

## **African Art and Culture: A Tool for the Social, Political and Economic Development of Africa**

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### **Abstract**

The cultural and artistic productions of Africa have various dimensions that emphasize the pivotal role art plays in the development of societies. This justifies why art and societal living and progression are intertwined. This article explains the influence of art in the social, political, and economic development of African societies.

**Keywords:** *African, Arts, Culture, Economic Development*

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### **Background to the Study**

African art is related to the development of the total life of Africans. This includes the dressing styles, eating habits, values, and norms in African society. It also embraces the use of art and our cultural heritage in addressing the social problems faced by the ethnic societies in the African continent. Many modern societies in Africa are faced with the challenge of teenage pregnancy, environmental pollution, and other forms of social vices. Strategies and solutions to these staggering problems can be found in the sound values, norms, belief systems, and practices in Africa. For instance, many scholars in African studies and cultures are calling for a re-visitation and revival of the indigenous practices of initiation rites for the youth that ensured that moral chasteness was maintained by the youth, including the abstinence from pre-marital sex and all other forms of social vices associated with the youth today. It was the measure put in place by the elderly members of the societies in introducing the mantle of leadership to the youth. The initiation rites were platforms for keeping the youth abreast with their social duties as responsible adults.

In addition, the African cosmological belief systems also call for living in harmony with nature while sustainable using nature's resources. Finding ways of implementing these precepts in modern African societies could bolster their social development. Moreover, African art and culture unearth the language diversities of Africa. It traces the historical development of languages, which is the first step in understanding the cultures of a people. The study of the various forms of art, including the attire, colour choice, design elements, shapes, and so forth, helps in understanding the social classes and personalities in African society (eSocial News Team, 2021).

Politically, African art and culture play quintessential roles in the political lives of the African people. The political artifacts serve as a means of identifying and defining the political roles of rulers such as traditional chiefs, spokespersons, traditional priests, and so forth. The political arts empower the ruling class in Africa in performing their priestly duties; exercising their administrative, executive, judicial and military duties.

Economically, the various forms of African art improve the standard of living of the African people. The production and use of the arts satisfy the needs of the people in the society either directly or indirectly. The direct means of producing the artworks in addressing the needs of the people are through the selling of the art pieces and the use of them in carrying out their daily activities. It also involves the use of art forms as incentives for increasing the production of other goods and services in the community to improve the general well-being of the people (eSocial News Team, 2021).

The study of African art and culture highlights the role of art in providing vocations and job avenues for the members of the society. These vocations in the arts will equip the youth with food-providing pursuit skills so that they will have a means of livelihood for themselves and their families. The great wealth from artworks is an asset for society. In times of economic strains, the artworks can be sold to improve the conditions of living of the people. Court artists who produce the general regalia of the state such as stools, palanquins, spokesmen staff,

textiles, and others generate economic revenue from them. Counterfeit copies of some of the chief's regalia are produced as souvenir items and exchanged for foreign currencies. During festivals and other cultural events in Africa, these regalia souvenir items are sold to the general public, especially tourists, generating monetary revenue. This greatly improves the tourism industry of countries in Africa.

### **Conclusion**

The article highlights the great benefits that African societies can gain from the arts and culture practiced by the people. African governments, ministries, and NGOs in charge of the development of art, culture, and tourism must ensure the development of this field. Funding in the form of scholarships, research grants, and awards must be offered to young scholars, researchers, and artists to enhance the study of African art and culture because it is a pinnacle of the social, political, and economic development of Africa.

### **References**

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<https://esocialnews.com/african-art-and-culture-a-tool-for-the-social-political-and-economic-development-of-africa>.