

Small Scale Ceramic Industry in Oyo State: Challenges and Prospects

Abiodun, Segun Oladapo, Akintonde, Moses Akintunde and Akinde, Toyin Emmanuel*.
Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, P. M.B. 4000,
Ogbomoso, Nigeria

* E-mail of the corresponding author: akite16@yahoo.com

Abstract

Small scale, as the appellation suggests is entrepreneurship. It can equally be affiliated with cottage, micro or mini depending on the field of enquiry. In ceramics the latter is popularly referred as small scale or cottage industry; its contribution to the continued rise in man's living standard is no doubt significant across times and ages. Although, many of the divergent developmental and technological innovations of the practice has been identified; still the challenges and prospects of the industry in Oyo State and Nigeria in extension has not been properly and adequately studied. This however, is as a result of the socio-economic cum political vicissitudes of the Nigerian States which often led to concurrent loss of data. And as such, this study appraises the aforesaid and hopes to bridge the gap in documentation on ceramics cottage in Oyo State and possibly serve as a reconnaissance model for Nigeria and the globe in extension.

Keywords: art entrepreneurship, ceramic, small scale industry, socio-political problem, pottery

1. Introduction

Small scale industry is a cottage firm that is managed by the owner(s) with the assistance of few personnel, in Nigeria it is synonymous with entrepreneurship otherwise known as one man business established with the view to promote the use of local resources in order to sustain local productivities and further enhance technological advancements locally (Aiyelari and Raji 2006:73, Ogunyakin 1998:1, and Ajiboye and Dosumu 2007:18). Small scale ceramics industry have played significant role in alleviating the condition of the common man in Nigeria. In Oyo state, the story is the same perhaps, since the era of Old Oyo Empire where pottery attests to be a prominent vocation of women beside their various agricultural activities (Johnson, 1921:125-126).

There are a lot of scholastic studies on the origin, development, materials, techniques, technology, industrialization, functions and patronage of ceramics and pottery across the world (Rhodes 1998, Peterson 1998 and Rothenberg 1972). Literatures on traditional and contemporary pottery as well as ceramic industries in Nigeria are also abound (Johnson 1921:125-126, Cardew 1969, Ibigbami 1981:12-19, Agberia 1998:66-72, Fatusin 1992, Ogunsina 1998:79-83 and Ojie 2000:125-129 among others). Abound as materials on the latter is, very few made mention of the state of Oyo State ceramic cottage industry. Among the few are Akinbogun, (2004), Kalilu, Akintonde and Ayodele, (2006) and Abiodun, (2012), their studies though variously argued on ceramics industry in Southwestern Nigeria and Oyo State. Nonetheless, Abiodun, (2012) further observed the inadequacy in the study of small scale ceramic industry in Oyo State and argued the need for critical investigation on its development, problems and prospects. His argument however, necessitate the need to study the attendant challenges facing ceramic cottage firms in Oyo State by identifying the various rise and fall in its development and their stakeholders before all is lost in vicissitude of time.

The emergence of modern small scale ceramic industries in Nigeria generally can be traced to the colonial era. This was as a result of the colonial government's efforts to develop the traditional pottery industry in order to meet new market demand. The effort eventually led to the establishment of ceramic experimental workshops in major towns with rich pottery tradition across the country.

The first of such attempts was made in 1904 by D. Robert in Ibadan for nine years. His attempt was not a success story because he failed to consider and rationalize the integration of local tradition with his Western orientation of pottery. Kenneth C. Murray's pottery workshop also took off in Ibadan, Umuahia and Lagos simultaneously between 1928 and 1938. His effort also did not yield substantial result. Nonetheless, the attempt made by Michael Cardew between 1950 and 1965 in Abuja eventually gave birth to a merger of two different orientations. At Abuja Pottery Training Centre. Cardew's rationale encouraged the enrollment of both men and women into the workshop where he introduced them to the use of the throwing wheel, kiln and glazes and other new ceramic materials and techniques in order to inter-marry traditional pottery with western techniques. Many of the trainees of the centre later went back to their different homelands to practice cottage pottery (Agberia 1998:68 and Chukueggu 1998:188-190).

In the same vein, the establishment of art schools which were designed to train art students to acquire professional skills and prepare them to face industrial challenges after their formal training has also aroused the interest of many graduates to set up their own studios, galleries and workshops. The latter is as a result of the

nature and functionality of ceramics as an industrial/applied art, particularly as an entrepreneurship driven sector in Nigeria's economic vicissitudes and serves as an anti-dot to high unemployment rate (Ojie 2000:125-129, 2008:73-78, Kashim 2006:115-123 and Kayode 2006:64-68). The efforts of the various stakeholders in the industry both local and foreign made the emergence and the continuity possible.

2. Development of Small Scale Ceramic Industries in Oyo State

Despite the efforts of earlier ceramic training centres with several pottery experimental workshops across the country between 1960 and 1980s (Agberia 1998:66), there is no trace of its link to the emergence of small scale ceramic industry. The development is slightly difficult to trace because the earlier small scale ceramic industries in the State were set up by private entrepreneurs in the 1980s. Many of such companies have folded up and their owners were also not readily accessible. Location is another factor; these industries were usually situated in isolated spaces which often limit access and patronage of their products to few elite and ceramic dealers both within and outside the state. Furthermore, Oyesiji (2009) and Olofin (2012) argued that the major cause of dearth of data on cottage ceramic industries in the state is as a result of non-registration of many of these firms.

Akinbogun (2004) and Abiodun (2012) observed that the emergence and development of small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State were high in the 1980s and 1990s. This was as a result of the boom in the ceramic market, courtesy of the availability of raw materials which were prospected through appropriate and intermediate technology for ceramic production. The latter according to Abiodun (2012) further encouraged college and workshop trained ceramists as well as ceramic entrepreneurs established small scale industries in the state.

The few notable and possibly registered small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State include Akas Ceramic Industry, Old Ife Road, Ibadan owned by Alhaji A. K. Akintoye; Artias Ceramic Industry was situated at Olaogun Area of Old Ife Road, Ibadan and founded by Hon. Lukuman Oduola; Ediak Ceramics of Asi-Basorun was established in 1982 by Edward Akujieze, a former Ceramics lecturer at The Polytechnic Ibadan. De Craft Ceramics and Gbenga Ceramics were established in 1984 and 1986 respectively at Asi-Basorun, Ibadan while God's Grace Ceramic Industry was owned by Joshua Olofinro (ceramist) and Femi Ibitoye (sculptor), established in August 1992 at Km. 8, Old Ife Road, Behind Grail Centre, Ibadan. In 1993, Thou Art which later metamorphosed to Dapo Art Gallery was established by Dapo Eyinade at the former Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) premises, Oyo; he later relocated to Kosobo area, Oyo in 2011.

In 1994, Earth and Fire Clay Work were jointly operated by two Ghanaians, Kofi and Charles at Ojoo, Ibadan. Saubana and Sons Ceramic was established by Mr. Saubana in 1998 at Orita-Challenge, Ibadan. Sahara Ceramics also existed at Challenge Area, Ibadan while Sudit Pottery and Sudef Ceramic industry were located at Ijebu Road Ibadan. Mrs Alade (a former staff of Oyo State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ceramic Section, Ibadan) also established a small scale ceramic industry at Monatan. Ona-Ara and Asolom Ceramic Industries were located at Ring Roads and Old Ife Road, Ibadan respectively. Fodacis Ceramic Enterprises also existed at New Adeoyo area in Ibadan in the 1990s.

In 2004, Musa Raymond the owner of Musa Raymond Ventures, Lagos that was producing fuel efficient charcoal stoves opened her ceramic section at former Nigerian Tobacco Company, Premises in Oyo. Terracotta charcoal stove insulators were produced in this company with jiggering method. The factory is now located at Agodongbo area, Fola Tyre, Oyo. Likewise, Women and Youth Art Foundation initiated by Peju Layiwola, (a sculptor and Art historian) in Ibadan started her ceramic section in 2009. Moreover, Segun Ajayi, a graduate with specialization in ceramics from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso was also making effort to develop his own small scale ceramic studio in Mabolaje Area, Oyo in 2010. There are also evident of anonymous potters who operate pseudo-small scale ceramic industries in the state who presumably participated in art exhibitions as well as attending trade fairs. Sometimes, they display their ceramic products by the road side. Presently, God's Grace Ceramic Industry and Saubana & Sons Ceramics, Ibadan as well as Dapo Art Gallery and Musa Raymond Venture Ceramic Section, Oyo are still producing at minimal capacity. Earth and Fire has relocated to Lekki Phase 1, Lagos perhaps for probable better patronage.

Likewise, there were other industries in Oyo State that were using non-conventional materials such as resin and fibreglass to produce bathroom fixtures like wash hand basins and bath top with casting method. This was due to exploration of materials that can aid mass production of ceramic wares with simple method in replacement of conventional methods with clay and glazes. Notable among them is Integrated Dynamic System which was known as IDS Bathroom Centre, Oyo. The firm was established by Prince Ajibola Afonja in 1982. However, IDS has stopped production since 1989 due to economic instability in the country (plate 1).

3. Personnel, Materials, Techniques and Products

The earlier small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State were owned by Nigerians and Ghanaians; their operations are by owners with the assistance of industrial training students and semi-skilled labourers usually on a small piece of lands. The secondary clays used for production were majorly collected along the stream and river; other

sources include mines from wells or road construction depots within the state while kaolin was bought from neighbouring towns or northern state. Many of these industries depended on imported glazes and other raw materials for their local production which eventually led to high cost of the production. Majority of the equipment and tools used by the industries were locally fabricated with a few imported ones. The equipment and tools include “slave and master” an improvised two-man operated kicked wheel. It is usually fabricated by using back axle of a automobile with a circular slab fixed on it and mounted a wooden or metal frame. Other equipment are few electric wheel and leg driven kicked wheel, jigger and jolley, moulds, kilns, hammer mill, sieves among others (plates 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). The equipment and tools determine the techniques of production and the quality of their products.

Their common technique of production in these industries is throwing (plate 8), Women and Youth Art Foundation, Ibadan however operates on mould/slip casting method using imported plaster moulds with few locally produced ones (plate 7). That notwithstanding, Musa Raymond Venture Ceramic section, Oyo is the only known industry that employs jiggering method for their production. Hand built method is seldom used by the industries for ceramic-sculpture and decoration of thrown ceramic wares (plates 8 and 9). This method is usually employed by formal art school trained artists.

Products of the small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State are limited compare to abundant ceramic products in this contemporary period. They include few glazed electric insulators, flower vases, dishes, cup, plates, tea and dining sets as well as many terracotta and painted terracotta flower vases. Charcoal and electric stove insulators, candle stands, pen holders, (plates 10 - 14) are also among their products. The available market outlets for these products include regular supply to the few ceramic dealers and patrons, art galleries and departmental stores in major cities in Oyo State and beyond. Trade fairs, and exhibitions as well as road-side display also provide market avenues to them.

4. Problems

Despite the availability of ceramics raw materials which is coupled with various governmental initiatives and programmes such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), with state and local affiliates as SEEDS and LEEDS respectively among others that were established others to promote the development of small scale industries in the country, yet, the sector is confronted with many challenges among which are the following:

The location of the basic raw materials (clay) of different types which often determines the cost of production is affecting the industry. This is because large quantity of the kaolin used in production of ceramic wares were either bought or collected from another State. Good secondary clays which are located along the streams and rivers banks are also bought in large quantity for production because of the stress involved in getting them and harassment from land owners. However, many of these clay depots are recently fast diminishing as a result of urbanization (government and people) constructing roads, drainages and houses on the existing clay depots as in the case in Ogbomoso; prospecting new depot at the outskirts of towns becomes inevitable, a development that is time wasting, energy consuming and capital intensive. And invariably affecting the cost of production and marketing price of such ceramic article.

Inadequate capital for operation also affects the industry. Most of the industries were established during ceramic wares boom of the 1980s and 1990s without putting into consideration of feasible and futuristic financial implication of what they are into. Those who are businessmen among the operators have stopped to invest additional capital; this further incapacitates the industry. Today, a good number of those operating cottage ceramic industries in the state are civil servants, pensioners and fresh school leavers that could neither afford the money to purchase necessary equipment nor have collateral that would enable them obtain loan from banks or related government agencies.

Inability to produce glazed wares at minimal cost led to the closure of many of the small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State since compounding glazes locally depends on addition of some imported glaze materials and recipes. Moreover, very few among the entrepreneurs and workers in the industry have a good knowledge of how to formulate their own functional glaze. Thus, most of their potential patrons now settle for imported ceramic products which are quite cheaper, better in quality and abundant in quantity. The ceramic industries that still exist limit themselves to few glazed wares with a lot of embellished terracotta wares.

Poor marketing strategies prevent buyers from locating ceramic market. Many of the industries also lack good feasibility study for good and regular market outlet. As a result of these, large numbers of the industries thus, market their products through trade fairs, exhibitions, galleries, shops and few supermarkets. Sometimes they also receive commissions from ceramic merchants and retailers. Their marketing strategies are so poor to the extent that many people across the state do not recognize their products beyond painted candle stands and terracotta flower vases which they usually bought along road-side in major cities in the State.

Most of the ceramists opined that poor focus and ineffectiveness of ceramists and potters associations also affected the development of good ceramic industries. In the same vein, members could not agree on particular market prices for their products as well as ways to sustain their industries. Though there are Ceramic Association of Nigeria (CerAN) and Craft Potter Association of Nigeria (CPAN) in the country whose major mandate among others is to facilitate mutual relationship among ceramists, government and investors of locally produced ceramics, there is no state chapter of any of these professional bodies in Oyo state up till date. Yet, there is no serious intervention on the development of indigenous ceramic industries from the national bodies.

The refusal of majority of small scale ceramic industries to register with appropriate government agency on industrial matters have also deprived most of the industries from benefiting in the micro-credit facilities that are available for small scale industries through the likes of, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and Poverty Alleviation Schemes (PAS) among others. For instance, G. O. Oyesiji, Director of Oyo State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Note 1) and Olofin of Oyo State Board of Internal Revenue, Ibadan (Note 2). Both of whom claimed that no small scale ceramic industry in Oyo State has registered with the establishment since 1980. They however, observed that the non-registration of many of such existing firms have hampered the possibility of enjoying from the various governments' initiatives.

Ineffective of various initiatives and programmes on small and medium scale industries is another challenge facing the industry. Despite the fact that government at different time has also made a lot of attempts in promoting small scale industry in which ceramics is inclusive, most of such initiatives and programmes are no longer effective in recent time. For instance National Directorate for Employment (NDE) that has all it takes to train young people and provide capital for them to establish small scale industries is not living up to expectation while many Nigerian graduates also refused to maximize the opportunities provided by these initiatives and programmes.

Importation of ceramic wares into the country has affected the market for the local ceramic wares as many patrons prefer to buy foreign ceramic products because of good quality. High taxes/tariffs that government is benefiting from imported ceramic materials, equipment and wares makes her also to encourage the importation of ceramic wares rather than promoting the development of local ceramic industry in the country. Many entrepreneurs now prefer importation of ceramic products to establishing local ceramic industries.

5. Prospects

In the midst of all these challenges, there are still great prospects for small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State in time to come as there is improvement in ceramic education in the State. Students of tertiary art schools now acquire entrepreneurship and industrial mass production skills unlike in the past when these vital areas were seldom taught. For instance, the introduction of ceramic students to kiln construction and burners' fabrication, glazes compounding and firing, as well as forms and materials technology and mass production techniques has exposed graduates of art schools particularly those of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso and possibly other institutions within and outside Oyo State the industry prerequisite. Many of these students are hoping to establish their own ceramic industries after graduation.

Involvements of tertiary institutions' students in the various mass production techniques in some small and medium scales ceramic industries during their industrial training scheme will also bring positive development to the industries in the future. This industrial exposure has also increased the knowledge of these students especially in the area of mass production, product branding, marketing strategies among others.

Different research breakthroughs in ceramics on the formulation of glazes, kiln construction, props and kiln selves making as well as the use of locally available materials to produce ceramic wares by Ogunsina (1998: 79-83), Oyeku (1998:73-78), Ojie (2002: 1-6), Areo (2005: 38 -46), Kalilu, Akintonde and Ayodele (2006), Kashim (2006:115-123) and Akinde (2009) among others, presented a bright future for ceramic production in the state. These breakthroughs when adequately applied by ceramic cottage firms will definitely reduce the cost of producing both terracotta and glazed wares and increase the quality of Nigeria-made ceramic wares. Ceramic exhibitions and Trade fairs, public enlightenments and other related initiatives by various stakeholders in the industry will also go a long way in creating more awareness about indigenous (local) ceramics and ceramic industries in Oyo State and Nigeria in generally.

6. Conclusion

Despite the huge contributions of ceramic cottage industries in Oyo State, particularly in the area of raising an average man's standard, significantly among its practitioners in the state; the challenges in the sector still hinder its growth. Amidst its various travails there is a bright future for the small scale ceramic industries in Oyo State. This can be achieved if the extant and upcoming industries can explore the abundant ceramic raw materials that are available in their locality through appropriate technology that encourages the use of local skills and materials to produce consumer goods at minimal cost as well as intermediate technology which adopts the combination of

local and foreign technologies (Wikipedia 2009).

Proper implementation of various government initiatives and programmes will also go a long way in encouraging local industries to look inward in sourcing for their materials, tools and equipment locally. The latter will further enable stakeholders to reduce the cost of production of ceramics, increase the quality of wares in Nigeria and likewise encourage more entrepreneurs to invest in the industry. Ceramic industries should also expand their products array in order to meet up with recent ceramic demands by improving their clay bodies, glaze compounding as well as maintained global best practices of mass production. They should also strategize various ways of marketing their products in order to give the local small scale ceramic industry enough awareness, not only in Oyo State but Nigeria as whole.

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Notes

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Personal communication with Olofin, Staff of Oyo State Board of Internal Revenue, Ibadan in November, 2012.

Table

S/N	Name of the Small Scale Ceramic Industries	Address	Present Condition
1	Akas Ceramic Industry	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
2	Artias Ceramic Industry	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
3	Asolom Ceramics	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
4	Ediak Ceramics	Asi-Basorun, Ibadan	No longer in operation
5	De Craft Ceramics	Asi-Basorun, Ibadan	No longer in operation
6	Gbenga Ceramics	Asi-Basorun, Ibadan	No longer in operation
6	Sahara Ceramics	Challenge Area, Ibadan	No longer in operation
8	Sudit Ceramics	Ijebu Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
9	Sudef Ceramics	Ijebu Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
10	Ona Ara Ceramics	Ring Road, Ibadan	No longer in operation
11	Alade Ceramic Industry	Monatan, Ibadan	No longer in operation
12	Fodacis Ceramic Entreprises	New Adeoyo, Ibadan	No longer in operation
13	God's Grace Ceramic Industry	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	Extant (producing at minimal capacity)
14	Saubana and Sons Ceramics	Orita Challenge, Ibadan	Extant (producing at minimal capacity)
15	Dapo Art Gallery	Former Nigerian Tobacco Company Premises, Oyo (relocated to Kosobo Area, Oyo)	Extant (producing at minimal)
16	Musa Raymond Ventures, Ceramic Section	Former Nigerian Tobacco Company Premises, Oyo (relocated Agodongbo area, Fola Tyre, Oyo.)	Extant (producing at minimal capacity)
17	Women and Youth Art Foundation (WY Art)	No 28, Lisabi Crescent, University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Developing
18	Earth and Fire Clay Work	Ojoo, Ibadan	Relocated to Lekki Phase 1, Lagos
19	Red Clay Concepts	Mabolaje, Oyo	Relocated to Suleja

Table 1: Present Condition of Small Scale Ceramic Industries in Oyo State

Plates



Plate 1
Fibreglass wash hand basin made by
IDS Bathroom Centre, Oyo
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 2
Dapo Art Gallery, Oyo
“Slave and Master Kick Wheel”
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 3
Red Clay Concept Oyo “Slave and
Master Potter’s Wheel “
Photograph by Ajayi Segun, 2010



Plate 4
Musa Raymond Venture Ceramic Section
Kicked Wheel with Jigger and Jolley
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 5
One of the Gas, oil and kerosene kilns
Used by God’s Grace Ceramic
Industry, Ibadan Photograph by Abiodun Segun,
2009



Plate 6
Femi Ibitoye (left) and Joshua Olofinro (right), owners of
God’s Grace Ceramic Industry, Ibadan are filling gas cylinder
with kerosene for firing process Photograph by Abiodun
Segun, 2009



Plate 8
Formed slip cast ceramic wares inside the plaster moulds at Women and Youth Art Foundation, Ibadan
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 9
Peju Layiwola, the initiator of Women and Youth Art Foundation, Ibadan, working on *Benin Queen Mother Head* hand-built ceramic-sculpture pieces
Photograph by Otunaiya Seyi, 2009



Plate 9
Dapo Eynade, the owner of Dapo Art Gallery, Oyo is designing a flower pot in both low and high reliefs
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 10
Electric insulator by God's Grace Ceramic Industry, Ibadan
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 11
Glazed flower vase by God's Grace
Ceramic Industry, Ibadan
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 12
Collection of different cast Benin figures
produced by Women and Youth Art Foundation,
Ibadan
Courtesy: Wy Art Editions (2010:117)



Plate 13
Painted candle stand by Dapo Art Gallery, Oyo
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009



Plate 14
Fuel Efficient Charcoal Stove by Musa
Raymond Venture, Oyo
Photograph by Abiodun Segun, 2009

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