasive argument stated below:

In every period, a certain view of the world, a collective mentality, dominates the whole mass of society. Dictating a society's attributes, guiding its choices, confirming its prejudices and directing its actions, this is very much a fact of civilisation... This is derived from distant past, from ancient beliefs, fears and anxieties which are almost unconscious – an immense contamination whose germs are lost in memory but transmitted from generation to generation. A society's reactions to the events of the day, to the pressure upon it, to the decisions it must face, are less a matter of logic or even self-interest than the response to an unexpressed and often inexpressible compulsion arising from the collective unconscious. (8)

One idea that first distinguishes the Tiv people out of the rest of the ethnic nationalities was its lack of monarchy. They had no centralized traditional leadership at the time the Europeans colonized them, a model that is reminiscent the European description of democracy, and fundamental human rights. Yet, the British colonial masters appointed a Tor-Tiv for the Tiv in 1946 and attempted to create a monarchical culture while at the same time creating structures for a Western styled democracy after Nigeria's independence. Jibo (23) observes rightly that this move was ironic:

The tendency is for people to move away under a monarchy to a republican system of government, like what happened in France during the French revolution or in Russia in the Bolshevik revolution. In both instances, monarchy was violently abolished. In fact, according to Marxism, the State is expected to wither away following the revolution of the proletariat.

This contradiction really exposes the hypocrisy of the colonial agenda which comprised three major objectives – political domination, religious conversion and economic exploitation of the colonies. All of these projects had to be undertaken along the paradoxical western template that is inherently infused with a sense contradiction. The politics of democracy and dictatorship, collectivism and individualism as well as royalty and constitutionalism. Religion was conducted by those who preached equality but believed in slavery and white supremacist rule, those who preached peace but conscripted natives for world wars and those who canvassed for the treasures of heaven but exploited African territories for treasures on earth. And of course, their economic agenda was modelled along trade imbalance and the exploitation of raw materials of the colonies. Thus, the linear progression of society from primitivity to modernity conceived by Western civilization was more of an economic agenda than either the political or religious reform. For the British to have introduced monarchies in either the Tiv or Igbo societies where they were absent was to facilitate the emergence of a binary economic class structure in a capitalist atmosphere. Civilization which is a euphemism for capitalism or materialism thrives on the wilful dichotomy of society and the deliberate exploitation of the downtrodden class in favour of the upper class.

Societies have always developed in material terms along two distinct blocks in wealth distribution. The minority group which comprises the aristocrats, the royals and the land owners, who control the capital, also control the political power. Then there is the majority group constituted of the poor, the peasants, the deprived, the invalids and the mass of the people who labour and build society with meagre wages.

The pre-colonial Tiv economy described as egalitarian was a model where such remarkable differences did not exist in so far as there were no citizens with blue blood as the present capitalist model has provided. In the wake of capitalism, however, such systems were regarded as primitive. Levi Strauss ( ) says "societies where relations between groups were settled once and for all and remained constant were barbaric" as opposed to those which were based on hierarchical arrangements with wide gaps between groups, and hence bereft of tensions, social conflicts, political struggles and continual revolutions. That could have been probably Karl Marx's idea of the insatiable instability that is obtained in evolving a capitalist economy.

After their encounter with the European capitalist colonial economy and their consequent integration into the dominant socio-cultural model adopted for all Nigerian ethnic communities, are the Tiv effectively participating in the Nigerian project as equal partners? Are there traces of Tiv culture in Nigeria today or is their culture and traditions heading towards extinction? But first, what is the state of affairs of this fairly large ethnic group of about 8 million people popularly regarded as the third most populous ethnic nationality in Nigeria?

## **II. TIV CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

There are basically two approaches in discussing the nexus between culture and development. The first, being the Western capitalist colonialist view insists that all cultures outside the Western world were essentially primitive and antithetical to modern science and rationality. This idea of naturalizing difference is intended to make us view ourselves firstly as inferiors to the Europeans and then later to the larger ethnic groups that succeeded the colonial masters after independence. In the colonial context, our languages were referred to as native dialects, our moral institutions, heathen religion and our traditions, cannibalistic. We were regarded as incapable of reasoning for ourselves and as culturally and morally inferior to the colonial masters. Our teachers

were instructed to punish us in primary schools for speaking our local languages. This logic of modern civilization is enunciated in Francis Fukuyama's book as follows:

All countries undergoing economic modernization must increasingly resemble one another: they must unify nationally on the basis of the centralized State, urbanized, replace traditional forms of social organization like tribe, sect and family with economically rational ones based on function and efficiency, provide for the universal education of their citizens. Such societies have become increasingly linked with one another through global markets and the spread of a universal consumer culture. Moreover, the logic of modern natural science would seem to dictate a universal evolution in the direction of capitalism (XIV).

We succumbed to this idea of globalization principally because the European tradition being liberal promised to guarantee us the sovereignty of country and subject. Our brothers and sisters who took over from the British masters also attempt to homogenize Nigerian culture, but are constrained in that direction because the three major ethnic groups are in fierce contention. The Tiv culture is therefore caught up in this ambivalence and consequent neglect. This unidirectional cultural tradition inherited from Europe has been conceived in very narrow terms with a belief that there were fixed notions about who counts and who does not count, which sets the framework for the marginalization of the minority tribes. This approach has also led to assimilation or annexation of smaller and weaker cultures and the extinction of certain languages. In 2007, Clair Soares reported in the Independent Newspaper of London that: "Every fortnight, another language dies, some 40 percent of the world's languages are thought to be at risk", Lauren Johnson estimates that almost 90% of the roughly 6900 languages spoken around the world would have disappeared by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The second approach of examining the relationship between culture and development is the synchronic model which sees culture as civilization. By this view, civilization is not appropriated by one group of people belonging to a certain geographical location or super race, but it is a common reservoir to which people from different societies contribute their peculiar practices, commodities and philosophies to ease the rapid development of our world. This idea runs counter to the supremacist Western European or North American view of a homogeneous globalized culture that is dominated and dictated from the West.

In this regard, culture is synonymous with civilization and the idea which draws various contributions from different races, nationalities, groups and tribes to the master agenda of human development and modernization. To discuss culture therefore is to discuss the unique geographical location, the climate, the natural vegetation, the animal species and the regular natural advantages and disadvantages of a given area. It also means to discuss what the inhabitant of the area have made of these basic conditions in agriculture, livestock breeding, food shelter, clothing, communications, industry, security, education, worship literature technology and so on. Cultural activities and practice are derived from humanity's endless search for ways to grapple with peculiar conditions prevalent in a given area, hence certain civilizations are developed consequent to the challenges of the environment. For instance, the architectural tradition of mounting very steep roofs is common in the Scandinavian countries where winter mounts almost 9 months of the year to enable snow slip down the roof with ease, while houses in the Sahara deserts are built with flat roofs to enable insulate dwellers from scorching heat. In like manner, geographical features like mountains, rivers, seas forests and deserts presents certain challenges to different groups of people as a result of which certain cultures of civilizations arise. This phenomenon is further explained by Brandel in the following manner:

In the dawn of time, river civilizations flourished in the old world: Chinese civilization along the Yellow River, Pre-Indian along the Indus; Sumerian Babylonian and Assyrian on the Euphrates and the Tigris; Egyptian on the Nile. A similar group of vigorous civilization developed in Northern Europe, around the Baltic and the North Sea-not to mention the Atlantic Ocean itself much of the west and its dependencies today, in fact are grouped around that ocean, rather as the Roman world of former times was grouped around the Mediterranean. (10)

The above idea is to illustrate the fact that nature presents itself as a difficulty to be overcome. Such difficulties that are related to communication, shelter, food gathering and production are associated with a unique geographical feature. The response of human beings in such environment to these challenges lay the foundations for culture or civilization. Every culture is based on an area with more or less fixed limits. Each has its own geography with its own opportunities and constraints, distinguishing one form of culture or tradition from the other. The cultural map of our world is therefore so variegated as it indicates houses built of wood, others build on clay, bamboo, paper, bricks or stone, which areas use wool or cotton or silk for textiles, which areas grow various food crops – rice, maize, wheat, cassava cereals and so on. The challenges vary, so does the response from each group and location. These differences define what Brandel describes as the cultural zones of the world.

A cultural zone as defined by anthropologists is an area within which one group of cultural characteristics is dominant. In the case of the primitive people, this may include not only their language but also their food crops, their marriage ceremonies, their religious beliefs, their pottery, their feathered arrows, their weaving techniques and so on.

Cultural formations are perceived at various levels. At the ethnic group of tribal level, at the provincial level of local administrative classification or the national levels of distinct countries and even at the continental level. The dominant cultural formation in our world today is popularly called the Western civilization but it is indeed the admixture of civilizations from the various European countries, the Americas, the Asias and Africans. Just every country or group participates in our civilization by contributing one or two ideas or practices to this universal pot pourri that keeps expanding and changing by the day. However, as Brandel rightly affirms, “the stability of these cultural zones and their frontiers do not however isolate them from cultural imports.” The idea here is that every culture borrows from the other just as much as it is also expected to contribute to world civilization in a unique way. It means that no cultural frontier is ever completely closed. Cultural practices are therefore in a state of perpetual flux. They move, change, improve and transform as the society constantly interacts and changes.

The driving force of Western civilization is industrialization or modernization. All societies affected by it tend to eliminate primordial practices by promoting urbanity and mercantilist models of advancement. Cultural practise can only survive when they are brought under the conditions of modern capitalist living, with the view to fostering them on the ever-expanding Western civilization. It is in this direction that I undertake to examine a few examples the Tiv people of Nigeria could showcase their culture and traditions to encourage development, modernization, generate employment and encourage tourism.

### III. THE TWO ASPECTS OF TIV CULTURE

#### (a) *Material Culture*

Material culture refers to tangible objects a society uses in daily activities like, farming, housing furniture, means of transportation, clothings, foods and indeed everything associated with survival. All these are elements of culture the white colonial masters strenuously attempted to replace with inventions and imports from the Western world. Although, the Europeans lifted most of their raw materials from Africa, they processed their goods and sent them back to Africa while encouraging the ideology of European supremacy.

European clothes became a symbol for decent and modern dressing while the Tiv *anger* or *tugudu* became a symbol of primitive outfit. Zinc houses replaced the traditional Tiv architecture of round thatched houses that shielded inhabitants from the extreme heat of the land. Beds and furniture were now been made of polished wood instead of the naturally polished bamboo. Bows and poisoned arrows were replaced by guns and ammunition in the armoury of Tiv warriors. The farmer’s hoe was replaced by the tractor and combined harvester. Donkeys and horses as means of transportation were replaced by automobiles. The electric, gas and coal have almost completely take over from the use of firewood and solar as energy sources. The tendency now is that all of these primitive material practices that have been replaced are called culture while those that replaced them are referred as modernity. That is the classic European demarcation of culture and modernity that has been handed down to us.

However, on realizing that all these innovations are not necessarily sole property of a certain tradition but a conglomeration of many ideas and practices from across the world, it becomes reprehensible that the Tiv people should only be recipients and not contributors as well. Modernity or civilization should be viewed as an improved way of doing things to achieve results, create beauty and enhance life.

For instance, we have no excuse to admit that the Chinese cuisine is now part of world civilization or culture, if we do not look inwards and take advantage our unique endowment in food production to add a special cuisine to the world culinary menu. The Tiv people are associated with bush rats, crickets and grasshoppers, just as the Chinese are associated with sea foods, frogs, lizards and so on. The Tiv people are unable to develop better ways of nursing rat farms outside the traditional methods that are fizzling out as a result of urbanization. How then can rats be produced in large commercial quantity to fit into today’s globalized and commercialized culinary markets?

The Tiv people have their unique beverages like the mumu, iber and inyata which are unique but comparable to oats, cerelac, custard and corn flakes generally referred to a prepared cereals. The yams, cassava, guinea corn, soyabeans, beniseed produced in Tivland could also be processed in large commercial scale and branded as our unique contribution to the universal culture, in which case culture shifts its focus from anthropological practice of yam festivities to the export of yam products. In the same vein, it is not enough that Tivland has a reputation as the second largest producer of citrus in the world. It must be seen sold in supermarkets in San Francisco, Tokyo and Vienna branded in packs as Tiv sweet orange juice. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (BS) Nigeria spent about 43 trillion Naira importing different kinds of foods from other countries from 2010 to 2016. Between the year 2006 to 2010 Nigeria imported about N160 billion Naira worth of prepared cereals while we were only able to export about N8.5 billion worth of our locally prepared cereals to other countries.

What appears to be the most conservative display of culture among the Tiv is in the area of textiles. The Tiv are endowed with great skills in weaving and they produce several varieties of clothes like the anger,

tugudu, chado godo akpen, ivavtyo, agbendeakurugh, gbagir, gberwaar and so on. Most of these clothes, dyed in radiant colours of black and white, are however woven in thick texture, and are therefore unsuitable for regular use except on ceremonial occasions. At most times, hats and head wears or simple mantles made of anger convey the identity of the wearer as a Tiv person. The impression given is not to necessarily make the Tiv cloth part of the day to day clothing of Tiv youths because no one really gives a thought to the discomfort of its thickness in the scorching sun or the tedium of its mass production. It is indeed the duty of the Tiv people, who are the owners of this textile to improve on both its quality and the method of its production to enable it get assimilation into global culture. It is then that we can meaningfully boast of a cultural renaissance and through it, a massive economic benefit for our society.

**(b) Ideological Culture**

Culture is not only manifest in tangible material things but also in behaviour and abstract ideas. Our various societies are sustained by certain assumptions and beliefs in which individuals grow up imbibing as a way of life. They learn the skills of philosophy at various activities like farming, education, medicine, clothing housing, dancing, entertainment, crafts, religion kinship and so on. In this way culture, like all ideologies silently dictates to individuals' psyche and guides them in their unique beliefs, philosophies, ethics, religions and values.

Cultural activities like folktales, proverbs, heroic songs, dances, poetry, drama, festivals and religions convey in various ways the ideological beliefs of a given culture. The Tiv people like any other African race, have these in abundance. Our language is also rich with devices of oratory and rhetorics. We have legendary stories of our progenitors which we tell our children from one generation to another. However, these cultural narratives are often regarded as "native" or local philosophies that have no place in today's civilization. We ascribe native intelligence to those who regale in cultural beliefs and practices and confer some measure of superiority for those who study Western philosophy. As a result, not much is done to promote the study and use of Tiv language, in schools and public institutions of State.

Tiv social-cultural practices can be harnessed bountifully to contribute in a unique way to civilization as well as create opportunities for recreation and tourism. A good example has been the *Kwaghir* theatre which research was carried out by Hagher, published widely and performed in various staged theatres in Europe and America. I also had the distinguished honour and privilege of leading a Tiv *Kwagh-hir* theatre troupe to perform at Ghana and France in 1999 and 2001 respectively. The performance attracted large audiences in all the places we performed as we got generous reviews in conventional and social media in Europe and also earned huge amount of money for the Benue State Government. It is a pity that government has not been able to sustain the annual *Kwagh-hir* festival that was initiated since the mid 1980s. We have consequently abandoned a golden opportunity to regularly host the annual *Kwagh-hir* festival as one of the biggest cultural tourist events in Africa, in which holiday makers from Europe, Asia and America would be visiting. As we speaks, the Ogun State annual Drum festival has been developed into a world class ceremony and is being opened today with Professor Wole Soyinka serving as its technical Consultant.

The popular *Swange* dance has been developed as an itinerant dance genre that is adaptable in all social occasions and stages across the world. This is quite commendable. However, the missing link is that this mostly a government initiative that has not been picked up by creative individuals. The present generation has not taken over from the first crop of *Swange* exponents like Jeremiah Ugba, Atule Hon, King One Abua, Mbatyevde Matal, Yamuel Yashi and Orshio Adakever. I commend the youngman behind the New Jerusalem group that has popularized the *Swange* rhythm in church and is getting internal attention. We hope that he will soon be invited in cosmopolitan centers of Europe and America to play his *Swange* gospel songs and gain international fume like Sonny Ade for Juju music, Joseph Shabalala for Lady Smith Black Mabanizo as well as Mbila Bel and Awilo hogombomba for Makossa.

But again, it appears *Swange* has overwhelmed all the other dance forms in Tivland. Such dances like *Gberchul*, *Hinga*, *Gbaseela*, *Tsa-utu*, *Biamegh*, *Aluabiam*, *Ange*, *Dasenda*, *ichegher* and so on could be developed to surpass the beauty of *Swange* or possibly stringed together to produce something unique. Indeed, Charles Keil an American anthropologist, while commenting on the art of Tiv dance says that:

If prizes were to be awarded for choreographic quality, quality and inventiveness in Nigeria, perhaps even in Africa as a whole, the Tiv people could justifiably lay claim to all these. (27)

It means the Tiv people have not yet developed much from the great endowments they have in the area of dance. A few years ago, a certain Youngman Zulezu developed a unique Tiv pop musical genre called *Kerewa*, in which Tiv children's play songs and lullabies were adapted and recreated into the hip-hop tradition. That became a unique Tiv contribution to Western civilization.

As an assesory to Drama and show business, Tiv culture can also be exploited to contribute in make-up artistry and beauty in a unique way. The tatoos of yesteryears, the shav and abaji could be modernized just as it

could be possible to improve of the chemical mixtures of kpagh to reinforce the beauty of our mothers, sisters and daughters.

In the literary arts, Tiv culture also has well developed genres in oral literature like every other African ethnic nationality. The Tiv people tell folktales and legendary stories of their progenitors that are passed from generation to generations. All these are rendered in elevated language, poetry and rhetoric. The world civilization had evolved from the oral to the print medium, and now precipitated at the electronic culture. Those who stagnate at the oral medium are now being described as primitive. These aspects of Tiv culture cannot continue to exist in their oral mode without diminishing eventually. It is the duty of university teachers and researchers capture them in print and electronic media, not necessarily for the sake of preserving them in their original forms, but to recreate them into modern works of literature in novels, plays and poetry.

It is a well known fact that the creative writer draws his raw materials from the activities and culture of people in his society. T.S. Eliot in his popular essay, "Tradition and The Individual Talent" says the writer recreates from a stock of mythical and historical materials accumulated in his subconscious since time immemorial:

The historical sense compels a man to write out not merely with his generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own century has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal together is what makes a writer traditional. (906)

The abstract process described here by Eliot is infact what distinguishes a writer of one culture from another. It proves that every culture has something unique to contribute to the literary art arising from its history, culture and tradition.

A similar process has been developed that requires the transition of oral and written arts to movie or the electronic medium. This is a gigantic multi-billion dollar industry that has generated a very keen competition among different groups and cultures all over the world. We have the Hollywood that packages mainly the North American Conquest stories; the Bollywood or Indian movie industry has also established a robust tradition of propagating the Indian culture and of course, the Nollywood industry may appear ostensibly Nigerian, but it is essentially a Yoruba and Igbo cultural colony. As a result, the Kano movie industry (*Kannywood*) has arisen from the rich cultural heritage of the Hausa/Fulani as well as Islamic traditions and is making waves in the ancient city of Kano. And what about the Gboko movie industry tentatively known as the Gbokowood? Why are we lagging behind in telling our stories in this most effective means provided in technology?

The Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) is globally recognized as the second largest film producer in the world. The industry is a significant part of the arts, entertainment and recreation Sector which contributed 2.3% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product, that's about ₦239 billion naira in 2016. It is one of the priority areas identified by the present government's Economic Recovery and growth plan with a projected earning of one billion dollars in export revenue in the year 2020. The question is, if Nigeria can make a whooping one billion dollars in the harnessing and sale of our films in one year, can't Tiv land work hard to secure at least 100 million dollars of this amount into Gboko? It is possible. It is doable. There is no doubt that the socio-cultural potentials of Tivland is a goldmine. We should all rise up and work hard towards exploiting them in order to raise our standard of living and join the mainstream of world civilization.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The trajectory of the Tiv culture and development in Nigeria is very intriguing and relatively exceptional. This marked difference between the Tiv and most other ethnic nationalities that constitute modern Nigeria has been generally acknowledged by scholars as arising from the distinct cultural, political and religious practices of the Tiv in pre-colonial times which earned them various descriptions as "segmetary", "egalitarian," "secular" or "democratic" society. So in spite of their common colonial experience along with other ethnic nationalities, the Tiv have maintained a problematic paradigm of resistance in the national agenda both during the pre-colonial and post-independence times, and the issue of their national integration has continually dominated a challenging intellectual debate.

However, various aspects of Tiv culture appear to be diminishing faster than in most of other ethnic nationalities. This paper has been able to advance the reason for this which is basically the inability to understand the fact that culture is not about primitive living but about creatively contributing to world civilization in a unique way. We have been able to identify the various Tiv cultural practices in material and ideological forms as well as suggest the various ways these areas could be modernized or recreated. The idea is culture is not stagnant but dynamic. Whichever society that merely basks on historical monuments, archaic ideas and primordial philosophies runs the risk of losing its culture, language, values and identity in the modern era.

The sudden upsurge of the electronic culture over and above the print has had considerable implication on the production and consumption of cultural products in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The novel tradition for instance, is a product of the print medium and has been in operation for several centuries in Europe, while the electronic

culture came into being in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Nigeria. The radio, television, audiovisual, and the film have proven to be more effective and faster in transmitting knowledge and entertainment than the print, hence the threat to diminish the role of literature in contemporary society.

Nigeria is serviced by hundreds of radio and television stations that broadcast programmes both in English and the various local languages round the clock. With a huge technological breakthrough in communication, the internet and the cable television coverage have become ubiquitous as the BBC, CNN, VOA and AlJezeera competing against each other to dominate the airwaves. Tiv culture needs to be represented on all these media and cosmopolitan cities of the world. It is then that we will reap the benefits of our unique cultural heritage.

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