

**Interventionist Performance and Industrial Harmony in UNIPORT: The Example of  
“Gbuji” TFD Workshop**

**BY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND FILM STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS,**

**NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA.**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES  
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UNIVERSITY, AWKA.**

**January, 2020**

## CERTIFICATION

I, AZUNWO, EZIWHO EMENIKE, with REG. NO **2015107009P** declare that this dissertation on **Interventionist Performance and Industrial Harmony in Uniport: The Example of “Gbuji” TFD Workshop** was carried out by me, this is my original work, it has not been submitted wholly or in part for the award of a degree in any other institution.

AZUNWO EZIWHO EMENIKE .....

SIGNATURE

DATE.....

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External Examiner

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to ASUU struggle for quality education in Nigeria. It is equally dedicated to the horde of developing playwrights and performers in the theatre and to the students who have inspired me with their dedication and creative thinking. Finally, this research is dedicated to my son, Azunwo, Jehu Chimezunemah for his love.

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### **Abstract**

Trade disputes, especially those that exist between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Port Harcourt Branch, Management and the Governing Council and by

extension Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), have not been tackled with theatre for Development approach; especially by academics who incidentally are the most affected by these incessant strike actions. Thus, this study investigates the industrial disharmony that exists between ASUU, University of Port Harcourt Management, and the Governing Council and by extension the FGN in a bid to addressing the issues of rot and incessant strike actions in Nigeria tertiary institutions and creating lasting peace in the university. Through the medium of Theatre-for-Development, (TfD), an approach which conscientises, sensitises and mobilises both ASUU and FGN into taking positive actions that will revitalise and solve the problems of these institutions in Nigeria. This study aims at producing an interventionist performance “Gbuji” as a dramatic resolution to the conciliation of ASUU, University of Port Harcourt Management, and the Governing Council and by extension the FGN’s lingering conflicts and re-examines the dogmatic views of the parties involved in the disputes. The study applies Gene Sharp’s (1973) “Theory of Power”(the theory and principle of Non-violent action) and Paulo Freire’s (1968) “Critical Pedagogy” as theoretical frameworks. The research designs used for this study are mixed methods, which involves presentation of “Gbuji” and the textual analysis of the subject matter. The study discovers that the children of the political class are not affected by ASUU strikes, because they do not attend public universities. The research equally discovers the adverse effects of breakdown of academic calendar through industrial disharmony in any nation, the shock, hazard, emotional trauma, psychological breakdown, which culminate into the lives of thoroughly bred students and academics. The study recommended that Nigerians should persuade the national assembly into making legislations that will clearly define and set the basic conditions for holding public offices. The research recommends that University of Port Harcourt Management and Governing Council should amicably settle all the on-going disputes in the university swiftly without regularly washing the dirty garments publically. Hence, Prof Frank Ugiomoh should be recalled and Prof Andrew Efemini be pardoned and due processes should be followed with objectivity.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The traditional theatre which remains the oldest form of the theatre is functional in nature. Therefore, it is not arguable that the theatre has been functional since its inception. However, with the emergence of Theatre for Development, the theatre is progressively becoming a more functional tool applied in conscientisation, sensitisation and mobilisation of all strata of life in the society, most especially for economic, educational, health, political, environmental, religious and ideological development. Theatre is a holistic art, all encompassing, as such; it can be considered as a folk art which, like all other arts, must start off from the community as a communal experience. The theatre can best be developed and transmitted to the audience by people who “speak the same language” with the audience, people who must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think, feel, and thus interpret phenomena, in roughly similar ways. Theatre is an avenue of imposing and giving a voice to the voiceless within a communal setting, this understanding was further brandished when Barlow and Skidmore define the theatre as an art form that provides individuals with practical opportunities to express themselves and develop aesthetic understanding (26).

From a modern standpoint, the ‘theatre’ is often connected with the conventional Western stage performance for affluent spectators with deluxe and lavish costumes and attractive backdrops. The word is derived from the Greek *theatron*, which stands for “a seeing place”. UNESCO informs that:



While this is certainly a very prominent form of theatre, there are also various other forms which have been used for purposes beyond mere entertainment, such as to convey religious, educational, political, social or economic messages. (6)

The theatre has also been seen as man's expression of his feelings, emotions, experiences and thoughts, thus, Burns submits that the theatre is:

An arena in which it is possible to study manifestations of the social values, forms and conventions of the society as well as the images of the social reality which people of different kinds and at different times have construed for themselves. (5)

The theatre stands out today as one of the oldest and most popular forms of entertainment in the world in which actors perform live for the audience on a stage or in other space designated for the performance; the theatre indeed performs varieties of purposes ranging from the practitioner's perspectives in historical and societal evolutions to the entertainment of the society and suggests possible solutions to varieties of problems. The space set aside for performances, either permanently or temporarily, is also known as a theatre. Hence, Barranger asserts that:

A theatre director in Britain by the name Peter Brook has advocated that for theatre to take place, an actor walk across an empty space while someone else is watching. In this empty space, called a stage, actors present themselves in a story about some aspect of human experience. The actors, the audience, and space are three essentials of theatre. The fourth is the performance or the actors' creative work in production. (40)

Theatre historians trace the origins of theatre to myth and ritual found in dances and mimed performances by masked dancers during fertility rites and other ceremonies that marked significant passages in life. Untimely societies acted out patterns of life, death, and rebirth associated with the welfare of village tribes. Adeoye explains that:

The theatre, in any society, is a culture house through which the totality of the ways of the people can be documented and presented over a given period of time. Its functions and values, its power as a weapon of mobilization, its function as a medium of communication and change are quite indisputable. (7)

Imitation, costumes, masks, makeup, gesture, dance, music, and pantomime were some of the theatrical elements found in early rituals. In paraphrasing Brockett, at some unrecorded time, these ceremonies and rituals became formalized in dramatic festivals and spread West from Greece and East from India. Essential to the theatre experience is the act of seeing and being seen. Right through the history of world cultures, actors have used a variety of locations for theatre, including amphitheatres, churches, halls, marketplaces, garages, street corners, warehouses, and formal buildings. It is not the building that makes theatre but rather the use of space for actors to imitate human experience before audiences. In a related development, Edward informs that:

God made man in his own image and man made theatre in his own image. He was fully aware that the world was filled with hate, discord, unhappiness, rivalries, misfortune, misunderstandings, conflicts, wars, accidents and destruction but he also knew that there was abundance of kindness, generosity, love of mankind, brotherhood, fun, excitement, joy, contentment and personal satisfaction. Symbolically, he chose two masks to represent his creation: a mask of tragedy, that wept, and a mask of comedy, that laughed. (3)

It is the responsibility of the theatre to unveil the minds and hearts of men, representing them before them through the audience, which invariably teaches them morals, whether in form of tragedy or creating joy and happiness for men. The theatre presents the complete man when he is happy, it is comedy and when he is sad and has plenty of sorrows to tackle, and the theatre presents tragedy for him. The theatre does all these with the objective of expressing man's dreams, aspirations, fear and joy. In the words of Arnold, she observes that:

Into theatre performances, we pour our dreams, our myths and stories, our struggles and fears. The conflicts that divide us and the laughter that makes whole, take their place on the stage. We make a journey through space and time that is limited only by our imagination... (2)

A good number of theatrical performances require the collaborative efforts of many creative people working towards a common goal- the production. Theatrical texts often referred to as

drama; usually, provide the vital framework for a performance. Theatre can be designed to entertain, instruct, motivate, persuade, and even shock the audience with maximum reality. Nevertheless, whatever the intentions of the playwright, director, performers, and crew, the result depends on the interface with an audience. The audience affects the performance by providing the performers with immediate feedback, such as laughter, tears, applause, or silence. Each night there is a continuous interaction between the auditorium and the stage. Finally, audiences make their opinions known through their attendance or nonattendance. They support what appeals to them and generally fail to support what they find distasteful, offensive or incomprehensible.

Although the theatre is a diverse and complex art, it requires collaboration among many artists, crew, and managers in order to create a performance for audiences. The theatre regardless of size or purpose requires artistic, managerial, and technical people as part of a permanent staff to prepare and present productions on a predetermined schedule. The theatre in most cases manifests itself in diverse forms like Commercial theatre, Site specific theatre, industrial theatre, Children's Theatre in Education (CTiE) and Theatre for Development (TfD), etc. This study hinges itself within the framework of Theatre-for-Development (TfD) as an interventionist medium in resolving all forms of crises and proffering solutions therein. It therefore studied ASUU strikes from 1999-2013 and some internal crises that have permeated University of Port Harcourt and have brought some disequilibrium in the system, using the medium of TfD as depicted in "Gbuji" workshop as an interventionist tool at finding lasting solutions to these protracted problems between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and University Management and by extension, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN).

The word "Gbuji" is derived from an Ikwerre expression meaning to strike. Ikwerre is one of the languages spoken in Rivers State, Niger Delta in Nigeria. "Gbuji" is a TfD workshop experimented in

University of Port Harcourt, carrying all the critical stakeholders along in the process. These stakeholders include: ASUU members, some internal members of the Governing Council and the University Management, parents, students, government officials. This study was created out of data collated in the course of this research, practical scenarios, improvisations and experimentations which resulted into the final public performance. "Gbuji" is equally a metaphor used in describing the relationship that exists among members of ASUU, Governing Council and the University Management.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is a trade union that is anchored within the framework of Nigerian Universities. The universities, on the other hand, train the specialists that will initiate development and change process in their countries. Lale holds that "Research, one of the cardinal obligations of Higher Education institutions, can provide relevant knowledge and develop appropriate technologies that fit local needs. (3) However the universities play pivotal/traditional roles of teaching, research and community development that will lead to sustainable human development. Janetzke and Scheidtweiler upheld the words of Kofi Annan on the university thus:

I believe that the universities must become a primary tool for African's development in the new country. Universities can help develop African enterprise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights; and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars. (iii)

The university education has over the decades has remained focused and the most virile mechanism for the utmost transmission of ideas, skills, history and culture from one generation to another, for the continuation of socio-economic development, human endurance, survival and self-improvement as well as man's ability to surmount and overcome his antagonistic and unsympathetic milieu and accordingly, improve standards of living and life expectancy. Lale submits in his *Vested Interest and the Mission of Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria* that:

“The value of our knowledge in the areas of medical science, agriculture, engineering, technology, law, political economy, to mention a few and its impact on human welfare, orderly living and overall development can hardly be overstated”. (3) How can the foregoing be achieved in a nation whose academic sector is at a regular log ahead and constant struggle with both governments at the centre and at the state levels? ASUU as a trade union over the years is responsible for the welfare of academic staff in all Nigerian universities, as such; the union has the last straw that could break the camels’ back whenever there is an industrial dispute between the union and her employer. It is indeed no longer news that ASUU may be warming up for yet another strike as a result of numerous failures by the employer in honouring already reached agreements and other issues bedevilling University of Port Harcourt Governing Council, the management and the ASUU struggle within. The Federal Government of Nigeria, on the other hand, has perceived that ASUU is at “war” with it. Therefore from a historical point of view, it is perceived that the Academic Staff Union of Universities is at war with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). It is a war that has been ongoing since ASUU entered the Nigerian national consciousness in 1978. The obvious truth, however, is that ASUU as a trade union has over the years, battled and is still battling with the Federal Government of Nigeria on obvious issues. In describing this war Akaruese citing Gbadegesin states that:

ASUU's war is a war against the entrenchment and glorification of ignorance as a national attribute. It is a war for the restoration of the glorious days of the academy in Nigeria, with a clear understanding that many positive changes are bound to follow because they are interconnected. (99)

This is why a creative approach to development through the theatre as an interventionist medium in ensuring harmony becomes imperative. Theatre as Bentley observes, presents community members with situations that engage them not only intellectually and aesthetically but also emotionally. This kind of emotion is most excellently described as "empathy" which Augusto

Boal in his teaching in *Theatre of the Oppressed* defines as the emotional relationship established between the character and the spectator, which makes the latter feel the impact of what has happened, is happening, or may happen, to the former. This interventionist medium is hinged on practice-based Theatre which Theatre for Development (TfD) is perfectly fitted. Community Theatre can be understood as social-communal activity which, like any other social activity, is inextricably correlated with the origins of society itself, and in most cases, it is can be understood as Theatre-for-Development. Community Theatre therefore is a community based performance(s), geared towards liberating, and giving specific light to the society. Courtney explains that a wide range of theatrical presentations are observed in each civilised society, but varies according to the development of the civilisation.

Hagher submits that:

Community Theatre for Development is a theatrical style which stresses participation, dialogue, critical conscientiousness committed to social transformation through cultural action using the theatre...through its practice...hope to involve the peasants and workers in finding solutions to their common problems, through research, dramatization, analysis and follow-up activities. (Qtd. in Odi, 59)

Theatre for Development (TFD) is a participatory theatre practice which allows communities to write their own stories, making it quite dramatic based on the messages that surface from the storytelling process. Theatre for Development emanates from the people and discusses the people's problems, infusing their own language and idioms of expressions. This system helps in domesticating the theatre to specific needs of the people, taken over and shaped by community people themselves. Theatre-for-Development seeks to demystify the 'Specialist Syndrome,' which takes away real opportunity from those at ground level, those programmes and projects are intended for and to impact directly in their lives. Theatre-for-Development (TfD) can be seen

as live performance or theatre used as a developmental tool. Theatre-for-development however can be defined as a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more dialogical process, where theatre is practiced with the people or by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and then encouraging them to voice and solve their own problems.

Theatre for Development however is a form of theatre whose objective remains to broadcast messages through conscientizing the communities about their objectives and social political situations. Mloma on the other hand explained the ideology as Popular Theatre, when the following submission was made on its aims to include:

Making the people to be aware their problems, and compelling them to be active participants in the development process by expressing their viewpoints and acting to better their conditions. Popular theatre is intended to empower the common man with a critical consciousness crucial to the struggle against the forces responsible for his poverty. (67)

Theatre for Development is a brand of participatory theatre, which encourages the techniques of improvisation and audience members' active performance in role taking, or can be fully scripted and staged, with the audience observing. Many Tfd productions are a mix of the two. "Theatre of the Oppressed" (TO), a technique invented by Augusto Boal is classified as a form of community-based theatre. Theatre-for-Development has become a household name and a brand of entertainment that is much striking and easy penetrating when it comes to message delivery, thus, hundreds and in most cases thousands of establishments and initiatives have used theatre, especially Tfd as a developmental tool for education or propaganda, as therapy, as a participatory tool, or as an exploratory tool in development. One of the earliest accounts on the use of Tfd is the thesis entitled "Theater as a Means of Moral Education and Socialization in the

Development of Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1845”, the thesis however recounts how theatre was used to promote ideological and civil development in a religious community in the US.

This is where Tfd becomes very significant, because as an interventionist theatre which preaches popular participation of the people through their native creative cheerfulness, it entertains, educates, informs and above all, Tfd volunteers itself willingly as an apparatus for driving this initiative and undeniably participatory development. The foregoing prompted Oga to submit that:

This kind of theatre speaks to the people in their own languages and idioms and ideals with issues of direct relevance to their own lives...they are allowed to control the dramaturgical processes; provide materials for drama; isolate through discussion on analysis, and issues the drama will focus on. (Qtd. in Odi. 57)

The launching of Tfd programmes all over the world as a form of socially-cognizant performance designed to support development by encouraging communal action is highly result oriented. This feat nurtures and promotes collective action; Tfd programmes give confidence to audience participation in theatre workshops. Most of these theatrical practices occur during rehearsals and they are often not considered effectual methods of operation with the conventional theatre. Conversely, the process of making theatre is very much appropriate outside the rehearsal venues. Creating theatre involves the practice of gathering a collection of individuals with loosely analogous goals, establishing an open and equal atmosphere, enriching and inspiring people to share their ideas, deconstructing and revising those ideas collectively, defining and refining those goals, functioning creatively towards an end product which no one individual could have envisioned or produced single-handedly. Many practitioners of Tfd always feel that this theatrical process is always valuable if directed towards developmental issues.

Tfd workshops, therefore, utilises theatrical techniques such as scenario, improvisation, problem-posing deliberations, including indigenous art forms, community-led script drafting,



follow-up discussions and above all, it prompts audience participation and community meeting. Community theatre therefore is an effective and successful means of communicating insightful and sensitive matters without the attending bitterness or antagonism that would have occurred generally in a realistic situation. Regardless of the fact that some of the contents transmitted by the “Gbuji” workshop were a direct criticism of local activities and customs that had hindered development and conservation goals, the audiences participated actively and positively during the question-and-answer session that followed each theatre performance, as opposed to several cases of hostility that had often greeted community meetings.

In advocating for the use of TfD as a medium for social transformation and modification, Emasealu submits that:

Several authorities have advocated the use of theatre as a tool of social transformation because it is a veritable means of getting a man to reflect on his socioeconomic conditions and, consequently, initiate programmes that would pave the way for meaningful human development. (156)

Identifying key TfD practices will prompt communal dialogue and action which challenge the status quo. But TfD cannot be carried out in seclusion or isolation, because it must be combined with at least two other tools such as Focus Group Discussion, Deliberative Discussion, Storytelling, Observation, Interview, etc before it can be achieved, as was applied in this research. This is where TfD becomes very poles apart from other forms of theatre. It requires above all, discipline, creativity, training and practice. Therefore for TfD to be plausible as a creative tool for mediation, it must engage members of the benefiting communities in a participatory manner, the facilitators in most cases must be trained in the use of TfD, team members must understand the rationale behind the project and there should be swift transmission of data into improvisation otherwise crucial points/facts in the stories may be forgotten. The

performance must combine drama, dance and songs together to make it lively, for easy flow of the themed message.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Trade disputes, especially those that exist between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), have not received the needed scholarly attention that it deserves, especially from academics who incidentally are the most affected by these incessant strike actions, hence this research.

## **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study was aimed at producing an interventionist performance “Gbuji” as a dramatic resolution to the conciliation of ASUU and FGN lingering conflicts.

The Objectives include to:

- i. assess how the Theatre for Development productions can conscientise the parties in this endemic conflict.
- ii. re-examine the dogmatic views of the parties involved in the disputes.
- iii. interrogate the ability of the selected Tfd productions and how they succeeded in engendering the cooperative attitude to the conflict resolution
- iv. educate the general public through the “Gbuji” (Tfd) workshop on the real nature of ASUU struggles, thus triggering a meaningful dialogue and engagement on the issue.
- v. use TFD to address the developmental predicaments occasioned by the disharmony between the Academic Staff Union of Universities on one hand and University Port Harcourt Governing and Management on the other hand.
- vi. stimulate further studies on the area of Theatre for Development in particular and Theatre practice in general.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to the extent that its recommendations would ensure sustainable industrial harmony between ASUU and FGN and by extension, the general public. This disharmony does not only occur in the public sector, such as public universities, it encompasses even the private organizations as well. This work will potentially proffer some pragmatic solutions to the regular industrial disharmony in Nigeria in general and the university sector in particular. It will likely promote uninterrupted academic calendar which is the hallmark of academic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society. This research will serve as a source of information for scholars in particular and unions in general and can stimulate attitudinal change in the university system especially the trade unions. It will equally serve as a corrective measure to the Trade Unions and the government negotiating teams so that they will no longer see negotiations as jamborees and opportunities of receiving huge allowances, but a meaningful dialogue leading to participatory action which TFD fosters.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study:**

Addressing academic conditions in Nigeria and supporting improved universal standard of education can be done in numerous ways. Hence, this work adopts the TFD approach and situates the study in University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. This study focuses on Theatre-for-Development and limits itself to “Gbuji” workshop which preoccupies itself with ASUU struggles.

## **1.6 Research Method**

This study was guided by mixed research design.

### **1.6.1 Population of the Study**

The population of this study is 1,050 persons aged 18 years and above drawn from cast and crew of the “Gbuji” workshop and members of the audience who watched the “Gbuji” performance. Their occupational representation include: government officials/politicians, students, parents, opinion leaders and ASUU members. The “Gbuji” Tfd workshop was a Theatrical workshop designed to communally discuss on ways to ending the protracted ASUU strikes.

### **1.6.2. Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The study made use of the random sampling technique because of its unique way of dealing directly with the population of interest present without much impediment. The sample the research covered here was two thousand members of the public who watched the performance and others drawn from cast and crew of “Gbuji” Tfd workshop. They were classified in units and these units comprise of students, parents, government officials (politicians), opinion leaders and members of ASUU. Questionnaires were distributed randomly among the target population. Each unit comprised of 210 participants and interviews were conducted with the UNIPORT branch ASUU Chairman, some professors, parents and few politicians among selected participants who watched the performance.

### **1.6.3. Research Instrument**

The instruments used in this research include questionnaire, interviews and discussions extracted from the “Gbuji” Tfd workshop. The participants in the Tfd workshop were drawn from government officials/politicians, students, parents, opinion leaders and ASUU members The

questionnaire was constructed based on a modified likert three point scale of Yes, No and Indifferent. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

#### **1.6.4. Data Collection**

The data utilized in this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the “Gbuji” Tfd workshop as well as the questionnaires, interviews and discussions emanating from the workshop presentation. The secondary data were obtained from published and unpublished materials such as textbooks, journals, and magazines as well as online sources. Research Assistants who were involved in the process helped in the administering the questionnaires. On the spot interviews were conducted on some lecturers, politicians and some members of the cast and crew. Few Research Assistants visited and interviewed the ASUU Chair in his office and Dean Faculty of Sciences of Management who left the performance venue as soon as Performance Discussion ended.

#### **1.6.5. Data Analysis**

The information that was received from the interviews, questionnaires as well as the results arising from the Tfd scenario/performance discussions were given in-depth analysis. This in turn informed the findings and recommendations of the study. The data were placed in tables, and then later divided into groups with subheadings, based on their responses for easy interpretation and explanation.

#### **1.6.6. Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The questionnaire and interview questions developed were validated for content and face validity through the dissertation supervisor and two other scholars with vast knowledge of the subject. The questionnaire was tested for reliability through the use of test and pre-test methods.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

For proper understanding and appreciation of this work, the key words and phrases used will be discussed because of their relevance and recurring nature. They are: Theatre-for-Development, “Gbuji”, ASUU, Strikes, Trade Union, Industrial harmony, Performance and Interventionist Theatre and Education and Progressive Society.

**Interventionist Theatre:** This is the process of using drama or the theatre in assisting people or organisations experiencing difficulties or challenges in managing their crisis which in turn restores order through a peaceful means.

**Theatre-for-Development: TFD:** This is that participatory theatre whose focus and ideological standpoint is strictly tied to the services it provides, such as social transformation, change, restructuring and above all, overhauling of the society through the direction of entertainment, education and information.

**“Gbuji”:** this is the TFD workshop of this particular study created out of data collated in the course of this research, practical scenarios, experimentations and improvisations which resulted into the dissertation play. It is equally a metaphor used in describing the relationship that exists between ASUU, FGN the university management and council. “Gbuji” derives its title from the Ikwerre word for “strike” which is its thematic preoccupation. Ikwerre is one of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in Rivers State, Nigeria

**ASUU:** The acronym ASUU stands for the Academic Staff Union of Universities. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was officially formed in Nigeria in 1978 following the dissolution and collapse of the then National Association of University Teachers (NAUT). Its aim is to rescue and restore the already diminishing, disintegrating, dying quality of Nigerian University education. ASUU therefore is a focused trade union within Nigeria universities with sole aim of combating and compelling the government to restore the stand of education in the country by providing the essentials for the universities.

**Strikes:** This is a period when workers protest against their employers, demanding for better work conditions, etc; this can be demonstrated by sitting at home, sitting in the offices without working, in most cases, the establishments are shutdown.

**Trade Union:** A Trade Union is an organisation of workers, acting collectively, who seek to protect and promote their mutual interests through collective bargaining with their employers. The purposes of trade union many include the following: negotiate wages and working condition terms, regulate relations between workers (its members) and the employer, take collective action to enforce the terms of collective bargaining, raise new demands on behalf of its members, and help settle both internal and external grievances of members.

**Industrial harmony:** Industrial harmony is securing the best possible conditions and living standards for employees. Harmonious relationship between the employer and the employees can only take place in an atmosphere devoid of multiple rancorous activities, which lay claim to right balance, wonderful sincerity, maximum good faith and great conscientiousness.

**Uniport:** Uniport is an acronym for University of Port Harcourt Nigeria, established in 1975 as University College, Port Harcourt and was given a University status in 1977. It is located in Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria. The students' population is estimated within the range of 45,000-55,000, with Prof. Ndowa Lale as the Vice Chancellor.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frameworks adopted for this research work are Gene Sharp's "Theory of Power" and Paulo Freire's "Teaching Theory".

### **2.1.1 Gene Sharp's(1973) Theory of Power (the theory and principle of Non-violent action)**

Non-violence action is a theory based on the moral postulate that the use of force is inherently detestable, and further, seeks to link non-violence to concrete political objectives. Nonviolent action has its root in religion and politics. Bearing a religious and political undertone, the thought of the nonviolent theory is one of the greatest contributions of one Indian (Mahatma Gandhi) in the history of peaceful struggle. Through his literatures and social dealings, the nonviolent movement was inspired and has since witness tremendous supports from newer theorists hence, some levels of principle and conceptual trans-modification have been put in place over time. Gandhi, who strongly trusted in the timeless pertinence of his philosophy, once posited that "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man". (Qtd. in McCarthy & Kruegler, 17)

In meaning and form however, nonviolence as a holistic idea bears a dualistic but related meanings. The general perception or philosophy of abstaining from any form of violence with regards to moral or religious sway happens to be the first, while, the social acting or behaviour of people by means of nonviolent dealing, action or conduct is the second. From the conceptual idea, one very bold mark is that violence is an expunged idea, dealing or approach to any situational circumstances of life. Hence, in any form of social practice or involvement and even when it comes to a situation of social struggle, violence of any sort is never an option.



The sounding of this idea appeals aptly to a principle that goes beyond a belief or moral behaviour. This is because the doctrine has a theoretic birth and undertone which is largely linked to the popular Indian legend, Mahatma Gandhi who stood in front in the struggle for independence against the oppressive hands of the British colony. Historically, the nonviolence idea is first credited to Gandhi who appears not just as a heroic nationalist but a religious leader and social crusader as far as the Indians are concern. And whereas the nonviolence idea stemmed from a religious background granted that the latter was Hindu, his teachings of Ahimsa (nonviolence and respect towards all living thing) trans-modified to mean a social theory long ago. Considering the modus of operation, nonviolence in theory and practice is highly tantamount to civil resistance. In fact, civil resistance is a very strong word in the register of the nonviolent theory. And while civil disobedience and mass non-cooperation are also strong operational tools here, the principle of nonviolence implies to mean a direct substitution for violent behaviour: it is a deliberate restraint from violence even in the face of adversaries.

Unlike John Dillard's Frustration Aggression theory which operates under the modus operandi of radicalism in dealing with social threats, the nonviolent theory appears to be a direct opposite. Typically, nonviolence is the personal practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. This calm attitude emanates from the very belief that hurting people, animals or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome. It is the general philosophy of abstention from violence. Hence adherents bear the likely opinion that violence may not be necessary as a technique to occasion revolution or bring about social change thus; they accept nonviolence as a means to achieve political or social change. Gene Sharp, a believer and philosopher of nonviolent theory presents a likely opinion that:

Nonviolent action is a technique of conducting protest, resistance, and intervention without physical violence by: (a) acts of omission (that is, the participants refuse to perform acts which they usually perform, or are required by law or regulation to perform); or (b) acts of commission (that is, the participants perform acts which they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden by law or regulation from performing); or (c) a combination of both. (Qtd. in McCarthy and Kruegler, 4)

Sharp's provision above is systematic hence, holds credence to the forms of nonviolence.

Realistically, nonviolence actions are bounteous and may not have the privilege to be quantified into any given number or figure. Consequently, actions as civil disobedience, conscientious objection, creative tension, demonstrations, direct action, boycotting, fasting are forms of nonviolent techniques amongst many with no define figure. The latter's provision however, provides some sense of organization to them when taking into closer examination, meanwhile, the mainstream idea is that nonviolence contains the act of not just doing but of not-doing too. The methods of non-cooperation and nonviolent intervention are responsive to the nonviolent form of not-doing, while, the act of protesting and other close related practices explains the nonviolent form of doing.

Idealistically, the nonviolence principle is a strategy for social change with zero acceptance of the employment of violence not even in the worse of situations. It is for its believers an alternative to passive acceptance of oppression and so they employ diverse methods in their campaign for social change. Such methods include; critical forms of education and persuasion, mass non-cooperation, civil disobedience, nonviolent direct action, and social, political, cultural and economic forms of intervention. In leaning with the above, Roland and Christopher hold thus:

As he developed his ideas, Gandhi came to believe that nonviolent action as a whole could be distinguished from particular methods or limited conceptions of its nature. For example, he came to the position that the popular terms passive resistance and civil disobedience do not encompass all of nonviolent action. (5)

In careful analysis however, no matter the nonviolent method, form or strategy employed, the principal goal here is to achieve predetermined results against oppressive social qualms and strangulating hullabaloo. While the success of the nonviolent approach may not be guaranteed in all situations and times, its provisional principles make for its considerable advantages. The philosophy of nonviolent action however informed Buckminster Fuller to submit that, “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete”. (9) This reality prompted Gandhi to initiate 18 projects that enabled Indians to take charge of their own society, making it much easier to “dismiss” British rule and lay the groundwork for their own democracy. Constructive work has many advantages: It enables people to break their dependency on a regime by creating their own goods and services. You cannot get rid of oppressors when you depend on them for essentials. You are not just reacting to offenses but taking charge. Being proactive helps you shed passivity, fear and helplessness.

The results of nonviolent action sometimes outweigh more than the anticipated outcome. For instance, when China was passing through a severe famine in the 1950s, the US branch of Fellowship of Reconciliation organized a mail-in campaign to get President Eisenhower to send surplus food to China. Some 35,000 Americans took part. Our message to the President was a simple inscription from Isaiah: “If thine enemy hunger, feed him.” It seemed as if there was no response. But 25 years later, we learned that we had averted a proposal to bomb targets in Mainland China during the Korean War! At a key meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Eisenhower announced: “Gentlemen, since 35,000 Americans want us to feed the Chinese, this is hardly the time to start bombing them.”

Violence sometimes “works” in the sense that it forces a particular change, but in the long run, it leads to more misery and disorder. We do not have control over the results of our actions, but we can have control over the means we use, even our feelings and our states of mind.

These six principles are founded on a belief that all life is an interconnected whole and that when we understand our real needs, we are not in competition with anyone. As Martin Luther King says, “I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be”. (4)

A critical observation however, is that the application and success of such conservative and superficial philosophy especially in this dispensation may depend highly on the situation at stake. Because, no matter how an individual may choose to look at it, some disturbing social situations is best handled or tackled with radicalism in view. Nonviolence theory in practice has nonetheless recorded some successes with the Martin Luther King’s case scenario in America as a leading example.

In the same stratum, Bondurant asserts that positive nonviolence combines love for self, other human beings, and communities, on the one hand, with nonviolent action campaigns against unjust laws, authorities, and institutions, on the other. It requires commitment to moral principles like (1) maintaining courage in the face of repression; (2) seeking reconciliation with, rather than defeat of, opponents; (3) attacking oppressive systems instead of oppressors; (4) accepting self-suffering without causing harm to others; (5) rejecting physical means of violence; and (6) retaining hope that social justice is possible. But it also promotes contentious interaction in public life according

to specific strategic guidelines: (1) carefully research and analyze oppressive situations before organizing protest campaigns; (2) educate state actors and the public about the issues at stake; (3) prepare for the spiritual, mental, and practical challenges of nonviolent activism; (4) keep lines of communication with authorities, bystanders, and fellow activists open; (5) when negotiations fail, engage in nonviolent direct action by applying methods like mass marches, boycotts, and sit-ins; and (6) create alternative institutions and “beloved communities” in which social differences no longer produce structural violence and oppression.

It is imperative therefore to note that nonviolence and nonviolent opposition reflect an alternative understanding of power in the modern world. Social scientists frequently believed in Weber in assuming that power is derived from the legitimacy to use violence and coercion possessed by those controlling the state, who can “realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others”. (180) For instance, Sharp begins with the ability of individuals or groups to wield power “for political objectives, especially by governmental institutions or by people in opposition to or in support of such institutions”. (7) He further argues that political power primarily relies on the consent of ordinary citizens, who can always decide to withdraw their obedience and organize effective nonviolent action against tyrannical governments, if they have the necessary will, courage, and knowledge.

Drawing on these alternative conceptualizations of nonviolence and power, we can therefore argue that political cultures of nonviolent opposition are significant when they transform human relationships defined by dominance into human relationships that is defined by love, dialogue and cooperation. The purpose of political cultures of nonviolent opposition, moreover, is not merely to take over control of states—and replace one tyranny with another—but to expand the power to promote social justice within states, between states and societies, within societies, and between

societies. Nonviolent action takes three main forms: 1) protest and persuasion, 2) noncooperation, and 3) intervention.

Drawing inspiration from the standpoint of Gene Sharp, researchers in the area of nonviolent action support their theories on social-scientific peculiarities that exist between rational choice and ethical behaviour, objective clarifications and biased interpretations, particularly strategic interests and moral values. The “Gbuji” Tfd workshop adopts the nonviolent action in seeking for change that will bring about revolution in Nigeria educational sector. Nonviolent action was epitomised in the workshop, as can be seen from everyone. The students adopted the nonviolent action in confronting the Academic Staff Union of Universities on the need for the union to stop their industrial disharmony. ASUU on the other hand welcomed the students with love and together, they staged a nonviolent action against the government. These attitudes uphold Ghandi’s ideology when he admonished in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* thus “There are many causes that I am prepared to die for but no causes that I am prepared to kill for” (40) this research agrees that the non-violence principle, also known as non-violent resistance, disavows the use of physical violence to trigger social or political change.

Sharp's key role has been to systematize the field in two ways. First, he has classified methods of nonviolent action and catalogued hundreds of different techniques along with an extensive array of historical examples. This classification has produced conceptual order amongst the cluttered and scattered experiences and literature on nonviolent actions. Second, Sharp has elaborated a theory of power which offers a framework for understanding how nonviolent action works. Sharp's ideas have drawn critical attention because they have been widely adopted by social activists as providing a theoretical underpinning for their own nonviolent actions. In most cases,

training sessions on nonviolence most often include segments on 'power theory', which typically is a simplified version of Sharp's ideas, based either directly on his writings or on secondary accounts of them. He believes that the power of rulers most often is derived from approval by the subjects, nonviolent action on the other hand, is a process of withdrawing consent, approval and consequently, it is a way of challenge the key modern problems of dictatorship, genocide, war, systems of oppression and more especially, bad government.

Sharp's theory of power however, is wired around two major concepts; and these concepts include the ruler-subject classification and, consent. The ruler-subject classification is one that Sharp have always displayed without detailed justification. He submits that "The 'ruler' includes 'not only chief executives but also ruling groups and all bodies in command of the State structure". (22) Sharp has most often focused on the state in his analysis, where he spelt out the various structures involved in the state, especially the state bureaucracy, police and military, all of which 'are under the command of the person or group which occupies the position of "ruler" at the head of the State". (316)

On the realm of power, Sharp submits that political power is one type of social power, as "the totality of means, influences, and pressures which must include authority, rewards, and sanctions available for use to achieve the objectives of the power-holder, especially the institutions of government, the State, and groups opposing either of them" (27) Sharp supplies his analysis to the common idea that power is a monolithic entity residing in the person or position of a ruler or ruling body. Sharp argues instead that power is pluralistic, residing with a variety of groups and in a diversity of locations, which he calls 'loci of power'. The loci of power provide a

countervailing force against the power of the ruler, especially when the loci are numerous and widely distributed throughout society.

Accommodating the argument that power is not fundamental to rulers that it must come from somewhere else. Sharp gives the following key sources of power: authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources and sanctions. (1112) In locating the foundation for sources of power where his second point stands, Sharp argues that these sources of the ruler's power “depend intimately upon the obedience and cooperation of the subjects”. (12) This is what he calls the consent theory of power. Without the consent of the subjects - either their active support or their passive submission the ruler would have little power and little basis to rule.

Sharp believes that Power is always conditional and unstable, requiring nurturing of cooperation and manipulation of potentially aggressive loci. His consideration of the sources of power thus leads him to obedience as the key: “the most important single quality of any government, without which it would not exist, must be the obedience and submission of its subjects. Obedience is at the heart of political power”. (16) Continuing in obedience, Sharp asked “What do men obey?” Sharp suggests that there is no single answer, “but that important are habit, fear of sanctions, moral obligation, self-interest, psychological identification with the ruler, zones of indifference and absence of self-confidence among subjects”. (16-24)

Travelling across history, Gene Sharp’s Power Theory has made tremendous impacts in proving its results. For example in 494 B.C., working-class Plebeians in Rome, protesting their treatment at the hands of the Roman consuls, staged a kind of sit-down strike on a hill near the city, later called the Sacred Mount. They remained there for several days, disrupting everyday life, until the



consuls agreed to many of their demands. Roman soldiers employed a similar nonviolent strategy more than 200 years later to win concessions from the Roman Senate. Nonviolent resistance even worked in Nazi-occupied Norway. In 1942, Norway's puppet leader Vidkun Quisling ordered teachers to join a "corporation" that would promote fascist principles. As many as 10,000 of Norway's 12,000 teachers refused to join the organization and signed statements of protest. Quisling had 1,000 teachers arrested and sent to concentration camps, but the others maintained their resistance. Quisling finally gave in, allowing the imprisoned teachers to return home.

The necessary first step toward changing an unjust regime, Sharp emphasizes, is for people to reject the self-fulfilling view of themselves as weak; after all, even the most brutal tyrants must rely to some extent on the cooperation of citizens, not just in the military, but throughout the society. Sharp is not the first scholar to offer this insight. The Scottish philosopher David Hume wrote: "Were you to preach, in most parts of the world, that political connections are founded together on mutual consent or a mutual promise, the magistrate would soon imprison you, as seditious, for loosening the ties of obedience, if your friends did not before shut you up, as delirious, for advancing such absurdities".

### **2.1.2 Paulo Freire's (1968) "Teaching Theory"**

One area in which post-colonial thought has been particularly rich and suggestive is the "Teaching Theory". Foremost in this field is the work of the Brazilian educational expert, Paulo Freire, especially with his seminal book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire aligns political oppression with oppressive pedagogy. Their approaches, according to Doki and Igbaba (347), are influenced by Marxist theory of social realism which is considered a viable tool for social transformation developing nations.

This area has always remained busy, especially with the educational appearance of Augusto Boal. His approach, as published in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* aims at educating the masses to jointly stand, realise their common problems and come up with action plans that would alleviate their precarious circumstances. Earlier, Freire's pedagogical experiments as published in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* advocates for conscientisation of the masses towards self-assessment, discovery and efficacy to enable them see their disadvantaged position and something about it. All these situate TFD within the ambience of participation which entails that people are not mere recipients of a prepared product, but are equally involved in the process. Going by this, the people's active participation in any empowerment scheme becomes imperative, hence, TFD motivates the people to question their situations and work out modalities of ameliorating them. TFD is considered a more friendly approach in negotiating Nigeria's nation's educational sector, because it employs the people's idioms and allows them become part of the process.

Traditional, oppressive pedagogy is learning by rote, in which teachers who know deposit their information and ideology into the passive minds of students taken as knowing nothing on their own. Such a practice posits students - especially the oppressed - as incapable of thinking for themselves or taking up action. It also instils a sense of the unquestioned inevitability of the oppressive status quo. Against this model, Freire calls for a dialectical pedagogy in which all are thought capable of active contribution - so-called teachers can learn from so-called students. Here the oppressed bring their own experience and understanding to the pedagogical process, solving problems for themselves, and thereby training themselves to take an active role in changing the world.

These pedagogical ideas have been applied to theatre in the work of Augusto Boal. The first sections of Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* are dedicated to an elaboration of Brecht's criticisms of 'Aristotelian' theatre with the help of ideas from Freire. Aristotelian theatre, which is the hegemonic form of western theatre, is a form of political indoctrination, intimidation and coercion, whereby an ideological acceptance of the status quo and fear of change is instilled in a passive and oppressed audience. For Boal, as for Brecht, the oppressive ideology and passivity of theatre are highly complicitous: the manipulative ideology of the status quo means the audience is not allowed to think for itself, and the audience's passive position as spectators means it is not allowed to act for itself.

The Gbuji Tfd workshop therefore rejects oppressive pedagogy which advocates learning by rote, in which teachers who know deposit their information and ideology into the passive minds of students taken as knowing nothing on their own and making them incapable of thinking for themselves or taking up action. The workshop also rejects the system of instilling a sense of the unquestioned inevitability of the oppressive status quo. The Gbuji workshop on the other hand adopts Freire's model which calls for a dialectical pedagogy in which all are taught capable of active contribution, it states in line with Freire that the so-called teachers can learn from so-called students. In the Tfd workshop, the oppressed bring their own experience and understanding to the pedagogical process, solving problems for themselves, and thereby training themselves to take active roles in changing the world which will result in the government of the day developing beyond listening and taking actions that will result in repositioning the academic sector.

## **2.2 Tfd in Theory and Practice**

The exceptionally eclectic and complex nature of Theatre-for-Development makes it challenging, if not problematic to define. Hence, nomenclatures have been allotted to the endeavour by diverse theatre practitioners. These nomenclatures include Theatre for Integrated Development, Community Theatre, Popular Theatre, Participatory Educational Theatre, Theatre in Education, Alternative Theatre, Campaign Theatre, Resistance Theatre, Revolutionary Theatre, Protest Theatre, Liberation Theatre, Oppositional Theatre, etc. Many efforts have grappled and tussled seriously with this subject. The phenomenon is generally a popular theatre form, aimed at conscientising and sensitising the society through research, performance and dialogue for positive action. Despite the fact that the classification seems to fluctuate, the fundamental nature of all these variations remain the same, which is looking ahead to the idea of theatre whose focus and ideological position is strictly tied to the services it provides, which is social transformation, change, restructuring and above all, overhauling of the society. An informal examination of the pointers and demonstrations of the different variations, illustrations abound on this: the Kwanga project which was supported by Women in Nigeria (WIN), adopted by the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) NGO, and the Population Programme of the philanthropic MacArthur Foundation. Ngugi Wathiong'O had his marvellous experimentations with Popular Theatre in Kamiriithu; while Penina Mlana coordinated projects with the aid popular theatre in Tanzania; the Jane Plastow's case was not different too because of the adaptation of Theatre in Education project in Eritrea: in Ethiopia, Carin Asplund's Advocacy Theatre was equally in display; Ngugi WaMiri's Community Theatre equally made waves in Zimbabwe and Augusto Boal's combustion with his Forum Theatre transverse the length and breadth of Brazil, affecting the whole nation and beyond. All these point to and highlight the role of education in a nation and social change. Byam in an overall submission holds that: Theatre-for-Development is conceived as transcendence over the

less interactive styles of popular theatre. (12) Byam is of the view that the area of the increased participation of the target audience in the theatrical process is key and fundamental. As a result, she proposes that "theatre for development must aspire to give confidence to the spectators in an examination of the social environment using dialogue" (12). It is not out of place to state that Theatre-for-Development which is a form of theatre whose objective is to propagate messages or to conscientise communities about their objective and social-political situation is apt for communality.

Our pivotal concern at this material time is the background that locates TfD approach as a tool that would protect the message of conscientisation cum sensitization of the minds of the people. Boal's ideology is sufficiently captured in his book, *Theatre of the Oppressed* as was earlier highlighted, with the aim of educating the masses to mutually assess and realize their familiar predicaments and come up with urgent action plan, geared towards alleviating or lessening their wobbly circumstances and situation around us. Freire's pedagogical experience and experiments are compressed in his publication entitled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where he advocated for the conscientisation of the masses towards self-assessment; unearthing and effectiveness to enable them see their disadvantaged position and do something fast about it. The foregoing critically situates TfD within the framework of participation which necessitates that the people are not mere addressees of the prepared product but are equally involved in the process. This suitably defines the people's active participation in any empowerment scheme which is quite imperative and motivates the people within ambit of TfD to question their immediate situations and work out modalities of improving or humanizing them. This is indeed an empowerment moment and process. Community theatre in different locations has been used in mobilizing the people in search for the solution of problems in the interest of nation-building, as can be perceived in this research work.

It is no doubt that the Epic Theatre practice of German playwright/director, Bertolt Brecht was the first method which contributed greatly to TFD's formation. Brecht indeed conceived and developed his Epic Theatre practice, throughout his career especially in the golden period which lasted between 1924 and 1956. In Brecht's thinking, his focal points were basically on the political climate and social issues that dominated Germany, especially during the World War Two, and the Cold War. The goal of Epic Theatre, therefore, was to stop looking at the theatre as a mere form of entertainment and to start using theatre to incite, provoke and stimulate social change. (30) Brecht is of the opinion that theatre must depict situations the audience would find applicable, exploit realistic settings, and stage scripts that address these issues critically. Analogous goals for social development were even emulated in the work of the Brazilian educator, Freire, in developing his philosophy of education as consummated in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire asserts that 'oppressors' must cease the traditional forms of education and encourage critical thinking so that the 'oppressed' populations might develop consciousness, awareness, assemble, and 'be their own example in the struggle for their redemption' (54). In his philosophy, Freire proposes that the educational process was inherently political; he submits that education could be conducted either as 'banking education', forcing its subjects to conform, or 'problem-posing education', allowing subjects to reflect on their circumstances. (19)

As a celebrated adult educationist, Freire championed the grounds of Development Education with his wonderfully multiple purposeful Adult literacy theories to democratize and develop the mainstream of the Brazilian citizens that were wallowing in complete uneducated or unformed in the broadest sense of it. He, however, de-emphasised the conventional formal western education in favour of the localised effective participatory model that has the capacity to impact almost on the lives of his nation's poor adults' populace. Freire's psychosocial educational training system was

expected at empowering the people to assertively articulate their rights while at the same time affording both the student and educator the opportunity to explore each other's store of knowledge in the process.

Sequel to Freire's publication of his works *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), *Pedagogy in Process* (1978), the famous Brazilian theatre director, Augusto Boal pooled Brecht's socially-informed Epic Theatre with Freire's method of using 'problem-posing' discussions, which is highly democratized in nature; he rode on Freire's advocacy for functional adult education theories and practices. Flying with the adaptation of Freire's development theories and convictions to his own medium of communication, which is the theatre; he formulated various theatre techniques which he named "Rehearsal Techniques", using these techniques, he reached out to the underprivileged and disadvantaged population of his nation. Consequently, urging his very people to participate through role-playing in the reshaping of their very own lives. He encouraged his people to replay their lives by using the mechanism of the theatre; he succeeded in building the people's self-confidence and collective assurance and competence as he engages them in Freire's stylish problem-posing/ problem-solving rehearsal theatre techniques. This, of course, motivates Boal in creating his own personal theatre practice called Forum Theatre (aka Popular Theatre), which he proposes and nurtures throughout the rest of his career expanding from 1971 to 1996. Boal stirred the establishment of Theatre for the Oppressed centres throughout his career and these centres were opened and became operational in many cities like Rio De Janeiro, Paris, Los Angeles, Nairobi, Kinshasa, Cairo, Maputo, Khartoum, Johannesburg, Kampala, Tamale, Harare, Buenos Aires, Somerville, Lima, Santo Andre, Brisbane, Victoria, Sydney, Kathmandu, Kabul, Seoul, Selangor, Lahore, Portland, Calgary, Chicago, Philadelphia, Vancouver, San Jose, Dublin, Oslo, London, Milan, just to mention but a few, and worked with these centres to continue

developing the Forum Theatre techniques which would in due course constitute and metamorphose into TfD practice. In evaluating Boal's techniques, the thoughts of Brecht and Freire, disclose the mechanisms which TfD adopts in impacting the audience. In evaluating the works of Brecht, Freire, and Boal, this research has acknowledged three mechanisms which are particularly significant to the execution of collective action which TfD rides to fame. These mechanisms include audience engagement, conscientisation, social networking. It is therefore imperative to state that the motivating factor behind Freire and Boal as scholars in their experiments was the strong conviction that they could evoke a change that would possibly translate into concrete realistic development in their society using the participatory tools of communication. These scholars were indeed disturbed about the appalling and awful poverty traversed situation of the mainstream of the Brazilian populace; they, however, charted a new course in the development process of their people, using more productive interpersonal methods of development communication.

## **2.3 Conceptual Review**

### **2.3.1 Trade Union and Industrial Harmony**

The phenomenon of trade union has remained in the front burner of every government, industry and other well meaning organisation in various round-tables as ways of mediating between employers and employees, thus resulting into peaceful atmosphere in the workplace. It is no longer news that there subsists a solid global compromise that the right to freedom of association allows the workers to aggregate and form trade unions for the safety of their economic and other interests. Freedom of association, of course, allowed by the Constitution, is the enabling right and the access to the implementation of a variety of other rights of workers. Therefore, when workers unite and form trade unions they are at liberty to the recognition for the purpose of collective bargaining with



the employer with a view to improving the terms and conditions of the engagement of workers. Thus, in recognition of the workers right to liberty or freedom of association carries with it the identification of the right to collective bargaining, as one of its essential components.

Industrial action is collectively any measure taken by trade unions or other organised labour, most times when they are forced out of work due to contract termination and no agreement being reached, meant to reduce productivity in a workplace. Quite often it is used and interpreted as a euphemism for strike or mass strike, but the scope is much wider. Industrial action may take place in the context of a labour dispute or may be meant to effect political or social change. This form of communication tends to be workers only means to voice their concerns for safety and benefits, strike is usually the last option in such dispute.

Following the history of trade unionism, the workforce was made up of peasants who irrespective of their inputs to the English economy had their lands coldly taken away from them. Not just that, they were forced to work for long hours usually between 12-18 hours daily under poor conditions in the factories and mines in return for low wages. This struggle however gave birth to the earliest trade unions. But as expected, they were declared illegitimate and greatly subdued, but they were later granted recognition by the English government.

A Trade Union is an organisation of workers, acting collectively, who seek to protect and promote their mutual interests through collective bargaining with their employers. The purposes of trade union many include the following: negotiate wages and working condition terms, regulate relations between workers (its members) and the employer, take collective action to enforce the terms of collective bargaining, raise new demands on behalf of its members, and help settle both internal and external grievances of members.

It may not be wrong to affirm that trade unions in Nigeria have done well by carving a matchless spot in the country's history. Without doubt however, the trade unions in Nigeria have the largest and organised people's force who has always offered a fighting force in opposition to the government and their policies. Their struggles against the government however, are yetto yield fruitful results, because their activities have not gone well with the government who through constitutional acts, have tried to limit the scope and purpose of trade unions. The labour movement has since the beginning of democracy in 1999 to a reasonable extent, acted as the guardian of the poor by protecting their interest. In addition to the trade unions, other organisation have played and still playing same role in the communities and educational institutions, such as social student organizations. To this end therefore, the government in their bid to dominate and subdue all, they have tried to limit the range of unionism. And this effort was given Constitutional patronage in the (Section 1 of the Trade Union Act of 1973, as amended in 2005); which prescribe the aim and purpose of a union are restricted to the representation of workers in the regulation of wages and working conditions within the industry. This and several other moves by the government however, have constantly met great rejection and resistance by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) who in their mode of operations has gone ahead as a trade union to concern itself with all aspects of the lives of workers and their employment conditions. Since a trade union ought to concern itself with the political life of the country, its economy, social position of workers, etc, (education, health care, welfare), because they all affect the interest of workers and the nation at large. It is therefore significant to state that in times when the government has been unacceptably hardened, inconsiderately vicious, bias, and intimidating, pressure groups such as the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU) and the numerous students union in Nigeria have either

independently or collectively opposed the government. And with unabashed and constraining actions such as strikes, industrial actions, mass protest, deliberate disregard of government instructions and legal manoeuvres, their demands have been met. Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) are some of the labour unions that have kept the Nigerian government on her toes basically through industrial action. Industrial action on the hand is a collective measure taken by trade unions or other organised labour to press their demands on the government or other organisations that pose as employer, thereby reducing productivity in workplaces. Industrial action can also be interpreted as euphemism for strike or mass strike.

These trade unions ensure security of workers which involves continued employment of workers, prevent retrenchment, lay off or lock-outs. Restrict application of “fire” or dismissal or discharge and VRS. They obtain better economic returns, this involves wages hike at periodic intervals, bonus at higher rate, other admissible allowances, subsidized canteen and transport facilities. They secure power to influence management which involves workers’ participation in management, decision making, role of union in policy decisions affecting workers, and staff members. Secure power to influence government through influence on government to pass labour legislation which improves working conditions, safety, welfare, security and retirement benefits of workers and their dependents, seek redress of grievances as and when needed.

The subject of industrial harmony in any country cannot be over emphasised, given that employers, employees and trade unions jointly represent them and are severally responsible for

good industrial relations. Fundamentally, it is imperative for both management and trade unions to accept, at the premier echelon, the same degree of responsibility for industrial harmony and other functions within their respective organisations. Harmonious industrial relations need to be developed within the framework of competence of the establishment. For example, a major objective of management must be to develop just and effective personnel and industrial relations policies which cause the confidence of all employees, subject to the purpose for which the establishment or undertaking was established and its social obligation to the nation.

Speaking in the Retreat for Trade Union leaders in Lagos State in Epe area of Lagos, Southwest Nigeria, Former Lagos State Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode posited that “industrial harmony between the government and its workers is key to effective service delivery in the state” (np). It is therefore important to submit that successful industrial harmony exists when there is a striking balance of interests by all critical stakeholders. Industrial harmony however, flourishes when there are wonderful managers, having the right to manage and the ability to plan for the future so that the public service can continue to be successful, delivering value to the citizenry, and keeping its officers motivated. Conversely, from the standpoint of the unions, industrial harmony is securing the best possible conditions and living standards for employees. Harmonious relationship between the employer and the employees can only take place in an atmosphere devoid of multiple rancorous activities, which lay claim to right balance, wonderful sincerity, maximum good faith and great conscientiousness. It is the joint responsibilities of employers and employees to seek and to maintain a peaceful and harmonious relationship for enhanced productivity so as to sustain business growth and profitability at all times. It is therefore vital to acknowledge that organisations aims are not achieved where productivity falls and workers quests for better working conditions are unattainable. Industrial harmony can only succeed when

employees are seen as organisations' most productive assets and partners in progress, because they manage to understand the aligning nature of personal aspirations with organizational purposes. For employees to show their partnership with the employers in matters that relate to business sustenance, the employers to demonstrate commitment to the welfare of the employees at all levels.

However, where conflicts of interest arise in the course of employers/employees relationship, the workshop said resolution of such conflicts should be pursued with understanding of getting a win/win situation for both parties. Effective communication/ feedback between employers and employees is imperative as poor communication could be disastrous in business, employment, labour and social relations, however, becomes vital in the process.

Conflicts at the places of work have causative factors, as such, they must be identified and constructively managed by both parties in order to achieve their system of objectives, as organisations purposes are not achieved where productivity falls, and workers quests for better working conditions are unattainable where work organisations are unproductive. Since employees are establishments' most productive assets they must be regarded as partners, managed to understand the aligning nature of personal aspirations with organisational rationale. It is therefore important for employees to demonstrate their partnership with the employers in matters that affect business sustenance, the employers must show commitment to the welfare of the employees at all levels. However, where conflicts of interest arise in the course of employers/employees relationship, the resolution of such conflicts should be pursued with understanding of getting a win/win situation for both parties. It is however imperative to note that effective communication and feedback between employers and employees should be

practiced, as poor communication will certainly become disastrous in business, employment, labour and social relations.

The words however embrace both to public and private service industries, the blue and white-collar workers. The labour relation, employee relation or employment relations is interchangeably and can be applied everywhere. It is therefore resourceful for trade unions to ensure that policies and practices they adopt are not only fair in relation to the function and purpose for which they have been formed but they should take into consideration national interests along. Trainers role/leader, trust, training, teamwork, approach of human resource management (HRM), worker participation, working condition, change in management, gain sharing and balancing act (work and personal) are some of the factors that contribute to industrial harmony.

### **2.3.2 Performance and Interventionist Theatre**

The field of performance in the theatre has received academic bombardments from different scholars in their contributions to the development of theatre studies. Interventionist theatre however, is the process of using drama or the theatre in assisting people or organisations experiencing difficulties or challenges in managing their crisis which in turn restores order, focus and hope through a peaceful means. The theatre most often speaks what everyone knows, what they ought to know and it proffers solutions therein, thus, Leonard and Kilkelly inform that “Sometimes the plays speak what everybody knows; sometimes they speak what nobody says. Sometimes they open paths or unveil truths; sometimes they challenge the way things are done or understood” (np.) The theatre over the decades is seen as one of the oldest and the most popular forms of entertainment in the world in which actors must perform live for an audience on

a stage or in other space designated for such performance. It has not ceased from performing varieties of purposes ranging from the practitioner's perspectives in historical and societal evolutions to the entertainment of the society.

Theatrical performances however require the collaborative efforts of various creative personalities, working towards a common goal which is the production. Performance is designed to entertain, instruct, motivate, win over, and above all, teach morals. In the performance, the audience plays pivotal role by providing the performers with immediate feedback, such as laughter, tears, applause, or silence as it was eminent with the "Gbuji" Tfd workshop. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, theatrical events have included such production elements as costumes, scenery, properties, music, and choreography. The theatre regardless of size or purpose requires artistic, managerial, and technical people as parts of a permanent staff to prepare and present productions on a predetermined schedule. It is instructive to state that the theatre apparently displays itself in various dimensions such Commercial theatre, Site specific theatre, industrial theatre, Children's Theatre in Education (CTiE) and Theatre for Development (Tfd), etc. This research has adopted the framework of Theatre-for-Development (Tfd). For the purposes of this study, our academic exercise on performance shall be limited to Tfd because the term replicates its description as theatre in the service of community, thus, Asigbo submits in "Deconstructing the Practice of Community Theatre in Nigeria" that:

Community Theatre for Development, Popular Theatre or Theatre for Development and its other variants have remained a popular and preferred means of ostensibly reaching the under developed and marginalized of the earth by theatre workers and the so called development communicators....The practice of popular/community theatre has its exponents in the persons of Paolo Freire, Augusto Boal and others for the "under developed" nations of Latin America while here in Nigeria, names like Oga Steve Abah, Jenks Okwori, John Egwugwullah and some others hold sway. Institutionally, the Ahmadu Bello

University, Zaria holds the undebatable title of being the bulwark of community Theatre practice while schools like UNIABUJA, UNIJOS and UNIBADAN are following in ABU's, footsteps. However, to fully drive home our contentions on the futility of community Theatre as a development agent, an attempt will be made to deconstruct some of the seductive terms that are usually used to manipulate the emotions and conclusions of target communities. (np)

Mlama collaborates with Asigbo by asserting that the concept is known as Popular Theatre and expresses its purposes swiftly thus:

It aims to make the people not only aware of but also active participants in the development process by expressing their viewpoints and acting to better their conditions. Popular theatre is intended to empower the common man with a critical consciousness crucial to the struggle against the forces responsible for his poverty. (67).

TfD ideally is a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more dialogical process, where theatre is practiced with the people or by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and then encouraging them to voice and solve their own problems. Theatre for Development (TfD) can be seen as a live performance or live performances, in other words, it is a theatre used as a developmental tool of which the "Gbuji" Production workshop has epitomised. It however covers the following in-person activities, with people before an audience: a spoken-word during the performance, which is drama, dance, musical presentation, etc. Drama however is central in the activities of TfD. Drama always provides the people distinctive chance to bring immediacy to any situation, making what is knowledge of the past as actual discovery in the present. Drama in most cases helps the recreation of human activities, and can draw on material from the beginning of time, making immediate what is now possibly dry information and makes of it a living experience, significant to the heart and spirit as well as the mind.



Theatre for Development is a type of participatory theatre that encourages artistic power or creativity and audience members to take roles in the performance, or can be fully scripted and staged, with the audience observing. It is a performance about the people by the people, for the people, expressing their struggle to transform their social conditions and in the process changing those conditions. Quoting Ngugi in Byam, “it is about ‘communities in motion’ performing their dreams for a better future” (xv).

In every community where Theatre for Development subsists, it is always made possible by a squad of theatre practitioners who work with varieties of development and extension agencies, serving and helping them create theatre that will carry out messages. The theatre supposedly presents codes to be analysed by the participants and in that process direct them to new consciousness and a thoughtful reality. Theatre in Education basically targets educational institutions while Theatre for Development fundamentally concentrates on the community since it is a community based theatre. Although Byam is of the view that Theatre for Development, as it is known till date, “is a relatively new phrase in the framework of theatre nomenclature, coined in Botswana in 1973, to describe an approach that attempted to reconcile Freirian concepts to a development project that used theatre as a stimulus. This particular form of theatre emerged from a quagmire of theatre terms with the distinct purpose of using theatre as a vehicle, a code of raising consciousness.” (25) Consequently, Theatre for Development is distinguished by active participation of members of the community in which it is anchoring, during which they discover and recognise their problems, contemplate and ponder on how and why the problems have effect on them and, with the understanding or knowledge acquired through an engagement with theatre performance, explore probable solutions. The objective of Theatre for

Development is however to arouse community awareness, consciousness and manifestation towards social transformation and possible change.

In a more rapid observation, Byam sustains further that:

Theatre for Development can in fact contribute to education for liberation as it has the potential to be used for conscientisation. She stresses that as (a) codification, it offers the participants a means of investigating and analysing their history, past and present, while also providing a forum for discussion. In addition, it further facilitates an understanding of the obstacles towards development by encouraging reflection on possible problems. (23)

In a related development, Frank asserts in her clarification between Theatre for Development and Popular Theatre that: “Theatre for Development uses Popular Theatre traditions to convey messages. In her view, the concepts, Popular Theatre and Theatre for the People do not adequately describe the phenomenon.” (10) Correspondingly, she views Community Theatre and Participatory Theatre as inadequate tags; this is because they only handle an aspect of this type of theatre, which is characteristically participatory in nature. It is therefore imperative to share her sentiment on the use of the concept, Theatre for Development; this is because it is much more specific and entails the notion that its main apprehension is the endorsement and encouragement of development in a given community. In isolation, it symbolizes a new theatrical approach troubled with the empowerment of rural and underprivileged urban communities. In using this approach of theatre, the community should select the development issues around which the project will work in relation to the perception they have about their reality.

#### **2.3.4 Education and Progressive Society**

It has long been opined that education is the key. A black and blink response therefore to such a flat remark will permeate the questions such as “key to what, how and why?” Such questions however through a careful thought process can only be generously asked by a person who do not

know or understand the value of education, and this could perhaps be tied to the fact that he/she may have never tasted a good life before or experienced a graphical dream of how it feels to live a good life. This is enough to maintain a foreground in this discourse that education is beyond all reasonable and unreasonable doubts, a key factor to any nation's growth. This is why Haile opines that:

Education develops the intellect; and the intellect distinguishes man from other creatures. It is education that enables man to harness nature and utilize her resources for well-being and improvement of his life. The key for the betterment and complement of modern living is education. But, 'Man, cannot live by bread alone'. Man, after all, is also composed of intellect and soul. Therefore, education in general, and higher education in particular, must aim to provide, beyond the physical, food for the intellect and soul. That education which ignores man's intrinsic nature, and neglects his intellect and reasoning power cannot be considered true education. (<https://www.goodreads.com/qoutes/253169-education-develops-the-intellect-and-the-intellect-distinguishes-man-from>)

Nwigwe on the other hand explains that, "In its original conception, education was aimed at the satisfaction of three pronged needs of man, namely, his intellectual, physical and moral needs."

(130)

When you consider the aforementioned items; intellectual, physical and moral needs, then, invariably man's entire worries have been summarily encapsulated. What else can one be looking for when he/she is satisfied physically, intellectually and morally? Adopting a critical consideration, a sharp response to that question is thus, "nothing in particular". Therefore, this platonic adaptation credits the foregrounding position thus; uphold education to a high degree. Hence, a close support comes from the latter's handwriting again as motivated by Plato, thus, his allegory:

Human beings are held prisoners in a cave and they see only shadows of objects on the wall. Some of them are liberated and they see real things and lastly the sun itself. They go to the cave in order to talk to the other criminals to flight. The text says in a few words what every form of education ought to be. It is primarily for the

emancipation of man from ignorance and all forms of enslavement. This till today has remained the primary objective of every right education. (130)

Whist this fact, it is but a reality in Nigeria, however a bizarre one at that the educational sector is being combated humbly to its knees by several forces threading in battalions. Such a pitiable and malaise looking situation beholds chronic underfunding and government's unsympathetic and nonchalant attitude towards the educational sector as some of its biggest barricades. This reality bound truth is indeed a big regret when one comes to terms with the goodwill mandates of education. Dienye contends that:

Education is involved with deliberate effort on the part of the educator in developing the personality of the child and to prepare him for membership of his society. These functions are in line with the dual roles individuals play in society. (38)

In view of these functions as put forward in the fore quotation, Nwigwe collaboratively affirms that:

Philosophers of education are generally agreed that education is for the overall development of man. According to Plato, man is tame or somewhat cultivated animal, but, nevertheless, he re requires proper instruction because, of all animals, with instruction man becomes the most divine and most civilized; but if insufficiently or ill-educated, he is the most savage of all earthly creatures. (132)

Thus, Dienye and Nwigwe's prepositions are not just in equal sense true but, credible and apt in context too; however, one may ask, how does a nation achieve such a indispensable function when on daily basis stringent forces are ever active to frustrate such attempt geared towards a common good? Whereas it is given that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been fighting over decades now in commitment towards the growth of education in Nigeria, the Federal Government instead of being supportive reply in a rather frustrating manner thus, impeding the hopeful process. In the light of above, Jega affirms that:

As if deliberately trying to frustrate ASUU, the FGN in 1985 introduced Decree 16, which transferred the university Senate's power to determine, regulate, accredit and monitor academic programmes to a federal agency, the National University Commission (NUC). The decree imposed uniformity on the university system, further eroding the principle of autonomy and academic freedoms that are the hallmarks of universities in all civilized countries. ASUU campaigned vigorously against the move but, in the end, the government had its way, transforming the universities into appendages of a state bureaucracy. (Qtd. in Anikpo, 8)

In this sense, any attempt at boxing ASUU, is an attempt at boxing academic development in Nigeria. Therefore, if academic staff at all levels are being battled down just as FGN exemplified in 1985, there will definitely be an adverse effect on the society. This is why Dienne suggests that:

The abundance of educators in the society ensures that both young and old are subjected to educative influences. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that some experiences provided by society are negative to the educator's purpose. It therefore stands to reason that the difference in life is determined by what the educator and the learner are trying to do. (39)

This very submission by the latter brings this discussion to a new dimension. This dimension installs the consideration of a critical cordiality between a fine educational dimension by a people and its impact on their society and vice versa. Hence, just like once observed in this research, the Nigerian society is in a messy state today as it was since she gained freedom for her colonial masters in the historic year "1960" and this is partly because of the back-stabbing services by the people especially the government on the educational sector. How does one affirm this claim? A fast and earnest answer to this question will hence bring ASUU again in a large magnitude to a spotlight in this research.

This is aptly because the above mentioned body as we all know have since her inception in 1978 been in a struggle to uplift the educational sector of the nation for the good of all and sundry. However, it is through the people's anti-strike attacks that the body have been subjected to that one can come to terms with the fact that the government is despite the impeding consequences

the nation has suffer, yet unprepared to upgrade the system. This has not only instigated a sour relationship between the said body and FGN, but have also contributed largely on the illiteracy and low mentality rate of the people whilst heterogeneous (un-standardized) educational system.

To maintain this point, Anikpo upholds that:

The consistent frosty relationship between the FGN and ASUU is a typical illustration of the Avelian ‘structural imperative of capitalism’. For more than three decades, the FGN has consistently provoked ASUU into strikes that paralysed the Nigerian university system while they lasted. At the last count, ASUU had recorded seven major strikes, four of which lasted a minimum of three months each. It will be recalled that in 1973, barely three years after the Nigerian civil war, after several failed attempts by university teachers to get the FGN reverse the policy, arising from the Udoji report, of unifying the salaries of University staff and civil servants, declared a strike under the banner of non trade union known as Association of University Teachers (AUT).

This in effect has engineered Nwigwe’s to think again, that:

If we look at the Nigerian University system from perspective of the foregoing reflection, we notice a great deal of disparity between the ideals of education and what is on ground in Nigeria. According to the Nigerian philosophy of Education, there are essential values and ideals that must be sought after and preserved and these include: “...a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, a land of bright and good opportunities for all citizens.” (139)

The then Sardauna of Sokoto was never wrong in his reliable coloration when he submits thus;

The cardinal principle on which our university is founded is to impact knowledge and learning to men and women of all races without any distinction on the ground of race, religion or political beliefs. The principle is enshrined in the university law. Only through membership and freedom of inquire and research can a university be drawn into the full ferment of thoughts from which new knowledge comes. Only if its adherence to those freedoms can it become truly great. If our staff and students are drawn from all parts of the world, then the mixture of international minds working together in an atmosphere of academic freedom can produce a university true to its ideals and meanings. (Qtd, in Nwigwe, 140)

These submissions are in a conceptually telling to the good mandates of education. Okowa credits this point by stating that:

Education is central to human existence and development. It is through education that values are transmitted across generations. Education enables society to create and domesticate knowledge. In the kind of knowledge driven society that the global village we call the world has turned into, any society that endangers its educational system, endangers its future. (75)

Despite these critical pointers, education's growth in Nigeria that has been boycotted by several factors, some of which have been mentioned within the framework of this very unit, notwithstanding, there is another big concern that has drawn cross attention in this discourse. Such concern lies in the worry that a bulk of the nation's populace is aptly misinformed about the dimensions of ASUU in bringing stability to education in Nigeria. This therefore brings this discourse to a landing that information is power and that one who is not informed is thus, deformed.

#### **2.4 Theatre-for-Development (TfD) and Community impacts**

Theatre-for-Development workshops organised in different communities over a long period of time has helped in changing the status quo of some communal settlements. The exploration and success stories of some cases will indeed reveal details of the workshop's impact and explain how communal engagement was measured in post-workshops.

The uncomplicatedness of applying the TfD option in tackling communal problems cannot be overemphasised, as consulting the archives; materials of great value will indeed chart the way forward in this area. Onyuwei for instance, is a village in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State in the North-Central, Nigeria, and this particular experience in 1992 with the workshop which was spearheaded by TfD practitioner Hansel Eyoh was indeed wonderful. Samson submits that this village is an agrarian society that depends on its fragile agricultural produce. This dependency was particularly troubling, as the village is cut off from surrounding markets by a lack of roads and bridges. Such issues according to Eyoh were discovered during

pre-workshop research and discussed throughout rehearsals. (32) The workshop commenced strictly with a period of interviews and research before the rehearsal process; consequently, practitioners encouraged local relationships prior to the workshop. Samson submits that the "practitioners determined that corruption, lack of bridges, perishable food crops, the futility of agricultural investment, and health issues were prominent" (137). For the duration of the workshop, community members were given generous opportunity to draft the script and there was the high use of improvisation throughout the rehearsals which led to the drafting of the main script and improvisation was finally used with the audience in the final performance. At the end of the workshop session, practitioners noted that the analysis of communal issues and potential solutions continued in homesteads and following these conversations in homesteads, the community reconvened to devise solutions to the issues.

The Mazah village experience was not different from that of Onyuwei, as a community, there were no roads leading to the village and rough terrain surrounds the valley. This according to Abah makes it difficult for the women to sell their agricultural produce, as they are unable to reach the markets themselves. (61) The primary concern of the workshop was the construction of a road and lack of fertilizer, which limited the agricultural output of the community. Finally, women's health was a concern; very few doctors were willing to live in the village and operate clinics when the village was so hard to reach. The same principles were applied as such, their system of objectives were achieved. This particular workshop studied a variety of problems afflicting and troubling the community and produced numerous sketches. Abah submits that practitioners attempted to implement community script drafting and improvisation in the rehearsal process and the same practitioners felt that the level of community drafting was insufficient; too much time



was spent amongst the practitioners developing the sketch before the community members contributed input or engaged in improvisation. (65-66)

Bokalaka region of Botswana adopted the TfD workshop in solving their problems. (13) Kidd and Byram uphold that this workshop was initiated by one community leader and two émigré adult educators; LaedzaBatanani was conceived in an effort to incorporate the community in the development process and understand their perspective. (92) This kind of concern among development workers is always noticeable in their struggle to improve their community as a result, the community becomes developed. Kidd informs that one of the techniques used was community script drafting; community leaders were consulted through two workshops prior to the performance. (93) Additionally, community leaders were present during the writing process to ensure that scenarios accurately portrayed their own village life. Follow-up discussions were also included in the programme as well, to help drive the message home. This, therefore, motivates Kidd to aver that:

Following the conclusion of the performance, the actors would disperse among audience members and ask them to congregate into small groups; these groups engaged in a discussion regarding the issues presented during the performance and potential solutions. Improvisation was used among practitioners and a select few community leaders during rehearsals. However, during the actual performance, the audience was not invited to engage in improvisation; thus improvisation was only used to incite critical thought in rehearsals. (93)

Hence, community drafting, follow-up discussions, and improvisation were the most utilised techniques at that period. Attempts to nurture local relationships before the workshop were not adopted in the process. Whereas the community leaders were used in the planning process while the practitioners implemented the workshop in these villages without visiting first and establishing a relationship with participants and the workshop integrated three of the four procedures or techniques. Bengé was of the opinion that:

Community members were consulted at the beginning of the workshop to identify development issues prevalent throughout the community and from these informants; a smaller group of community members was assembled to write the script. During the script writing process, improvisation was utilized to explore various plotlines... More importantly, during the final performance, there were points where the action of the play was paused and the audience was invited to explain how they might respond in a similar situation... While audience members may not always have taken the stage, they were still given the opportunity to improvise by expressing how they would play out the situation in reality... At one point, an actor even spoke directly to one of the community leaders and forced him to join the performance. (114-116)

Finally, there was no follow-up interaction and the practitioners were of the view that involving members of the community was satisfactory to produce results. Undeniably, the TfD programme created an increase in communal concern with development issues.

TfD workshops as a professional practice have transverse or criss-crossed multiple communities and countries, leaving experiences and expectations behind for the improvement and betterment of those areas touched. It was observed by Eyoh that inside Kumba, TfD workshops were conducted in the Kake, Kurume, and Konye villages (9). It was discovered that lack of a bridge to cross the river which separates them from other villages was one of the most imperative or burning issues the villages encountered. Eyoh sustains that:

A TfD project was organized by Hansel Eyoh and Penina Mloma in December 1984 for Kumba, Cameroon; the practitioners began by speaking with individuals in each of the villages and cultivating local partnerships. It became clear that the main obstacle inhibiting the construction of a bridge was the inability of the village councils to cooperate. Workshop practitioners convinced the three councils to convene and staged a show about three brothers who destroyed themselves by fighting for the councils with community members. Therefore, local partnerships and community script drafting were utilized. Improvisation was also incorporated through the rehearsal process, although it was primarily for practitioners and community members did not participate. Finally, the performance was followed by a post-show discussion between the councils who agreed to form a committee to discuss the bridge. (9)

Whereas the community's definite goal of building a bridge had not been realized ten years later due to an unexpected drop in the price of their products which limited the village's funds, an

administrative unit had been formed along with a rural council and a secondary school built. This administrative unit and school built point toward communalism or collectivism consequential from the Tfd workshop which the establishment of organizations at the communal level.

## **2.5 Theatre-for-Development in Nigeria**

The foundation of Tfd in Nigeria can be traceable to the traditional theatre traditions of the people dating back to the pre-colonial times. Theatre has been part and parcel of African communities given those diverse theatrical forms which include story-telling, songs, music, mimes and dances which are always presented during celebrations and other communal familiarities. These theatrical performances were blended in most cases to represent what is known today academically as Total Theatre package which entertainment and enlightenments and preserve our cultural heritage. From the foregoing therefore, the theatre was like a communal, mutual institution which the people sees as an agent of socialization and social mobilization – a platform traceable for addressing the communal ills, setbacks and predicaments which jurisdiction was basic human needs of survival. The children of our fathers were taught through this system and cultural values were preserved within. Its social significance increased with time and it became an authentic medium for making political statement as was seen in the Alarinjo operatic theatre of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Western part of Nigeria.

The advancement of civilization and culture of human have society often subjected it to diverse changes which can be classified as positive and negative. Going by what we can see day as a result of knowledge, colonialism has brought major changes and adjustments in the socio-political and cultural atmosphere of Nigeria and her theatrical practices were not left behind. The Nigeria under Britain indirect rule equally confronted with new social concerns and these veracities required an upgraded theatre which Obuh observes as:

The theatre which emerged at this point addressed itself to the problem of suppression the Nigerian society was experiencing at the hands of the Europeans settlers. This sort of problem was faced by many other African countries as well. (1)

The theatre quickly became thoughtful of issues of oppression and subjugation of the people by their colonial masters. Theatre practitioners like Hubert Ogunde protested vehemently with their talents in the art against this colonial ascendancy. His play *Bread and Bullet* which was produced in 1949 criticized the gruesome killing of innocent miners who protested their poor remuneration by embarking on a strike action. Ogunde's theatre became a tool for addressing national problems and predicaments which includes the independence from our colonial masters. Ogunde's theatrical practices borrowed heavily from the rich traditional theatre heritage and culture of his time, modified and confer on a number of features to successive aeon. Traversing through the training manual on *Community Theatre for Social Mobilization*, Obuh informs that:

The main features of his of theatre included the following: it dealt with current issues which were of immediate relevance; it made use of the traditional arts; it reached out to the people by moving from place to place, and the plays were made by the group. (1)

The idea and practice of moving performances to different communities was seen as important and espoused by tertiary institutions; group of students toured rural communities with performances, educating and entertaining members of those communities on crucial matters. This mores, however traceable to the Makerere University of Uganda in East Africa, and was later adopted by the University of Ibadan, Nigeria giving birth to the popular University Travelling Theatre. This, as the name suggests, was predominantly itinerant in nature, taking performances to various communities outside the university. This mode of theatre proved effective and afterwards was adopted by government agencies as a method of information dissemination and it works like charm or magic on the people.

These government-sponsored plays were faulted in some ways. First, their impacts were not often sustained after the performances had ended owing to the fact that the people did not take part in the making of the plays. Again, the plays often discussed problems from the government's point of view and hardly embrace the people. Thirdly, it was difficult to adopt the continuation style of making plays in any given community as there was no skill left after the professional theatre artistes had gone.

The above paucities gave birth to the need to develop a new approach to community theatre whose focal points hover within the neighbourhood of developmental issues of the rural and urban disadvantaged. In Nigeria therefore, this novel approach is believed to have originated in 1975 from Michael Etherton who established Drama as a course of study at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Etherton had been affiliated to the University of Zambia and was spellbound and influenced by such works in Botswana; he was later employed at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This position is corroborated by Hagher, who asserts that TFD in Nigeria:

appears to have descended from the experiments of Augusto Boal and Paul Freire in Latin America, through the East Africa experiments in Kenya, especially in LaedzaBatanini campaigns in Botswana and the Chikwakwa travelling theatre in Zambia. (3)

Etherton, while in Zaria, applied his knowledge of the theatre and sought to develop his TFD experience. His contributions were fabulous. With the help of his expatriate colleague, Brian Crow, and the collaboration of such enthusiastic young theatre practitioners as Tunde Lakoju, Salihu Bappa and Abah, Etherton established ABU Collectives which according to Kerr:

was heavily influenced by the concept of 'rehearsal theatre' developed by Latin American drama worker and theorist, Augusto Boal. Boal emphasized 'theatre as a discourse' where, instead of polished performance presented to a popular audience by an elite cadre of artist, the theatre team actually collaborated with the audience in the creation of drama. (Qtd. in Odi, 161)

ABU Collectives like several other theatre groups in Nigerian universities that arose after it sought to create a favourable meeting point for town and gown by reaching out to enlighten and empower communities to confront their socio-political problems collectively.

## **2.6 Industrial Actions in Nigeria**

Indeed, Colonial interference and its socio-economic forces led to the formation of trade unions in Nigeria which saw the Southern Nigeria Civil Service Union (it was soon after renamed Nigeria Civil Service Union after the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914) as the first observed trade union formed in 1912. Nevertheless, Osoba submits that "trade unionism commenced effectively in Nigeria from the early 1930s, due to a number of accumulated grievances such as low wages, racial discriminations against Nigerian workers, and the attitudes of colonial administration to the welfare of Nigerian workers". In the thirties, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) was born (1931), whereas the Railway Workers Union (RWU), which later played a major role in the 1945 National strike, was also formed in 1931.

History has it that the lifespan of the Representative Council was cut short in 1938 when it was suspended as a result of the passing into law of the Trade Union Act by the colonial government. The Act which specified that as few as five persons could combine to form and register a trade union gave rise to the formation of two unions that were solely introduced by workers who emerged at the collieries in 1940. These were the Enugu Colliery Workers' Union and the Enugu Colliery Surface Improvement Union formed by underground and surface workers respectively. The two unions chased detached agenda; but in the 1942/1943 cost of Living Allowances (Cola) negotiations, the underground workers' union had a better bargain. This made many surface workers to enrol en-mass into the underground union. The first amalgamated union to surface at

the coal industry was the Colliery Workers Union (CWU), formed in April 1944 as a result of the fusion of the two earlier unions.

The phenomenon of strikes in Nigeria therefore does not need introduction as these actions are consistent in the country. In recent past, the oil marketers and importers held a strike that brought the nation's economy to a grinding halt, compelling and forcing massive queues at every petrol station transversely in the entire country; this particular action led to many fire disaster in Nigeria, as citizens were busy storing this petroleum product. Health Workers across the nation have had countless strikes on and off over the last few months as a result of unsettling grumbles and grievances with working conditions and their pay. We had one of the big strikes that occurred following the removal of Oil Subsidies by Jonathan's administration. In the same vein, it is quintessential for us not to forget in a hurry the common issue of University strikes that have submerged the nation since only God knows when, it is on record that ASUU embarked on some protracted strikes (July 1<sup>st</sup> – December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, August 14<sup>th</sup> -September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017). All these have come upon the nation because of the objective claims of the university lecturers, which include poor conditions of the classrooms in some schools, substandard pay in others. The general purpose of a strike is to take a stand when all other methods of airing grievances have failed; usually seen as the last resort in getting what you need or want from the system. It is imperative to note that strikes in Nigeria are not a contemporary phenomenon. Historically speaking, there have been numerous key industrial actions that have taken place in the past, yet two key strikes stand out, as a result of their accelerating contribution to the collapse of British Colonialism in Nigeria. The first notable one was the General strike of 1945.

The law in Nigeria permits every worker to form or join unions, with the exception of members of the armed services, the police force, fire-fighters, Central Bank employees and customs and

excise staff. The history of industrial actions in Nigeria can never be written without adequate references to the 1940s industrial actions; although the first recorded strike action in history took place during the reign of Ramses III in the twelfth century B.C. In 1942, lots of trade unions in Nigeria became federated under the "Federated trade unions of Nigeria". The purpose, of course, was for the Organization was to serve as the central control for all unions under it. The strike of 1945 transpired for two fundamental reasons. Firstly, it occurred due to the rising cost of living for workers; sequel to end of World War 2, inflation amplified and increased greatly, workers' wages remained the same. The second reason that led to the strike occurred was racial discrimination among Nigeria workers. Workers argued that their European colleagues received much different and higher wages than their African counterparts and frankly speaking, it could not be tolerated any longer, as such, the 17 labour unions encompassing about 30,000 workers across federation embarked on strike until their demands were met. For about 37 days, the government tried to no avail and completely failed to bring an end to the industrial action. Padmore informs that:

The first nationwide strike by the organized workforce in Nigeria was on 21 June 1945 by about 150 000 clerical and non-clerical workers in the Nigerian civil service, demanding better wages in response to the rising cost of living brought about by the Second World War. (4)

The impact of the strike was overwhelming and it quickly left a nationalistic indentation and impression that would later change the nation, perhaps for good. The strike itself was a direct disobedience to the colonial authority in Nigeria and an attestation that if everybody organised well enough and cohesively; they would pose a massive threat to the status quo. It is therefore imperative to note that the strike in many ways influenced the Zikist Movement that emerged and took the front burner from 1946-1950; it equally gave birth to Northern Consciousness. This



strike action engineered the formation of the Northern People's Congress in 1949, a party that would end up forming the first government as of Independence 11 years later.

The Second significant strike that occurred in Nigerian history was the Enugu Coal Miners strike of 1949. The gripes took place fundamentally because of the belief that the management was deliberately holding up their salary; this belief blew things out of all proportion by Nationalist Press. Consequently, the coal miners ordered a sit-down strike in the mines, refusing to undertake any responsibility until their demands were met in full. This singular action sent serious fear to the government of the day and had the explosives in the mines removed, for fear they would use it towards their demands. The miners became apprehensive that this action would lead to the shutting down of the mines, the miners alerted the Market Women who came with their sticks and machetes to thwart any attempt of further removal of the explosives. Tensions eventually set in giving room to the Police to fire into the Protesters, killing over 21 Miners and injuring about 51 others. The events that occurred at the Enugu Coal Miners strike led to an eruption of anger across cities in Nigeria and meant more ammunition for the Zikist Movement against the colonial Government. Riots and Looting would occur in Aba, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Onitsha.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DATA PRESENTATION

The tables below present combined data collated from members of the public and experiments. In order to realize a reliable response, a total of 1050 questionnaires were administered randomly to members of the public during the performances (audience/performers), and few dignitaries were equally interviewed. Out of the 1050 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 978 were returned and none was found invalid, while 72 cannot be accounted for because they were never brought back:

**Table 1: The distribution and return of questionnaires**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Government officials/ Politicians</b>	<b>Opinion leaders</b>	<b>ASUU member</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Questionnaire distributed</b>	210	210	210	210	210	1050
<b>Questionnaire returned</b>	181	199	201	197	200	978
<b>Questionnaire not returned</b>	29	11	9	13	10	72

From the table above, each of the categories of the experiment received 210 questionnaires out of the total of 1050 copies distributed. 181 respondents among the students returned their ticked questionnaires. Among the parents, 199 respondents returned theirs. A total of 201 government officials returned theirs, 197 opinion leaders returned theirs, while 200 ASUU members turned in their own respectively, totalling 978.

**Table 2: The questions contained in the questionnaire and the available responses:**

S/N	QUESTION	R E S P O N S E		
1	Did the performance meet your expectation?	Yes	No	Indifferent
2	Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between ASUU and FGN?	Yes	No	Indifferent
3	Can “Gbuji” address the current disaster in Nigerian Universities?	Yes	No	Indifferent
4	This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree?	Yes	No	Indifferent
5	Did the subject matter of the drama hold your attention?	Yes	No	Indifferent

**Table 3: Responses on whether the performance met your expectation**

Question	Response		
Did the performance meet your expectation?	Yes	No	Indifferent
978 returned questionnaires	908 (92.9%)	63(6.4%)	2 (0.2%)

Table 3 above presents the general response to the question: Did the performance meet your expectation? In percentage, 908 questionnaires accounting for 92.9% of the 978 returned questionnaires which indicated that the performance met their expectation. Only 63 respondents i.e. 6.4% claimed the performance never met their expectation, while 2 (0.2%) persons remained indifferent. The implication of the above data is that a larger number of respondents are of the opinion that the performance met their expectation. This sets the basis for the research which seeks to uncover possible causes of ASUU strikes and the solutions to the problem.

The data contained in the above table proves clearly that the performance met the expectation of the general public and thus, incites the next question: Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between the ASUU and the FGN? The reactions collated on this question are tabulated below.

**Table 4: Responses on: Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between the ASUU and the FGN?**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>		
Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between the ASUU and the FGN?	Yes	No	Indifferent
978 returned questionnaires	457 (46.8%)	402 (41.2%)	118 (12%)

The question, “Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between the ASUU and the FGN?” From the table above, a total number of 457 representing 46.8% of the 978 respondents held that they think politics plays a vital role in addressing industrial disharmony between ASUU and FGN, while 402 representing 41.2% held a contrary opinion. 118 representing 12 % of the respondents indicated indifference. The perceived contentious nature of the question could be seen as the reason for the different categories pointing accusing fingers on each other. This question among all the questions raised has the highest percentage indication of indifference among the respondents. The implication of this is that the university system will remain the way it is unless those responsible in tackling the needs of our educational institutions wake up to their responsibility.

**Table 5: Responses on Can “Gbuji” address the current cataclysm in Nigerian Universities?**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>		
Can “Gbuji” address the current cataclysm in Nigerian Universities?	Yes	No	Indifferent
978 returned questionnaires	812 (83%)	107 (11%)	58 (6%)

The above table addresses the respondents' support that "Gbuji" can address the current cataclysm in Nigerian Universities. Having assessed the support that "Gbuji" can address the current cataclysm in Nigerian Universities; the next assessment would be on the response to the question: This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree? That is presented in the table below:

**Table 6: Responses on This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree?**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>		
This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree?	Yes	No	Indifferent
978 returned questionnaire	803 (82.2%)	159 (16.3%)	15 (1.5%)

Amid the thunderous applause that greeted the performance at the locations, it was pertinent to find out if the play served the purpose for which it was staged by way of impacting the people's attitude toward sanitation. This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree? Fascinatingly, 803 representing 82.2% of the 978 respondents answered in the affirmative, 153 representing 16.3% of the total returned questionnaires responded in the negative while 15 which is 1.5% indicated indifference. The creditable percentage in affirmation is an indication of hope that the experiments would yield the desired results in the society. The subsequent table tackles the question: Did the subject matter of the drama hold your attention and would you recommend similar performances in your research work? This is aimed at sampling the opinions of the people about subsequent use of similar performances for advocacy.

**Table 7: Responses on did the subject matter of the drama hold your attention and will you recommend similar performances for environmental advocacy?**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>		
Did the subject matter of the drama hold your attention?	Yes	No	Indifferent
978 returned questionnaires	796 (81.5%)	141 (14.4%)	40 (4.1%)

Reacting to the above question, 796 which made up 81.5% of the respondents indicated that the subject matter of the drama held their attention and that they would recommend similar theatrical ventures in subsequent researches. 141 representing 14.4% of the respondents said no, while 40 of them i.e. 4.1% of the total returned questionnaires showed a position of indifference to the posed question. Perceivably, the success of the performance informed the preponderance of affirmative responses to the question.

### **3.1 Advocacy Visit and Selection of Volunteers**

Advocacy visit entails visiting and researching the target community which is commonly considered priceless, but this act in many ways constitutes familiarity with the community. This is however debated among Boalian practitioners; therefore, there is a famous diversity among the strength of these local relationships. The “Gbuji” workshop enabled us visiting and revisiting the same academic communities in order to establish intimate relationships with them. These regular workshops visit helped in cultivating relationships. For that reason, this study focuses on both cases including a period to cultivate local relationships, and a period where no local relationship was established prior to the workshop. Characteristically, this opportunity will encourage local relationships formation through a research period prior to the workshop where practitioners gather preliminary information about communal issues.

The following persons (staff and students) indicated interest and volunteered themselves for the purpose of this research effort. On the staff category, Dr. Edum Sunday volunteered as the assistant facilitator to coordinate the dramatic unit of the production exercise. Dr. Dike Emmanuel Nwachuku, Somieari Ikiroma-Owiye, Dr. Austin Sado (ASUU Chairman, Uniport Chapter), Prof. Nathaniel Abraham (HOD, Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt), Prof. Barisua Nwinee (Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port

Harcourt), Florence OkosimiemaKalio (Former S.A. to the Hon. Commissioner of Information and Culture, Rivers State and Former S.A. to the Managing of NDDC) Dr. Imo Edward (Associate Dean, Student Affairs, University of Port Harcourt), Richard Iloma, Felix Agbata, Tekena Mark Gasper, and Collins AzuOlogu, Godwin Bamah. These people guided the research with their knowledge of the subject, provided information and assisted in the field work.

On category of student volunteers who visited the field, sourcing for information and finally participated in the workshop. They include: Johnson Regina, Ime Mary-Jane Ekaette, OkaforObahChisom, EkehNneka grace, OkechukwuChidera Faith, Edward Patience, EmebieEvangerlyneChisom, OmegaSopuruchEmmanuella, Ogadi John Bellema, Ona-Eki Success Oke, Obi Ken Chukwuma, Pepple Joy Godwin, AbuaRoselineNgam, NwaneriIfeanyi, Okolie AnwuuJ umwobi P, Kanee Barisi, Ajudekpe, Vitalis, Nwakile Chinaza, Esukuile Jeremiah, NgobidiMakuo Cynthia, Chukwuma God's will, Victor Lazarus, Akpodubakaye Rupert, William Faith Uloma, Amachree Favour Thankyou, Obi Peace Princess, Onyemaechi Cynthia C., WosuNgozi Peace, Amaechi Jenifer, Osemene Uche, Uba Christopher, Kaine Barisi, Ronald Kingsley Udah, Willipepple Tamunoiduari, Godspower Kelvin Briggs, Mmeabe Teyete, Omowhovo Collins Amye, Osinachi Prince Amadi, Aghedo Annabel Nengi and Odoyi Harmony Ebenezer-coordinator.

### **3.2 Research on ASUU and (Uniport Management, Council and FGN Industrial Dispute**

The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method which was introduced in conjunction with the Rapid Rural Approach and Rural Impact Assessment (RIA) became very pivotal in this Tfd experiment. The RRA and RIA are considered as the most basic techniques of investigation or means of data collation. Both methods are effectual in evaluating the level of problem in the target community. The assessment in all cases produced data requirements which enabled the "Gbuji"

workshop agent and the practitioners to draw up a need assessment table as well as categorise the problems of the academic community accordingly. The problems include various disagreements between ASUU and the University Governing Council and Management, Profs Andrew Efemini and Frank Ugiomoh. PRA represents a group of approaches such as RRA, RIA and methods that will encourage the community to actively participate in raising and analyzing their knowledge of their living conditions in order to create the correct action plan.

One of the most effective TfD techniques is the research in the target community which often times encourages local partnerships. This technique naturally involves the team of practitioners/researchers arriving in the community before the commencement of the workshop. The rationale behind this visit is for researchers to monitor and take part in the community's daily activities so as to familiarise themselves with the context under which their workshop is designed to take place. The advantage is the basic interaction between members of the audience and the researchers who are in most cases the practitioners. The local research in many ways helps in establishing the awareness necessary and most important to the community in which the workshop will be hosted. Whereas this benefit hardly relates to the mechanisms through which TfD operates, it does guarantee an even functioning of the workshop. The subsequent result is the audience engagement with recognisable elements in the performance. This engagement was facilitated by the researcher's sensitivity and familiarity with the community members, their culture and traditions which follows studying the community. Paying a visit to the host community aforementioned helps researchers identify cultural elements to include in the production. Most importantly, homestays enable researchers to identify with fragmented units within the community and draft characters which in many ways look a lot like members of the community.



The TfD's efficient nature gives members of the audience the ability to relate with the characters which are of the offshoot of their community and are critical to the project's ability to increase collective action between and among audience members. Character reliability facilitates members of the audience to easily discover behaviours, attitudes and mannerisms which they might imitate in order to change their circumstances. This idea was buttressed by both Kruger and Papa when they observe that identification with characters gives audience members a sense of empowerment whenever they witness characters successfully improve their circumstances. The careful creation of characters to showcase the mannerisms of the members of the community is always supported through research and complete observation which is a by-product of collaboration with the local partners. Papa was not wrong with the submission that "salient characters make audience members more willing to critically engage with the show".(Qtd. in Vicki et. al, 23).

### **3.3 Data Collation and Analysis**

Information gathered from the community researched was presented at an open forum. They were extensively discussed in terms of how the issues came about, their effects, and how they can be handled. This process enabled the "Gbuji" workshop team to critically understand the issues, problems and strategies that was used to overcome them. During the analysis of the data collated, the community came to a compromise as to which problems are of priority. It is vital to state here that the "Gbuji" workshop succeeded basically on dialogue, this dialogue was used for assessment, and the discussions during the process of playmaking and scenario building were created.

### **3.4 Scenario Formation and Improvisation**

A scenario is an outline of the plot of a dramatic work, giving particulars to the scenes, characters, situations, etc. It is an outline of the play upon which actions and characters can be

constructed neatly. It begins with a simple sketch and it grows until it is complete, with all the major actions and character movements.

The first scenario sets forth the basic concept of the TFD. It contains the basic conflict, the play's thought, characters, genre, the length of the play, time and place, the basic story. The basic conflict- "Conflict is the struggle which grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot" (Holman, 118). It is a major literary element that creates challenges in a story by adding uncertainty if the goal will be achieved. The conflict is the problem within Uniport as it affects the University Management, members of the Governing Council and by extension the FGN against the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and by extension Profs Efemini and Ugiomoh.

The play's thought often time, is regarded as the governing intellectual substance. It is divided into theme and subject matter. The theme is the central idea of the play; it is The Psychological effect of betrayal of trust created by the government on her inability to honour agreements. The subject matter is the basic issue or topic treated in the play. The subject matters are government's neglect of the education, emotional and psychological abuse, unionism, faith in one's country and political sycophancy.

Script drafting is a major technique which practitioners may integrate community members in the research process, depending on the willingness of the community to participate. Integrating community members in the script drafting process is particularly important, as it allows them to practically give in their best in information supply. Community members especially the major characters were involved in building and developing of the blueprint which later metamorphosed into the script. Having produced the raw materials for the experiment from the analysis stage, it

was now time to search for the story that will highlight and link the issues and problems in a dramatic world, such that will provoke more discussion and challenge the people to take positive action. The researchers met and interacted with a variety of characters from the host community. The people with whom they interacted revealed themselves as they related their stories, aspirations, dreams and fantasies. Through these interactions, the experience mutually became a journey into self-discovery as well as an opportunity for knowledge and appreciation of others. At this point, all hands were on the deck to carefully allow the story to evolve from the susceptibility of the people. This type of communal reflection on developmental issues became vital to the process of conscientisation to initiate communal reflection. The scenario which is an executive plan of action became acquiescent and agreeable to change at anytime, according to the changing standpoints of the community. At this point, the team leader facilitated the process of the story creation. Personal life stories of members of the community were used to illustrate the problems identified, building an imaginary story around it as long as it was the people who are involved. The inclusion of the community in the script drafting became an essential characteristic of TfD and it was encouraged. This technique required the incorporation of community leaders and members in the brainstorming and script writing process. This drafting of scripts becomes very vital because it touches the foundational linkage with the community, this process draws on the experienced perspectives of key members of the community and it helps incorporate familiar elements in the show which will engage the audience. These participants were volunteers who were invited to participate by the practitioners and their local partners. Principally, community script-drafting facilitated the incorporation of familiar characters and cultural elements. Again, engaging community members into the drafting process encouraged them in the area of conscientisation. Gathering community leaders together to articulate developmental issues and

challenges initiated social networking which is exceptionally imperative. Consequently, this ideological standpoint contributed positively to the efficacy of the “Gbuji” workshop.

Copious TfD workshops all over the world have seen that community drafting of scripts facilitates audience engagement with the workshop and the outcome which is the production. Historically speaking, the Community Environmental Forum Theatre in Texas USA started with interrogating members of the community to share their views and problems in their community and the assorted features or players which underlie these problems.

Community involvement in the script drafting also encourages engagement by guaranteeing that familiar characters are infused in the production to all for easy recognition. In a related development, Quinlan opines further that “community script drafting is a key element which contributes to the creation of realistic and familiar characters”. (121) Additionally, the field of entertainment education discovered applicable and significant characters as a medium through which art may connect an audience. In the same vein, community script drafting results in the engagement of applicable characters which are extremely useful in TfD workshop sessions, thus, resulting in conscientisation. Speaking further on the subject, Quinlan volunteers that multiple projects using community script drafting is result oriented in many ways in TfD workshops:

Here community script drafting contributes to the identification of communal issues, it provides an understanding of ‘larger social and political forces’ causing these issues and empowers the audiences to discuss and seek for solutions. (84)

Importantly, improvisation is an imperative strategy often employed in TfD workshops. This method is often executed during the writing process or the actual performance. Conversely, improvisation characteristically persuades audience members to discover a specific actor then conclude playing out the hypothetical situation based on how they might react to similar situations in their individual lives. The key ingredients of improvisation involve the audience members interacting and interfacing critically with the material presented on stage, identifying with a

character, and exploring potential resolutions to the issues posed in the production. Playing out hypothetical situations stimulates the audiences towards collective action through audience engagement, conscientisation, and social networking. Once the audience members wear the personality of a character, they are instantaneously engaged as Papa holds that:

Essentially, improvisation enables audience members to experience parasocial relationships with characters. (55) He further argues that “this relationship is critical to changing audience perspectives; as identification with characters draws the audience into the performance and encourages them to consider how it emulates their own experiences. (55)

This relationship that exists between members of the audience and characters is essentially the key ways which the work of art might incite or provoke the audiences to take up new mannerisms, which cultural political theory according to Ahmed, provides that art is effective at inciting conscientisation. (4) As a means which engages the audience in the artistic process, improvisation makes possible reflection on communal issues among participants. Consequently, research has proven improvisation very effective at sorting out development problems and their causes. This heightened awareness is the essence of conscientisation. Improvisation supports social networking, no wonder studies of TfD workshops in Canada and other areas have proved this as effective. Scholarly observations volunteered by Quinlan indicate that playing out hypothetical situations enabled participants to work cooperatively with each other. (30) In the research, Quinlan submits that "Drawing audience members into the scene incited discussion between audience members regarding the best route to resolution; thus, improvisation initiated socializing between audience members". (32) Improvisation, therefore, affords a forum for community members to speak openly and exchange ideas, essentially for the development of the, leading to. This, of course, leads to the type of networking required for collective action for change.

Improvisation in most cases is not only applicable in TfD, however, it is always integrated into most theatrical exploits.

Consequently, improvisation takes a multitude of formats to be implemented. This research adopted the most popular method of improvisation which involves circumstances where the participants set up the general guidelines for the context of the scene, leaving the conclusion indeterminate, allowing the actors act out the scene based on their own natural inclination. Improvisation in most cases occurs during the rehearsal process. In improvisation, those on invitation to take on a character are given the opportunity to share their sensitivities, discover the underlying causes of communal problems and issues, and do experimentation with probable clarifications for these causes. Although there may be benefits in integrating improvisation at specific points in the TfD workshop, either before or after the performance, this research is principally concerned with the participants giving afforded opportunity to express their experience in improvisation and subsequent production.

The members of the university management and governing council change their ideologies and present reasons why they cannot live up to expectations, with too many discordant tones; the students, the unions and the entire society are affected by the university interplay. This goes on for a while until the union decides to down tools; the students mobilised themselves and staged a protest against the system, parents, and government officials/politicians to register their presence against the university interplay. Few lecturers engage in too many sexual adventures in different cities with their students, thereby debasing the sacredness of the ivory tower before the eyes of the public and abandoning the ethics of the professions, some even go as far writing examinations for some of the students, just to make the ends meet. The protest almost resulted in a fiasco, suddenly, the students become aware that the government delegation that is ably led by

the president is in the university to commission the university administrative (Senate) building, and they cease the opportunity and move their protest to the president immediately.

### **3.5 Rehearsal Processes**

Rehearsals have long been accepted as part of every theatre production. Usually taking place over six to eight weeks, they give the cast the opportunity to learn their lines, refine their movements and find the emotional truth of the play. The director guides the cast during rehearsals, ensuring that all the actors and technical aspects of the production (lights, sound, sets) mesh together into a unified and consistent whole.

After building the scenario, the facilitator and the coordinator went through the list of volunteers; casting was conducted for the volunteers on the 1st of May, 2018. Rehearsals commenced in full blast after the casting was done. The rehearsals commenced on 5th of May, 2018. The group rehearsals took place for forty two (42) days. Through the rehearsals, the idea and concept became clearer and solidified; composition and picturisation were completely achieved. During the rehearsals, so much was achieved; songs were learnt and integrated in the process. From day two to-day eight, the cast developed songs in line with the theme of the sketch. This same period, the songs developed were fully perfected and integrated. After the songs rehearsal, the dramatic sketches were built-up through improvisational method. This process became the crux of the matter; hence, it lasted for two weeks. The next phase saw the skeletal blockings emanating from the improvised sketches. This phase lasted for a period of nineteen days of rigorous rehearsals, of which the songs were fully integrated and well blended into the dramatic sketch, resulting into the performance on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 at the Car Park of UNIPORT Arts Theatre (CRAB).Details of the volunteers, production pictures, props, costumes, use of songs, etc, can be seen in chapters three, four and the appendix of this dissertation.

### 3.6 Performance Presentation

The above performance was presented distinctively in English language since the residents of the university community and other guests who ordinarily constitute the audience members speak and understand the language. The performance took place in an open air space at the Car Park of the UNIPORT Arts Theatre (CRAB). Some Tuesday, 30th October, 2018. Some of the audience members sat in an organised manner, while a large crowd stood randomly taking different positions, struggling to feel the performance because the first mechanism supporting collective action is audience participation and engagement which Jackson and Ler-Aladgem have always preached in their research endeavours. Accordingly, Jackson and Ler-Aladgem submit that:

One of the main characteristics of audience participation is that it changes the nature of the dramatic action and exploits the social, political and therapeutic potential of the event. This encounter between fiction and reality, art and society, drama and politics enlarges 'the performance text' to include not only the dramatic text (plot, characterization, dialogue, etc) but also all the social activities before, during, and immediately after the event.(212)

Interviews were conducted at the venue before and after the performance. Questionnaires were equally distributed and returned after the performance presentation. For instance, Prof. Nathaniel Abraham when asked what his mission was on the venue of the performance, answered:

Well, my colleague Emenike mentioned that his PhD research centres along mediating among the warring factions in the university. Being a member of ASUU I wanted to come and see him, our colleagues and his students dramatise the issue. I am yet to see the play, but I am sure that by the time we see what you put forward, I will be better equipped to know what to say but we know that ASUU, over the years, have been struggling for a better deal for universities in Nigeria, that our classrooms, our laboratories, our learning environment should be properly equipped, like universities should have, that our students should be given opportunity to learn like students in other parts of the world do. That has been the central theme of ASUU struggles all these years. It has not necessarily been mainly for the welfare of individual members of ASUU but for the betterment of the entire system, that the university should function like a university, proper funding and such things. (Interview, 30/10/2018)



The play encouraged the people to confront their problem head-on using the non-violence approach. This approach supported self-examination within members of the community and communal mobilisation, especially following the Socratic aphorism of “man know thyself, for an unexamined life is not worth living” (Qtd. in Minimah, 18). The performers’ movements, gestures, facial expressions, the use of solidarity songs, etc in-between the scenes of the play gave the spectators the satisfaction they desired and deserved and gave them the unique opportunity to relish the holistic nature of TFD. Such engaging performances and the use of intimate performance areas remain culturally sensitive by incorporating audience perspectives which Ahmed and Morrison have separately submitted that theatre has developed potentials to interest an audience, enough to provoke them towards social change.

### **3.7 Post Performance Discussion**

During the post-performance discussions, members of the university community expressed joy over the manner in which the problems ravaging the academic institution, especially University of Port Harcourt were captured in the play, considering the short period the research team were with them. Some were even marvelled that people who acted with the students blended so well. Commenting on the impact of the performance, Prof Victor Dappa, a senior member of ASUU and a professor in the department of Basic Medicine in the University of Port Harcourt asserted as follows:

Gbuji” performance was indeed revolutionary in nature, and as such it was a positive one. So I think more of this should be seen around our environment and our society at large, so that we can push for the positive change we desire. As an actor in the production, I can easily remember these few lines of mine “How many leaders have the university produced in our country?” none. But in some developing countries the universities produce leaders that are true. So “Gbuji” as a performance itself was a very interesting one and one that projects the struggles of ASUU and on the other hand, mediate between the warring parties in the university. Therefore, if the government of our nation takes a sincere look at the

academic sector, these unnecessary strike actions will be a thing of the past, hence, the country will move forward. (30/10/2018)

The implication of Dappa's submission on the performance however is that the production was a huge success and it addressed the core of the ASUU struggle. Another senior professor who was also a member of the audience, Prof Nathaniel Abraham, Head of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt commented as follows:

Whenever ASUU down strolls, there are many consequences. In the first place, they truncate the academic calendar. Somehow in the Nigerian university system, a student may know when he or she starts a programme but may not know when the programme will come to an end, because if there are strikes, some stretching for months, time is lost. Sometimes a whole session or close to a session is lost. Children in private schools or those abroad will finish in record time and those in public universities most times overstay. That is one of the effects of ASUU strike. To us as members of ASUU, whenever we go on strike, the government tries to starve us, they withdraw our salaries, there are some of us, both husband and wife like myself, are members of ASUU. So you will find a situation where there is no source of income for the family, no money coming in through the husband and the wife and the entire family suffers. It also exposes our students, when they are not profitably engaged in the school; some go about doing unwholesome things. Chances are that some of them have been involved in accidents, and in things that probably should have been avoided if they were in school. So it has so many effects on the individual members, the entire society, the students and everyone. (30/10/2018)

From his submission therefore, it is imperative to note that productions such as this, can influence the University management and Governing Council and by extension, government to acting rightly and swiftly too. Based on Professor Abraham's observation, the success of this production was highly informing and commendable. However, it was argued that some foreign universities do not depend on government for funding, yet they hardly experience internal squabble as are recently experiencing in UniPort; rather, they have become more innovative in their dealings and fund raising. This prompted Florence Okosimiema Kalio, a politician, to admit thus:

Having watched the experiment on ASUU struggle, I got more informed about the plight of the lecturers, the internal squabble in UniPort and also I think it is important that government invest more on education and funding public universities. And I also think it is important that the university community become greatly innovative. Universities should find ways to raise funds. In the play, they mentioned Harvard, Harvard do not necessarily get funds from the United State government. Harvard has become innovative and you see that they do not only get funds from the Alumni, they also have other programmes where they raise funds from the summer school, so I think the university should become innovative and look for other ways of raising funds rather than waiting for government. Also I think ASUU is selfish and they should become less selfish and also consider the plight of students. (30/10/2018)

Speaking further on the performance, when asked to comment on the realistic nature of adopting the model where the whole stakeholders congregated under one umbrella to articulate the problem of the Nigeria tertiary education, Dr (Mrs) Adedamola Olutoyin OshoOnyeaso of the department of Human Kinetics, a senior ASUU member and UNIPORT ASUU Investment Officer, commented that:

Emphatically, it was very realistic. The production told us what is going in the university society. What destroyed the world is lack of communication, that world was represented by “The Tower of Babel” and this particular communication has the power to bring us together again in order to remove rebellion from ASUU, students or whatever because if a student has a wrong impression of why the lecturers strike. There is inadequate or completely lack of communication but clips like this will familiarize and orientate the minds of the parents, the students, the lecturers and everybody perfectly. This is an advocacy and it is one of the strongest weapons you can use to get the government to improve on the educational sector. So it has my 99%, if not maybe 100% perfect to me. The students and all the stakeholders today did very well. (30/10/2018)

It is worthy of note to state that from every indication, the performance was a huge success, because it addressed the subject of the discourse, driving the message clearly to all who watched the performance with keen interest and creating the understanding of ASUU struggle to all and sundry.

The resolution of the play took place in a formal meeting where the government officials, ably led by the president himself came to commission the new administrative building of the

university. The following personalities accompanied Mr. President: the minister of education, minister of labour and productivity, NUC Secretary, Vice Chancellor and his team, students and other critical stakeholders. Here ample opportunity was given to all the parties to present their cases before Mr. President, who saw things for himself for the first time. Mr. President listens to all the parties involved and he granted all their prayers and promised immediate execution of everything.

### 3.8 Follow-Up Activities

What replaced the Post Performance Discussion and the follow-up activities was restaged performance from the “Gbuji” performance. While the performance ended, and post performance discussion commenced, the ASUU UNIPOINT Branch Chairman, Dr Austin Sado in consultation with his EXCOS asked for a repeat performance of “Gbuji” before ASUU NEC in June 2019, especially during the official commissioning of the newly built ASUU Secretariat,. The follow-up experience was undertaken by the research team to ascertain if progress was recorded in the university community and the country at large and the possible impact nationwide.



**Plate 1: The Performance of “Gbuji” before ASUU UNIPOINT NEC 2019 at the main auditorium of ASUU Secretariat.**

The repeat performance of “Gbuji” on the eve of ASUU UNIPOINT NEC in June, 2019 which held at the ASUU Secretariat, created much talking points and these talking points include; the sack of Prof Ugiomoh, the suspension of Prof Efemini, accreditation malpractice, sexual harassment, extortion and dwindling rate of publication by ASUU members. ASUU delegates spoke from the national point of view, given that the performance which served as a follow-up activity was watched by ASUU national EXCOS, members of the university management, member of the university Governing Council and delegates from all the public universities in Nigeria. Apart from mediating that the internal problem be resolved objectively and by extension, the FGN to respond to subsisting agreement it reached with the union, “Gbuji” production addressed issues of accreditation malpractice, which is always carried out by ASUU members in their struggle to keep sister universities afloat. The following lines from the “Gbuji” production sparked up the discussion on accreditation malpractice.



**Plate 2: Shows a student expressing her sentiment against the ASUU leadership.**

GLORIA

You complain about the falling standard of education, lack of manpower, inadequate funding, yet, you guys go as far as other universities, posing as lecturers during accreditation

ALL STUDENTS

That is accreditation malpractice!

This particular act UNIPORT ASUU NEC remarked has kept the government wondering, especially when the union complains of understaffing (inadequate manpower), and falling standard of education in Nigeria universities. During the follow-up activities, ASUU national leadership observed that the impersonation by lecturers or accreditation malpractice as the students tagged it in the performance, as carried out by members is highly unethical, and promised that henceforth the union shall device a means of addressing it squarely. Speaking on this issue, the former national President of ASUU, Dr NasirFaggeIsa submitted that the few times he was on the accreditation team, the universities he visited attempted to bribe, but he vehemently rejected the offer, noting that such highly unethical practices should be discouraged. Consequently, he was never invited in subsequent accreditation exercises.



**Plate 3: Shows the students displaying placards with inscriptions about ASUU industrial action.**

He further buttressed his point with one of the lines delivered from the production thus:

**Prof Harmony**

And I must add that we will have to demand high standards and give consistent, loyal support to those who merit it. We must live exemplary lives as academics and we must not fail the future generation because of greed and some inordinate ambitions. Let's also educate the students on agreements entered with government in the past that we're currently demanding for full implementation. I believe bringing them into the mainstream of the struggle will go a long way in strengthening our struggles.

Dr Austin Sado, UNIPORT branch Chairperson on the other hand informed NEC that some members of University of Port Harcourt who served on the accreditation team to a university, returned the money they attempted bribing them with. The Branch Chairman stressed that the secretariat was currently processing the return of those sums. This accreditation malpractice, according ASUU leadership gave support to the trending argument that ASUU has helped some politicians to rig the just concluded 2019 general election.

Next was the issue of sexual harassment and financial gratifications, thus the following lines introduced made ASUU National leadership very uncomfortable:

OVUNDA

Sir, have you ever thought of the welfare of your students? Your members even in most cases declare war on students.

ASUU CHAIRMAN

War? How do you mean?

CYRIL

Are you not aware that some of your members extort money from students and even demand other special effects from some of our female students before they could pass their examinations?

ASUU CHAIRMAN

(Laughing) And such persons have not been reported?

SUG PRESIDENT

Sir, who do we report them to? Do we report them to the gods?

ASUU CHAIRMAN

Of course to the University or at least to ASUU.

ALL STUDENTS

Why to ASUU as a body?

ASUU CHAIRMAN

You can report to ASUU because ASUU has an internal mechanism of disciplining erring members. (Clears his throat) ASUU has her Ethics and Grievances Committee and this committee handles such matters if they actually exist.

In reaction to the performance, ASUU President, Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi reminded ASUU members that they should desist from such unethical practices if they are involved in them, warning that they should be conscious of their ethical responsibilities as role models, local parents and mentors to our students. In his words:

I want to remind comrades seated here today that ASUU as a union, has mechanisms in place. We encourage students to come and report such cases. We attach female lecturers to such cases and victims. We have cases where we suspend our members as parts of disciplinary procedures, once a prima facie has been established against the lecturer who is involved in such abuse. The only thing is that we don't need to go to press to discuss such suspension. We should be conscious of our ethical responsibilities. We must remember that we are role models, local parents and mentors to our students.



**Plate 4: Shows ASUU National President and some members of his executives sitting in the front, keenly watching the “Gbuji” performance.**

Additionally, he cautions branch Chairpersons to ensure that ethics and disciplinary committees in their branches are effective and members should live above reproach. Their roles should always be to handle such cases as we do at the national. The first step is to ask the branches to handle and when they cannot, they refer to the national office. Still buttressing his point however, he submits that:

I can recall two or three cases that got to us, but no specifics. Those lecturers were suspended from our union; yes, they were suspended. But we don't have the powers to take it beyond that. If we investigate any lecturer, the university



authorities have the powers to take it further. Additionally, in many of the campuses, the Staff Professional Ethics and Disciplinary Committee has representatives from ASUU and other unions. We take part and we don't bend the rules. We stand our grounds because such lecturers will constitute a negative influence. Their negative image could rub off on all of us.



**Plate 5: Shows delegates standing, expressing great satisfaction on the performance, with Emeritus Prof. Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa smiling.**

Delegates in UNIPORT ASUU NEC 2019 vehemently condemn the act. First, they warned members who are ready to discontinue from such disgraceful activities, informing that if anyone is caught, such person will be named and shamed respectively, after going through the due process of investigations and at the end of the day, if the person is culpable. ASUU does not cover-up. Hence, the full sanctions will be applied and the whole world will know about it. But the lecturers must be taken through the due process. We have to emphasise the due process because anybody can allege anything. It was generally agreed that we do not want a situation where our members will become victims of reverse persecutions. The fact that we will denounce any of our members that conduct themselves in an improper manner does not mean that our members should just be stigmatised over mere allegation.



**Plate 6: Shows delegates with their eyes fixed on the performance, while a few are seen recording the performance with joy.**

There should be no sacred cows in the process and when all these are done, lecturers will protect the sanctity of the Ivory Tower. It was unanimously agreed that nowadays, some lecturers that come into the system actually do not know what it takes to be a father figure or a mother figure to students, especially when the lecturers are young. Conclusively, it was agreed that lecturers, especially the younger ones should be inducted and made to be aware of their responsibilities and the certainty of sanctions in the university.



**Plate 7: Shows a cross section of delegates watching the performance with keen interest.**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter addresses the interventionist dimension of “Gbuji” as well as the potentialities of “Gbuji” as an instrument for addressing industrial harmony and national development. Facilitated by Azunwo Eziwho Emenike and coordinated by Edum Sunday, “Gbuji”, a short experimental dramatic performance experimented through the Theatre-for-Development (TfD) approach, derives its title from the Ikwerre word for “strike” which is its thematic preoccupation. Ikwerre is one of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in Rivers State, Nigeria

#### **4.1 “Gbuji” Production and Industrial Conflict Resolution: the Storyline**

“Gbuji” is a theatrical skit composed specifically through a Theatre-for-Development (TfD) approach. Accordingly, the script, in its present form, has evolved through the workshop processes, in keeping with its experimental nature, “Gbuji” has become a one-act play, with a simple plot structure and its actions designed divisible into a beginning, middle and an end. In what follows, we shall attempt to provide a synopsis of “Gbuji”.

The performance begins with a rowdy protest by students who have just heard that there is an impending strike by ASUU as a result of their misunderstanding with the university management. This action constitutes the exposition of the plot of the play. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is having a congress somewhere in the University community with the intention of staging a total, indefinite and comprehensive strike. Meanwhile, the disgruntled students of Nigerian University who regard themselves as innocent victims of the frequent and often protracted industrial disputes between ASUU and the government decide that they have had enough. To bring about a revolutionary solution to an industrial impasse that has engulfed them against their will, the students decide to stage a protest against the union. This

emergency rally engages the students in their numbers led by the student union government (SUG) president as they sing their solidarity song marching fearlessly to face the leaders of ASUU. In no time, the students find themselves face to face with the ASUU chairman, his Executives, ASUU stakeholders and members of university management and council.

Following a very weak and unfriendly welcoming, the students, school management, university council and the ASUU representatives begin to dialogue, as the latter educate the former on ASUU principles, the council members and school management try to counter their position. This lengthy discussion puts the usually eloquent ASUU president and his two subordinates in a defensive position against the irrepressible and obstreperous crowd of students who are prepared to unleash their pent-up discontent on the ASUU officials. The students are of the opinion that ASUU is in the habit of embarking on incessant strikes and that most of these strikes are poorly motivated and only in pursuit of the selfish interest of its members. In reaction, the ASUU chairman makes a frantic effort at defending the union by educating the already disenchanted students and giving members of the university council reasons why they should always follow due process in all their dealings. This attempt makes three basic points, the first, highlights the principles which informed the establishment of ASUU as well as the union's objectives, the second informs that ASUU constantly goes on strikes because the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) constantly reneges on agreements it freely entered into with the union, especially with the current biff the Uniport chapter has with the university management and the council on the sack and suspended Professors and finally, the achievements of ASUU which are relevant to the development of university education in Nigeria and not beneficial to ASUU members alone. Despite this bold and persuasive attempt at articulating ASUU's position as a well-meaning trade union with an unwavering commitment to the improvement of tertiary education and handle the

internal crisis in the university, the already biased students still find reasons to fault ASUU members. This scenario is however resolved with the information that the President of the country is in the vicinity of the university to inaugurate a project. The ASUU chairman, his Executives and a few members of the union further discuss the distraction the government's negotiating team is causing them, including struggling to break their strike using every available means, while encouraging one another to remain resolute in their opposition to the government's antics and the negative position the council has taken against some blacklisted academics. The ASUU chairman suggests that they should visit the location where the President of the country is inaugurating a project and register their complaints. With this, the ASUU team as well as the protesting students march in one accord to the venue of the project inauguration, singing their songs of solidarity all the while.

The President and his entourage comprising the Ministers of Education, Finance, and Labour and Productivity as well as the Executive Secretary of the NUC, members of the university council and management are visibly embarrassed by the intrusion of the protesters who are manhandled, shoved aside and dispersed by heavily armed and fierce-looking policemen. With a semblance of calm thus restored, the President inquires of the Vice-chancellor what all the fuss is about and what exactly the grouse of ASUU is. The Vice-chancellor explains that the lecturers feel affronted by the recent clampdown on some of their vocal colleagues with threats of suspension and termination hanging ominously like the sword of Damocles over them. The President is surprised at the words of the Vice-chancellor and asks the members of his entourage why they have still not bribed the leadership of ASUU as he had directed. They inform the President that they had tried every possible antic in a bid to compromise the leadership of ASUU and break their ranks, but that the integrity of the unionists was impregnable. Instead, the members of the

Presidential entourage inform their principal, the unionists are demanding a direct meeting with the President. Feigning equanimity, the President directs that the ASUU delegation should be allowed in so that he can hear from them. The interactive session commences with the identification of the various delegations present, after which the ASUU chairman itemizes the union's worries. The ASUU chairman's speech is amplified by the supporting speeches of Professor Festus and Professor Andrew of ASUU. As might be expected, the representatives of parents are not impressed by ASUU's rationalizations. The parents lament that they are the ones who ultimately bear the brunt of ASUU's endless strikes. In support of the position of parents, the SUG president, speaking on behalf of the students, complains that the frequent disruptions of the academic calendar by the striking lecturers frustrate students' academic aspirations. Members of the President's entourage weigh in by inveighing against ASUU whose members they accuse of laziness, unproductive nature, corruption, selfishness and sundry unflattering infractions, rather than reason with the university management and council, they take to sudden industrial actions all the time. A shouting match ensues between the ASUU delegation, whose members feel traduced by these allegations, and the Presidential entourage, while members of the university council and management pretentiously watched. At this point, the President who has all the while maintained a patrician and dignified silence watching and listening as events unfold around him decides to intervene. He cautions each group of the stakeholders for some of their excesses and takes the opportunity to announce a hefty financial intervention towards the development of university education in the country and compels the minister of education to objectively handle the internal crises within the university, reminding him that it was because of cases like this that he was appointed, while hoping that this gesture will forestall once and for all any future occurrence of strikes in the country's universities. Satisfied with this presidential

intervention, all the stakeholders rise and break into a song of solidarity, and the plot ends with that resolution. The excerpt below captures the government's insensitivity to the development of tertiary education in the country.

MR PRESIDENT

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't want to be disgraced by that reckless group called ASUU in my administration (smiles), so what is the latest with your negotiation with them.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

His Excellency, the meeting with ASUU, those selfish rascals ended in deadlock and they walked out of the meeting. Sir, the next strategy is how to break the strike.

MR PRESIDENT

I hear some students of University of Port Harcourt have been protesting because they were shutout from registering their courses and others were recalled from the NYSC and sent back to years 2, 3 and 4 respectively, even after paying their school fees. Minister of Education, I don't know what has come over you. Can't you reason? Don't you reason? Don't you know this is Africa? Go and get the ASUU leaders compromised so that we can blackmail them to submission. (in anger) do not come back until you have successfully broken the so-called ASUU. Make sure that the strike ends immediately. (Pauses) and as for that rascally Vice Chancellor, you better call him to order by all means. It is an order.

PERMANENT SECRETARY

His Excellency, that rascally Vice Chancellor has become something else, suspending and sacking world class professors, only because they do not agree with his lures. This is why I'm still opposing their so-called autonomy. And for the ASUU leaders, it is difficult to entice them.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Permanent Secretary, please leave that for the politicians to handle. That strike must be broken by all means; it is my duty (smiles).

MR PRESIDENT

(Smiles with wicked intentions) Minister of Education that is all I want to hear. Break the so-called strike or the heavens will fall!

PERMANENT SECRETARY

(Stammering helplessly) But sir, truth be said, I think they have a point in their agitation. It is for our own good and the future of our children. I suggest we find a

way of addressing their demands rather than finding a way of breaking the strike and their union.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

(Shuns him swiftly) Sharap....!

The above dialogues show the insensitivity of the government towards the resolution of ASUU strike. It also shows that some of the government officials are aware that ASUU is pursuing a genuine case. The position of Permanent Secretary echoes this particular idea. His corporative attitude to the conflict resolution is glaring and its impact on the hardliners, the President and the Minister can be felt in the president's change of attitude below.

MR PRESIDENT

So, Permanent Secretary, your opinion is that we carry all the money in this country and give to ASUU because education according to you is very, very important abi and you forget we are fighting insurgency, corruption and the rest of them?



**Plate 8:Four (4) units of action from the production merged: government officials, ASUU, students, performers.**



The strike which the title beholds is against all odds, an expression of ASUU, and the attendant industrial actions which are recurrent issues in the Nigeria higher educational system. As far as Nigeria and the educational system are concerned, industrial action is a relative generational phenomenon, especially with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Following this establishment, “Gbuji” is as a Tfd production proffered better ways of resolving disputes, internal and external problems and industrial disharmony without strike. It assessed its effects upon relative stakeholders and a provision of interventionist strategy for curbing of ASUU strikes.

The activities that cumulated in the final production of Theatre-for-Development presentation have become a brand, a sort of mini-theatre industry that can never be dismissed by a mere wave of hand, hence, it is no longer a gainsay but an adequate truism to humbly submit that every production that is geared towards staging of any kind is the snowballing interpretation of the community of people’s thought, contemplation, their point of view and ideological stand point. The dynamics of “Gbuji” production is apt and concrete on national development and progress in the society and ASUU’s position through her numerous strike actions which has been issues for years defacing the educational sector and the society at large. Industrial actions have over the years caused much disaffection within different sectors of the society- the students against the lecturers (ASUU), ASUU against the University Management and Council, Federal Government of Nigeria and the Federal Government of Nigeria against ASUU and the students likewise. These issues have not received the attention they deserve by the government. It is therefore significant to note that the factors that have caused and still sustaining these industrial disharmony abound, numerous and as such, they have created a bridge in communication in the academia and society.

The play production of “Gbuji” was set to address this constant and eminent industrial disharmony that has grossly affected the educational, the socio-political and economic sectors of the nation. The production which deliberately dealt with the need for communal solidarity, advocacy, mobilization, conscientisation and sensitization of the masses, a quintessence of dialogue and non-violence as potent tools for settling any form of disharmony. The production was set out to identifying and tackling the causes of industrial disharmony between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the politics of industrial disharmony, the impact of ASUU strikes on the society, the interventionist dimension in the production and industrial disharmony and national development. However, it is on this note that production pass for social constructivism and restructuring of a decaying system in the development of national unity and uprightness. Typically, the “Gbuji” performance is an onward attempt to viewing ASUU, her incessant strikes, the effects on the students, society and the government’s position at resolving these generational issues. Inso doing, the production focuses on the following areas: the causes of disharmony between ASUU and University management and Council and FGN, the politics of industrial actions, the physical, mental, economic and psychological impact of ASUU to the society, the interventionist dimension in “Gbuji” production, industrial disharmony and National development. These serve as template for this analytical appraisal.

#### **4.2 Industrial Disharmony andPolitics: the Impact of “Gbuji” Production on ASUU, Port Harcourt Branch**

In calling for the removal of Prof NdowaLale, the Vice Chancellor of University of Port Harcourt, Prof Andrew Efeminiinsists that:

Criminal and deliberate violation of the University Act, abuse of the university law and installing his stooges and surrogates as members of the university governing body...Armed with his surrogates and cronies; Prof Okey Onuchukwu, Prof Antonia Okerengwu, Prof Femi Shaka and Prof Henry Alapiki, the vice chancellor proceeded to unleash terror on all dissenting voices. Prof Frank Uguimoh and myself suffered from the ruthless abuse of office by Prof Lale and his illegal internal council members.(Qtd. in [truereporter.com/wp-content](http://truereporter.com/wp-content))

This is how the University of Port Harcourt Council is constituted: Prof. Mvendaja Jibo (Pro-Chancellor and Chairman), other external members are Hajia Lubabatu Lawal, Chief Johnson Chinyelugo, Mr Joseph Fafi, Mr Bello Dukku Salihu, Mrs Mary Uwemedino (Representative of Federal Minister of Education) and Mr Chris Adokeme (Convocation Representative). From the composition of the internal membership, we have the university management then, ably led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Sunday NdowaLale, the following are elected members: Profs. Okechuku Onuchuku, Femi O. Shaka, Alice R. Nte, Florence O. Nduka and Dr Agatha O. Atagar. The ASUU executives is led by Dr Austin Sado, the warring party with the university are fundamentally Profs Frank Ugiomoh and Andrew Efemini and the students against the university management.

Fundamentally, education has been globally regarded as the bedrock of any given society, following its vast contributions in alleviating the people from their downtrodden nature and giving them adequate hope. Education has played pivotal role in changing the psyches and ideological standpoints of many; it opens doors where none seems to exist. It changes people's ideology and naturally commands them to address one who has acquired it with maximum respect, especially if such an education has influenced such life beyond the politics of his immediate surroundings. University of Port Harcourt is not different from other institutions; hence, it has been bedevilled of recent with different magnitudes of politics and intrigues that led to the sack of Prof Frank Ugiomoh and the regular suspension of Prof Andrew Efemini. This

politics has equally affected the students of the university To the extent that the House Representatives Committee on Public Petition invited the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt to appear before it in order to respond to some questions over the petition in black and white against him by a number of graduates of the institution. It is on record that over one thousand two hundred graduates' petitioned Prof. NdowaLale, Uniport's Vice-Chancellor and the university to the House of Representatives for the rebuttal of the institution to mobilize them for the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). The petition was received by the House of Representatives via Hon. Engr. Solomon Adaelu, who is a member representing Obingwa, Osioma and Ugwunagbo Federal Constituency and submitted it to the House of Representatives for deliberations. The graduates claimed the school was withholding their Degree Certificates and refusing to mobilize them for the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) because they paid their final year school fees late. Giving its significance on the society, countries around the world that have great value for education, invest billions and trillions of her currency in ensuring that the education sector gets what is needed in grooming minds that will be transported into the society and effect the right change and contribute effectively to national development

This keen interest of ASUU to revitalise education in Nigeria and normalise the crisis situation in Uniport has met resistance and different challenges producing several dramatic beats, scenes and conflicts in Nigeria, with ASUU as the protagonist fighting from one end and the Federal Government of Nigeria, University Governing Council and Management as the antagonist fighting from the other end with full armaments in their disposal. For instance, the Vice Chancellor accuses Prof Efemini thus:

Professor Efemini is a certified fraudster who has done incalculable damage to the hard-earned image of the University of Port Harcourt. His sadistic urge for cyclical chaos is not in synch with the activities of a conventional University. Professor Efemini has not hidden his intention to disrupt normal academic activities in the University since the subsisting peace does not conduce to his operational structure. It is important to state here that Professor Efemini has long ceased to teach his courses and have contact hours with students as required by extant rules. There is irrefutable evidence that Professor Efemini now dedicates the abundant time available to him to unremitting agitations and activities that promote anarchy on campus. He is no longer an active academic or a 'normal' member of the University community. It is now time for Professor Efemini to be released from the services of the University to allow him enough time to pursue his destructive programme of unremitting anarchy outside the sane precincts of the campus. Such an eccentric anarchist has no place in an academic community that prides itself on polished behaviour, refined discourse and deference to the rights of others. Efemini should no longer be allowed to pollute the campus with his wild imagination and shadowboxing pranks. (Qtd. in [truereporter.com/wp-content](http://truereporter.com/wp-content))

This of course cannot bring about academic stability and peace as far the accusation and counter accusation keep hitting the academic institution from both the aggrieved and the university management. For instance, Prof. Efemini alleges that:

Under Prof NdowaLale's watch, first year students are charged approximately one hundred and twenty eight thousand naira (N128,000) excluding non statutory charges at the various faculties and departments.... Due to Prof Lale's criminal concealment, Senate and Council have taken decisions to enforce illegal fees on unsuspecting parents and students with very damaging consequences.... The implication of the excess charges on 1st year students is that Senate was misled into forcing 2nd year and 3rd year students to repeat their classes for inability to pay their fees when the draconian Vice Chancellor has collected such fees in their first year... Prof Lale must urgently be removed as investigations into how much was collected and what he did with these illegal collections is carried out.(Qtd. in [truereporter.com/wp-content](http://truereporter.com/wp-content))

With the need to improve education in Nigeria and with ASUU as the most committed body in that regard, ASUU necessarily needs to interact effectively with the University management, Council and FGN in order to equalize their needs and demands. This necessary interaction brings about several meetings which usually result in signing some memoranda of understanding that require implementations. This is usually the underlying structure however; the basic problem

here is the FGN, University Council and Management's inability and unwillingness to keep to those understandings, the University Management position on certain issues that affect ASUU members and the Council's rigid position when it comes to the serious critics of the university. This is an irritating fact and has been the major cause of ASUU's disharmony with the university and by extension FGN, and to equalize this anger ASUU as a body always commensurate with the frustration aggression theory by striking. These attitudes have never been healthy to the supposedly peaceful atmosphere that is required for a functional university. ASUU Chairman UniPort Branch, Dr Austen Sado has complained about the attitude of the University Management concerning certain issues during an interview with Kelvin Ebiri of *Guardian* that:

It was preposterous for the Vice Chancellor to have ordered the closure of the secretariat on the basis of a claim by a parallel group that is not recognised a trade union in the country. I do not know any law in this country that allows somebody to lock another man's property. We appreciate the fact that the property is within the university campus, but the building is the sweat of our members. We hear that that there is a claim that another group is claiming part ownership of this property and on the basis of that the vice chancellor ordered that our secretariat be sealed. This group they are referring to is not known to the law. CONUA is not a registered trade union known to any law in this country. But the university administration, just as it ordered security men to take us away from our meeting, has also done this.

John Dollard, Neal E. Miller et al.'s frustration-aggression theory, states that when one is frustrated he becomes aggressive. This can be illustrated by the pictures bellow, the ASUU president and his comrades were busy explaining the rot and decay to those who care to know why the system has putrefied to this level beyond redemption. In addressing the foregoing circumstances in the university, the "Gbuji" Tfd workshop interfaced with majority of the warring factions, getting their views and rationale for the crisis that has taken greater dimensions.



**Plate 9: Shows ASUU President acted by Emmanuel Linus and two of his Executives, acted by Harmony Ebenezer and Collins addressing few those on ground of the issues that have brought the system to a standstill in “Gbuji” performance.**

#### ASUU PRESIDENT

With the poor state of education in Nigeria especially with regards to the poor amenities and facilities where classrooms, hostels, offices and administrative buildings are poorly equipped, very limited and haphazard the Nigerian government and other attached relevant bodies on education matters seem to be blinded, because with this growing reality of menacing effect, education still receives less than 10% from the annual budgetary allocation from FGN for more than a decade. But for the interest of our students, we must go back to the negotiating table rather than embark another strike. And in considering the current dilemma in our university, the council and management must be thoroughly engaged.

#### PROF. ANDREW

Engaged the management and university council this time around, why they change their stance as touching the predicament that has bedevilled us? But considering the budgetary provision to the educational sector, the Nigerian situation is not funny how federal funding for university education has nosedived from 11.2% in 1999 to an appalling 4.4% in 2004, 2000. It is on record that the budgetary allocation to university education was at 8.76% down from 11.12% in just one year. 7.0% in 2001; 6.1% in 2002, 4.75% in 2004, 10.6% in 2009, 6.4% in 2010, 6.2% in 2011, 8.43% in 2012 and 8.9% in 2013...(8)

ASUU President however reminds his colleagues while addressing everyone who cares that strike should always be the very last resort and appeals to members to be patient and continue with the use of dialogue. ASUU also tries to get the sympathy of their students and justify the

impending strike. They try an interactive session with the students to highlight causes of the strike especially with the branch. ASUU politics in this industrial disharmony shows that they recognise their students as stakeholders and therefore do not want to be portrayed in bad light before their students as the university management; council and federal government are trying to prove in their propaganda.



**Plate 10: Prof. Andrew acted by Collins, addressing the university management and council on critical issues bedevilling the university while the students, ASUU President and Prof Festus listen behind him in “Gbuji”.**

These ready expressions are establishment of a sonorous problem that only ASUU as a union seems to have noticed and are ready to mediate and bring about peace in the system. However, with their consciousness, perception and unlimited efforts in bringing to limelight this problem, it is disappointing to say that the management and council which are government’s representatives in the university only establish themselves as a tricksters, trouble makers and hoaxers since their preoccupation on this matter is basically an attitude of breaking established contracts with ASUU. This attitude of mischief brings to mind that those in politics, handling sensitive positions as regards education do not have education in mind, that is why they always find it easy in cheating the sector by dispatching just an iota of the nation’s resource to the sector. The picture below where the minister of education antagonises ASUU further explains this idea.





**Plate 11: Shows Nathaniel Gogo acting the role of a disgruntled member of the University Council, opposing the stance and views of the lecturers as he addresses the current misunderstanding in the university in “Gbuji”**

More so, they are not interested in fighting for the sector despite their portfolio and even when little comes to the sector they are ready to swallow as professional looters. While the above is a supportive point, the issue of agreement with FGN still remains the core source of ASUU’s disharmony with FGN and FGN’s inability to compel the university council which is its direct representatives in the university. It is even funny to state that these parties always accuse themselves of breaching agreements, especially ASUU. This is in fact, another controversy in this matter and has grown to the extent that even students now think that ASUU may not be guiltless in keeping to agreements as demonstrated by the picture and lines below, after all, the crises in the university are orchestrated by ASUU members given that the Vice Chancellor and those internal members of the council are ASUU members.



**Plate 12: This plate shows the students in argument.**

ASUU CHAIRMAN

...government do not keep to their own part of the bargain and the university management isn't helping matters after all.

STUDENTS

Do your members keep to agreement?

ASUU PRESIDENT

Yes! But the government has always broken hers. Sometimes telling us they never entered such agreements with us.



**Plate 13: ASUU Chairman expressing anger over the situation in the system.**



**Plate 14: ASUU Chairman cautioning a student whose intention was to stir the students into an ungodly revolution.**

The above pictures and lines express the controversy hovering around University of Port Harcourt, and drawing from them, a necessary question comes to mind thus; who is really responsible for not keeping to agreement? Could it be the FGN, university council, management or ASUU? While this question still remains a food for thought the theory of “interactionism” as conceived by George Hurbert Mead may unravel this mastery. Mead’s deduction is hinged on a perspective that derives social processes such as conflict, cooperative, identify formation etc from interaction. It is the study of how individuals shape society and how society shape individual through meanings derived from interactions. In a short line, the interactionist theory simply summarises that the actions and reactions of today and is largely dependent on yesterday’s interaction and its outcome. Based on this theory, it is given that most of ASUU’s declaration of strikes after reaching agreements with FGN is because of government’s failure to honour agreements. One should in fact wonder how one can even take up industrial actions if agreements are honoured. It is less likely to happen. Strikes can be heavily avoided if government, ASUU and other critical stakeholders in the university keep to established contracts. ASUU Chairman’s explanation of the level of the rot and decay of the university system beyond the students can even perceive to the students, parents and critical stakeholders moved one of the students into uncontrollable tears, as can be seen in the picture bellow:



**Plate 15: Students protesting and one of the students expressed grief over the level of rot and decay discovered in the university system.**

The phenomenon of industrial dispute has been inherent and may remain deep seated in the Nigerian space for a very long time. This is because the Nigerian government appears unwilling in honouring agreements it freely entered into with ASUU and ASUU on the other hand, has remain unbendable and resolute concerning her position with the FGN as touching saving the Nigerian public universities. The University Management and Council have always done things to satisfy their desire, and ASUU problems to an extent do not border them. The foregoing can be summarised in the words of Prof Nathaniel Abraham, a committed ASUU member who out of his busy schedules did not meet up with the whole processes that cumulated into the performance on that day, but became a member of the audience, and made valuable contributions during the preproduction and was interview. Hear his comments:

**Prof. Nathaniel Abraham:**...but we know that ASUU over the years have been struggling for a better deal for universities in Nigeria, that our classrooms, our laboratories, our learning environment should be properly equipped, like universities should have, that our students should be given opportunity to learn like students in other parts of the world do. That has been the central theme of ASUU struggles all these years. It has not necessarily been mainly for the welfare of individual members of ASUU but for the betterment of the entire system, that the university should function like a university, proper funding and such things. We have equally begged our colleagues on the other divide to always deal with members with objectivity instead fighting them as if they are enemies. (See appendix 2)

Chad observes that in capitalist economy wage and profit mismanagement have always caused industrial disputes. (1) This is further expressed in “Major causes of Industrial Dispute” authored by Kamal who observed that:

The development of capitalistic industry which means the control of the tools of production by a small entrepreneur class has brought to the fore the acute problem of friction between management and labour throughout the world. (qtd in Chad,1)

In the matrix of “Gbuji”, the force of the acute problem of friction is between the federal government and the members of ASUU. It is perturbing to note that the educational sector in Nigeria, especially the university suffers so much on the issue of funding and lack of infrastructural provision from the federal government. Nevertheless, education is the transformation tool in any given society and it should be held in high esteem. (Akinwale, 1) Correspondingly, Akinwale pictures another major issue and complain of ASUU that has led to its past and probably future industrial actions such as strike when he explains that:

It is unfortunate that the government that is vested with the responsibility of ensuring sustainable development in all ramifications through education, claimed to have skipped some allowances of teachers in higher institutions of learning during the preparation of its fiscal budget for 2013. A contract or agreement that is duly signed by parties is deemed to be binding on parties involved, but Nigerian government that should uphold this has failed to implement such agreement which it entered into with ASUU in 2009, which in turn leads to a breach and violation of contract. (Qtd. in Okowa, 1)

### **4.3 ASUU Strike, Dialogue and Community Action**

Given the dynamics of politics in every country, it is largely perceived a game of interest where standing individuals or individuals in groups meander through all means in order to achieve different results and their system objectives. In an ideal and the professional setting, politics ought to be a game where individuals battle their way into crucial and minor government positions, competing to be distinguished by their performance. This competition for high

performance promotes national development in some countries and destroys others in other nations. While this superlative concept exists in large amplitude in the western world, in Africa, especially Nigeria politics is largely associated with the struggle for strategic positions in order to manipulate and steal public funds thereby occasioning national squalor. This unhealthy national practice on worse scenarios is taken to different environment contrary to normalcy. What is the relevance of politics in funding universities properly? What is the relevance of politics in settling agreements fully signed with ASUU as a union? What is the relevance of politics in the university management and council having deep disagreements with branch ASUU? It is in fact a great astonishment to observe that politics stands as an adversary to the growth of a positive and lucrative enterprise that is capable of national development. The display of ill politics in Nigeria is a plaguing national madness that has crippled many sectors in Nigeria. According to the “Gbuji” production in connotative sense, politics or better still, dirty politics is an apparent issue and an irresponsible factor for industrial disharmony.

#### MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Majority of them are grossly incompetent. Do you know that in some developing countries, the university provides the needs and leadership, as such, they attract grants, own patents and develop their counties. Here what do we have? Is it not men and women who daily agitate for their belly and nothing more? (Smiles) do you know that even those political appointees who do well in government are like expatriates, imported from overseas. How many of them here can boast of providing good leadership in this country?

#### ASUU MEMBERS

We cannot sit here and allow this error insult us!

#### GOVT. OFFICIAL

Do you know that the university of overstaffed, yet, these men keep telling us that they're understaffed, every month, their wage bills keep increasing. In fact, some of them now do business in their offices and drink heavily during office hours. (In anger) The most annoying part is that most of them fail their promotion exercise because they're not productive, they hardly write. They're always static.

#### ASUU PRESIDENT

Who brings those stringent measures during promotion?



### MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Your colleagues of course... Are they no longer members of the central A&PC? You speak of stringent measures, yet, the serious ones are busy getting promotion simply because they're writing and publishing. Have you ever put yourselves on the shoes of your colleagues who are not non-academics? You've constantly demanded for increase allowances, etc without been productive. The students have always complained of been victimized by your colleagues, yet, you're busy chasing shadows!

This argument raised by the government official is a clear antagonism against ASUU and it is highly political as it is based on diplomacy and politics of sullenness. But beyond the "Gbuji" claim the following are social realities that express and support the fore point on politics. The practice of allocating the least or one of the least percentages annually during federal budgetary allocation to education can be considered extremely political. This is even a shocking reality being that education is a core sector that requires adequate funding to thrive and supply its "positiveness" to the society but in the case of Nigeria it is rather pushed to the background while other countries flourish in this area. And when crisis set in as a result of much political machination, the politicians quickly set up negation team, which can be considered as a political outfit designed to settling political stooges. Since politicians see crisis as avenues for money making, they keep creating crisis by not implementing agreement mutually entered into with unions. The act of denying agreements made with ASUU by FGN and the council's ardent like for different crises is the university community is highly political. How else can one describe such a situation if not to say that a game of interest is working antagonistically from underground? The act of illegally diverting university funds by government officials in the name of projects without instituting the budget monitoring committee is political. Some greedy and deviant personnel in government usually use their positions in engaging in such unethical practices. When the chronicle of strikes and unrest in Nigerian universities is set out, even the

most unpatriotic rebel shudders. The cost of the unending instability in our universities is better left to the imagination and no one should continue to fan the flames of industrial disharmony in the university. The political wing of strikes have led to the prolongation of the period of study of the average Nigerian' student, low morale among staff and students, increase in the cost of education, loss of focus by academics, brain drain, plummeting standards and mass despair.

The height of politics can be located in every administration in the country. For instance, after the euphoria of his electoral victory and massive local and international goodwill, President Obasanjo ignored ASUU and denied that an agreement existed between ASUU and the previous regime of AbdulsalamiAbubakar. He argued that there was no evidence of the said agreement in the records of the Provisional Ruling Council. ASUU on its part vehemently argued that the government negotiating team led by the Minister of Education, Mr. Samuel Olaiya Oni, was a legal entity duly constituted to negotiate with it. It rebuked government for disowning the agreement since government is a legal continuity. Shortly, President Obasanjo's government, through the Special Adviser on Economic Matters, Chief Philip Asiodu, in the face of public outrage, shamefacedly acknowledged the agreement. But he stated that government was having a problem with it because it was rushed. After weeks of posturing and showmanship by Chief Asiodu, government negotiated and signed another agreement with ASUU on 26, October 1999, after over six weeks of strike. The essential points of the agreement were indistinguishable from the so called "rushed agreement" of May 25, 1999.

The politics of the industrial disharmony later resurfaced in April 2, 2001, when ASUU declared a strike after failing to get government to sign an agreement negotiated with it and concluded in December 18, 2000. Several attempts were made to avert the crisis by ASUU. Subsequently, the failure to gain a hearing from government, ASUU declared a trade dispute with government and



proceeded on strike about four weeks later. Government's reaction to the declaration of a trade dispute and a strike was the position of Chief Asiodu during the 1999 crisis. Dr Babalola Borishade, the new Minister of Education, dismissed ASUU's agreement with the government as a "resolution". He argued that the agreement was impractical, and implementable. He dismissed the negotiating team set up by his predecessor as unsuitable, lopsided and pro-universities. The politics of the industrial disharmony was further pushed as the weeks that followed April 2, the minister engages in a propaganda, which ASUU saw as misinformation and brazen display of arrogance and bad faith. The performance of "Gbuji" through the voice of ASUU Chairman explained why strikes may remain with us for a long time to come. Even when these significant factors are made obvious to the audience in the presence of the government officials ably led by the nation's president, it can be believed that they are merely incidental upon more fundamental issues of conflicts of perception, values, ideology and general anti-intellectual disposition of the Nigerian Society, a scorn for the teaching profession among other reasons and these are functions of politicising the educational sector. The following lines carefully explain the above:

ASUU CHAIRMAN

(Smiling) It was intentional that I give you the brief history of the union, but since you're not interested in the history, I want to proceed to give you the reasons why ASUU have in time past gone on strike, currently on strike and may equally strike in the future. (Mix reaction from those in the meeting).

CYRIL

Okay na, can you hear him...he is even contemplating of a future strike when the present is not yet tackled?

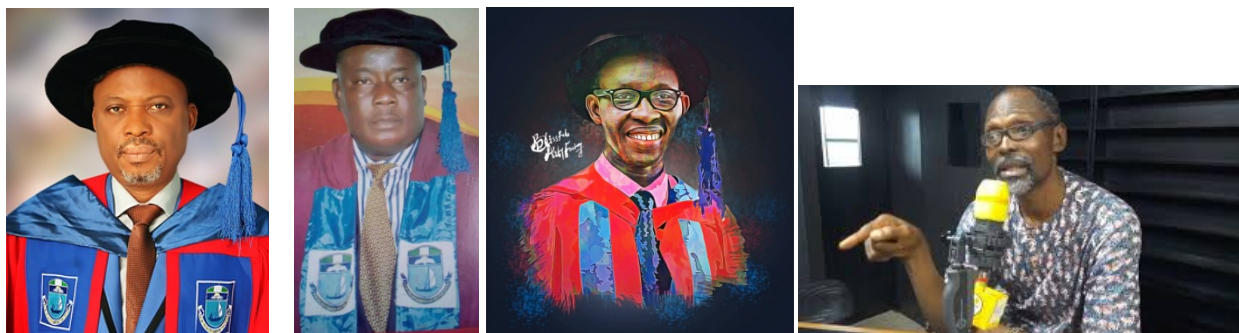
ASUU CHAIRMAN

Future strikes may be inevitable because the kind of government we have does not encourage scholarship and does not keep to the agreement.



**Plate 16: ASUU Chairman acted by Emmanuel Linus addressing a section of the protesters.**

These social realistic points established which is supported by the “Gbuji” production is indeed a counter-productive practice that has hindered ASUU’s struggle beyond proper funding of the academia and peaceful coexistence in the university. It is very normal and as a matter of fact a general phenomenon for people to politicize or politic during industrial action. During industrial action such as ASUU strike that has caused this industrial disharmony, members of the government, management, council and some members of the Union of ASUU stand as beneficiaries.



**Plate 17: Shows from left to right: Profs Sunday Ndowa Lale (VC Uniport, Andrew Efemini, Frank Ugiomoh & Dr Austin Sado, ASUU Chairman, Uniport Branch)**

Nevertheless, the agitation and not meeting of demands will always suffice. The idea of politics in industrial disharmony is seen from many angles, especially that of the students seeing their lecturers (Members of ASUU) trying to carry out industrial action becomes political and

personal interest and not for the interest and welfare of the students neither is it for the development of the educational system. The students highlighted instances of corruption perpetrated by ASUU members yet the union pretend to be unaware of these crimes in the university. However, the students in their state of grievance; during their discussion practically expose some sensitive issues which members of the union do not discuss. The character SUG President puts forward as follows:

SUG President: (cuts in) it was part of the news items in that period? (Pauses) as if that's not enough, just recently, your aunty was appointed commissioner for Happiness and couples fulfilment by one Governor in the east, after assisting the Vice Chancellor of a certain university to ruin it. It runs in your blood. Look at your face!

It is felt that when those who ought to build bridges destroy the university, they activate all the arsenals in their disposal in order to stay relevant either within the university community or in the wider society.

#### **4.4 The Impact of ASUU on the Society**

In any case all forms or kinds of industrial actions on an impulsive ground affect the society in many ways. When NUPENG goes on strike, fuel becomes scarce and everybody is affected either directly or indirectly, when doctors go on strike mortality rate increases as public hospitals shut their doors against patients even those under emergency and same applies to ASUU strike. Whenever ASUU goes on strike it is an error to assume that people are not affected, but the question would be "How does it affect the people?" "Is it positive or negative?" "Or does it say both?" "And if yes, who enjoys during strike and who suffers?" The *Gbuji* production in correlation with the trending social realities as it concerns this matter will provide answers to these questions. The impact of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the society is always massive, especially when such impact is measured during their industrial action. The

impact could be classified negative and positive due to those affected simultaneously by the activities of the union in Nigeria. Although the impact of ASUU in the society is enormous, we shall consider a few as were projected by the play production. The frequent and unmanageable industrial action (strike) often executed by ASUU is not at most the best approach for the government to meet their demand because the final point of the action definitely fall on the lower class in the society, especially the underprivileged Nigeria students. The poor are greatly affected with the actions of ASUU giving that during their strikes, the government officials and the rich Nigerians always have their children flown overseas in search of education which is fast dying in Nigeria by the actions and inactions of the these politicians. The students having known the mysterious impact of the strikes on them staged a protest against the lecturers and Nigerian government trying to prevail on both parties to settle their difference so that they can remain in university. The pictures below best explain this situation.



**Plate 18 shows students in a protest mood.**

It is now that Education has found itself within the power tussle between the federal government and ASUU as a union, an idea which unimaginable, yet the reality is before everyone. This particular disposition as was captured in the production has made the students to stay longer than the required number of years needed to spend in the system; this increases the cost of education

for the both parent and individual student, in a highly competitive and relatively low return on investments on education society. The picture of the protesting students is the best example to explain this.



**Plate 19 shows protesting students.**

To begin, any response to the question of how ASUU strike affects the people is to summarily say that the impact is generally not fair to the largest amp of the society even though it is always intended for good as it presents a warm result at the end of the day. During ASUU strike it is interesting to say that members of ASUU are intemperately affected, in that as academic staff which of course means civil servants their salaries are withheld by government for not being active at work. Whenever they go on strike and as a result, they find it very tasking to manage in an environment of financial dryness. Most academic staff are running their families as fathers and mothers and even the singles with lesser responsibilities are yet curtailed with the reality of surviving without salaries. During long industrial action, some of them in their bid to survive are forced to engage in certain private jobs which ordinarily they would not have dared to. This reality is to say that ASUU is consciously aware of the natural effect of the strike upon them but chooses to still hold on to their action because of the bigger picture and the future of Nigeria educational sector.

Apart from ASUU, university students appear to suffer more on account of ASUU strike. As a result of this action, many students have been forced to drop out of school due to a protracted academic journey. Sometimes sponsors die or suffer huge financial distress and so affected students are forced to dropout, while on many occasions others having been distracted from school divert their attentions to other activities which are most times ill-natured; stealing, clubbing, partying and crime related businesses. These deviant engagement lands some unlucky students in trouble with law enforcement agencies. To support this argument, the *Gbuji* experimental display has the following to prove;

#### SUGPRESIDENT

Good day ladies and gentlemen. We the Nigerian students are here to say No to the unnecessary strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities, we are tired of staying at home, we are tired of paying unnecessary rents, and we are tired of being victims to late graduation due to strike...abi no sooooooooooo?

ALL STUDENTS

Na so!

This short excerpt is to express students view on the matter and as it affects them. Additionally to the already mentioned, is to aptly say that long strikes affect students' psychology and it can be dangerous too. Having stayed away from school for so long, the mind becomes engaged with negative influences. From the above, it is of clear standing that the students are steady victims of ASUU strikes with a massive impact upon them.

The impact of the strike action sometimes regiment some of the students to the street as some use it as a period of making money by all means, the girls unfortunately get pregnant, some fall victim in the hands of "ritualists", while the boys who are unfortunate to get menial job falls into the temptation of bribery, kidnapping, militancy and cultism which often times lead to their death. In addressing this particular situation, one of the critical stakeholders asked ASUU President a critical question thus:



## STAKEHOLDER (2)

ASUU President, have you ever asked how the parents and the society survive during your so-called strike?



**Plate 20 shows a stakeholder expressing her thought.**

But the response of the ASUU President was not friendly but extremely unfortunate as he pours the anger eating him up as a result of government's irresponsibility on the innocent young lady for asking a polite question thus:

## ASUU CHAIRMAN

It's your business to manage your children during industrial actions, after all, majority of us are parents and equally have children in the public universities. If you don't control your children, they'll cause the society serious pains during strike. Don't allow your children and wards go into prostitution, armed robbery, etc.

Going by the whole unplanned situation, sometimes these students find it difficult to fall back on track after a long protracted strike action. This issue of the student receiving the major blow during ASUU industrial action is visibly stated in the lines of one of Nancy, a character in the play. She explains that:

## NANCY

I'm aware that they still pay your salaries while you guys go on strike (in anger) have you ever asked how the students survive during the strike.

It may not be out of place to state that ASUU strike indeed has some negative effects when it comes to the lives of the students. How these strike actions affect these poor students while the children of the well-to-do and corrupt politicians gallivant and luxuriate overseas is very disheartening. The poor feels the bane grossly because of their places in the stair of society. The play proclaims the need to foster an encouraging spirit towards our educational sector by sending our children to our own university instead of sending them abroad. The incessant strike actions by ASUU have affected the school system and the students at large, posing great challenges to their study duration, performances in examination and final grading. The students are sent out from school for a longertime and this in turn cuts them off from academic exercises, the parents and caregivers get frustrated and agitate, while they anticipate a longer time for school resumption. However, the extent towchich these ASUU actions affect students and society still need to be given critical attention.

Apartfrom the students' angle, another area to look upon is the society. Away from the university environ, the society also feel the impact of ASUU and her industrial action. Most times parents complain that ASUU strikes affect their financial plans for their wards education; more so, during their industrial actions their wards are lured into unhealthy practices which in turn bringharmful effects on them. Beyond the complaintsof parents, traders, business-persons and motorists who base around the university environment frown at ASUU strike with a clear view that it hinders their businesses and its profit flow. Naturally, industrial action forces students out of campuses and those who do businesses around university environs stand to lose the presence of their most numbered patrons.

It is therefore imperative to state that ASUU is a revolutionary body with a radical approach but with a common interest of improving the Ivory Tower in Nigeria. Hence, for ASUU to realize its



objectives and considering the nature of the situation, to some, it will be apt for industrial action to remain as the last resort, but this study proposes and still maintains dialogue as the resort notwithstanding any other opinions.

### **Social Impacts of ASUU**

ASUU is an organised trade union of intellectuals seeking not only the socio-political and economic welfare of her members, but are equally keen at promoting the cause of university education in the country as well as the entire good of Nigeria and Nigerians therein. Since her birth in 1978, ASUU has never ceased from struggling in order to reform the educational sector in Nigeria which is in dire need of restoration.

ASUU's main points of struggle have been for adequate funding, improved salary package, autonomy and academic freedom in order to curb brain drain and ensure the survival of the university system. ([unizik.edu.ng/unions/academic-staff-union-of-universities-asuu-nnamdi-azikiwe-university/](http://unizik.edu.ng/unions/academic-staff-union-of-universities-asuu-nnamdi-azikiwe-university/)).

From the above, her unifying goal is to ensure a standard academic atmosphere for the people. To do this, universities in Nigeria ought to be adequately funded by the Federal Government in order to meet up there pressing demands. The latter contends that;

Federal Government funding of federal universities has not matched the growth of these institutions and there is a clear imperative for the government to increase such funding to at least match the minimum of 26 per cent of the federal budgets as recommended by UNESCO. (88).

This need as captured from above is sadly one milestone Nigeria as a nation has battled to accomplish. Consistent failings have however been occasioned by government's frustrating attitude towards the growth of the academic sector. Notwithstanding this stamped barrier, ASUU has remained relevant and its impact manifests itself in the form of the union's uncompromising struggle against the government's neglect of education in general and tertiary education in particular.

The truth remains that ASUU's struggles over the years have yielded some useful dividends. As a matter of fact, each and every of her strike actions is nothing but a clarion call to the FGN to fulfil her obligations of adequately funding university institutions, overhauling crippling and already dilapidated university facilities as well as ensuring proper salary structure for university staff. It is, however, surprising that despite the long-term benefits which have accrued to tertiary education in the country from ASUU's principled industrial actions, other critical stakeholders in the sector, such as students, parents and guardians, who are the ultimate beneficiaries, persist in their hostility towards the union. This could however be as a result of the direct effect of the ASUU strikes upon the students, parents, traders and businesspeople around university community and other affected stakeholders.

Their cries are to an extent understandable because, strikes can, in the short run, be injurious to their educational or commercial interests. For a student, his academic calendar is disrupted hence, his graduation is delayed, Replace this comma with a semicolon for a parent, more expenses would be incurred for the upkeep of children who would be required to spend longer time on their studies than the statutory duration of such programmes; while, for the businesspeople such unplanned breaks are likely to send their potential customers packing and, thus, shrink their income. Whilst these grumblings, the gun shots of strikes fired up by ASUU is yielding fatly as FGN appears to only pay sensible attention when there is an industrial action. This scenario works in the model of cause and effect; action leads to strikes and strikes lead to positive results. In contrast, silence leads to nothing and nothing is to no end. Therefore, whether people grumble during strikes or not, strike actions occasion results at the end of the day which is in effect transporting to the good of the entire populace and to the development of the nation.

#### 4.5 The Interventionist Dimension in ‘Gbuji’ Production

The intervention dimension in the TfD production first and foremost was a reawakening and enlightening of the students and parents to cope with industrial actions such as strike and make them to develop possible ways of escape. The intervention dimension is traceable to the theatre of the oppressed as championed by Augusto Boal ably inspired by the works of Paulo Freire in which Gopal expresses that:

Theatre of the oppressed is a form of theatre which deals with specific problems (sexual harassment, domestic violence or physical punishment at schools). It is inspired by local issues and proposes an approach where the people who face these local issues are the ones who try to find ways to resolve them. (10)

The interventionist dimension of the “Gbuji” production has gone beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> century approach of drama which Nwabueze in his *Studies in Dramatic Literature* submits that:

The twentieth century is a complex period. The complexity is manifested in the avalanche of plays and concepts that constitutes what we generally describe as modern drama. The dramatic literature of the period can be divided into – drama of realism, and drama of protest, disillusionment and the search for alternatives. (55)

The alternative dimension explains purely why “Gbuji” is a collaboration of both the realistic and the drama of protest, disillusionment and the search for alternatives. This clearly shows how perfectly the performance anchors through by creatively using a medium that justifies the intention of this research. In examining the interventionist dimension of “Gbuji”, Nwabueze further posits that:

In the drama of realism, the modern dramatist concerns itself with details of contemporary life, and attempts to give spectacular insights into real problems of real people. (56)

This clearly explains why the performance sinks deep into all participated and those who saw the production because the play is witnessed in everyday environment as the issue of strike is prevalent in everyday life in our country Nigeria.

The performance through the interpretation of the characters graphically discussed issues affecting ASUU as a union, the general staff of the University, students and the nation at large were used to portray the actions and happenings within the sectors and proffer possible solutions to the green problems and issues raised. From the position of majority of the spectators who responded to the questionnaire and granted the production crew interviews at the end of the performance suggested ways to improve the academic sector and bring to notice the attention of the government the real rot within the framework. The whole parties unanimously affirmed the following “No to poor funding in the system, no to indefinite and unnecessary strike and no to lack of communication between the lecturers to the students”. It is imperative to state that the responses above were gathered from conscious minds that watched the performance and gave indispensable information and suggestions on how to harmonize this disunity and disparities between the students, lecturers (members of ASUU) and the federal government.

The respondents (students / lecturers) attributed the incessant strike action to lack of quality leadership in the country and school management system even ASUU as a union. They see the breach of agreement between FGN and ASUU as lack of interest in the educational sector from the government; they therefore agitated for an improved funding of the educational sector which was made visible in the performance. They also bring to the fore the need for government’s representatives to alive to their responsibilities in the universities, remind the government to pay Earned Academic Allowances (EAA) owed the university workers and provide the needed infrastructure for teaching and learning. The performance appealed to the government to renovate

dilapidating infrastructure within the universities where necessary, equip the laboratories and other practical workshops. The government was equally called upon to provide good hostel accommodations for the students, modern classrooms and teaching aids to facilitate learning, when these are done, students will face their study and may not be distracted by vices. This shows that ASUU's agitations sometimes are prone to the fact that the federal government do not deem it fit to relate with them in sensitive issues bothering the union and educational sector at large. They however argue that ASUU is fully aware that the government works so hard in meeting the needs of other sectors; it is not enough for ASUU to embark on industrial actions (strike). Conversely, strike is not the answer and the ultimate measure to take, but then the government and her preventatives (Council and Management) should adopt workable political will in tackling the issues bedevilling the educational sector squarely, without which, the problems bedevilling University of Port Harcourt will continue to trend without remedy. University communities on the other hand should be more innovative in fund raising instead of solely relying on the government on one hand, and on the other hand, the Pro-Chancellor and his team should treat everyone as equal irrespective of the staff's line of thought. The performance also placed importance on dialogue, as it was evident and forms the major theme of the production. Dialogue is the only key to salvage the animosity that exists in the university. Violence breeds more violence, peace and dialogue should be the watch-ward. The indication is observed in the interaction between Andrew and the ASUU Chairman in "Gbuji" respectively in their discussion about the students.

...I share their despair, frustration and hopelessness that young Nigerian students could ever embrace the concept of nonviolence as the effective and powerful instrument of social reform if we don't discuss with them as a union (Andrew).

In the same vein, the ASUU Chairman buttresses this point thus;

Violence must not come from any of us, first, we became victimized with violent intents, we will have walked in or struggle in vain, and our years of intellectual struggle of glorious dignity will be transformed into an eve of gloomy catastrophe (13).

The essence of dialogue in conflict resolution cannot be over emphasized. It is paramount and therefore the nitty-gritty of the production and the way forward to a better and peaceful administration. Therefore dialogue still remains potent, the respondents also suggests that ASUU as a body should generate means and approach to meeting with the university Council, management and government thus;

Performances such as “Gbuji” can pass as a means of communicating to the federal government since it is an advocacy programme using the Interventionist approach to speak to the government; because, once this performance is covered and sent on all social media platforms, it will definitely get to the government. And again, the play production suggests ways to government in meeting up with the demands of ASUU (respondent).

The interventionist dimension in “Gbuji” interleaves as earlier said, insert a coma here arose from the concept of “pedagogy of the oppressed” by Paulo Freire, which later metamorphosed into “theatre of the oppressed” for Augusto Boal. The final performance of the TFD was done in the open area for every member of the school community to watch, outside the population of the study, where the people participated in the actions and also sought for possible ways of resolving the lingering issues in University of Port Harcourt and by extension, the Ivory Tower.

#### **4.6 Industrial Disharmony and National Development**

To begin any discussion in this column is to begin by conceptualising the word disharmony. Disharmony relatively means lack of harmony between two or among more bodies; definably the term expresses the absence of harmony or concordance (in harmony). Disharmony is a word born out of the root word harmony which according to the study of music expresses a pleasing combination of elements or arrangements of sounds. Now, in relation to the thrust of this

research, industrial disharmony here implies lack of peace and stability in a particular industry. From the “Gbuji” performance perspective, the incessant strike action carried out by ASUU as a body appears as a misnomer of the greatest proportion in the space. Many people seem to be uninformed and ignorant about the dimensions of ASUU struggle in stabilising the universities and this is a special problem on its own. This saggy view by the bulk of Nigerians has misled many people into thinking that the industrial actions are strictly degenerating practice, whereas they fail to look out for the outcome of strike actions by ASUU as a body. According to “Gbuji”, ASUU and the result of her struggle have been responsible for a lot of developments in Nigerian universities. The NEEDS ASSESSMENTS and TETFUND projects that are apparent in almost all Nigerian public universities are made possible by the continuous advocacy of ASUU, therefore, the ongoing squabble in the university of Port Harcourt can also be mediated by the same union objectively. According to “Gbuji” production, it is revealed how public universities suffer on account of poor funding:

#### ASUU CHAIRMAN

The Nigeria situation is not funny how federal funding for the university education has nosedived from 11.12% in 1999 to an appalling 4.4% in 2004, 2000. It is on record that the budgetary allocation to university education was at 8.76% down from 11.12% in just one year. 7.0% in 2001; 6.1% in 2002, 4.75% in 2003, 4.54% in 2004, 10.6% in 2009, 6.4% in 2010, 6.2% in 2011, 8.43% in 2012 and 8.7% in 2013”. My people, for Nigeria to effectively compete with her counterparts’ world over, she must invest sincerely in educational sector. This low level of funding needs to be significantly increased; at least, beginning with the 2014 budget; a model target of 16.0 percent, that is, double the average for 2009 – 2013, but still far below the prescribed UNESCO’s 26% will be a departure from the norm. It is saddening that on the average, Nigeria spends less than 9.0% of its annual budget on education. When compared with other African countries, common sense would tell us that we have long ceased been the giant of Africa. In 2012, the World Bank’s report on the annual educational budgetary provision for twenty countries across the globe indicts Nigeria and shows she is the least with the percentage allocation to the sector at 8.4% and Ghana swept the list with budgetary allocation to educational sector to 31.0%, while South Africa and Kenya came 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively at 25.8% and 23.0%. (13)

This revelation of poor funding of Universities is a severe and terrorising scenario and as those directly in front of the burning furnace, ASUU battles government to do the needful by the only voice they answer to “STRIKE”, if the union does all those to bring development in public universities, then ASUU as a union can mediate and achieve much more peace internally without shutting down the university for a day. Although it is due to ignorance and probably lack of intellectual capacity that many people think that ASUU’s engagements in strike actions is totally a bad idea, however, from the route of this study, one may want to have a rethink. The “Gbuji” Production relates a brief appraisal of what the worlds’ university ranking look like;

#### CHANKY

Do you know that from the world university ranking, , it is clear therefore to capture that no Ten Nigerian Universities made the first one hundred universities in Africa, with University of Benin ranking first among Nigerian universities, 31<sup>st</sup> in African and 2,485 in the world. Others are Auchi Polytechnic 32<sup>nd</sup> in Africa, 2,487 in the world, University of Ibadan, 45 in Africa, 3,215 in the world, University of Ilorin 47 in Africa, 3,342 in the world. University of Lagos 55 in Africa, 3,691 world over, University of Nigeria 64 in Africa, 4,031, Ahmadu Bello University, 76 in Africa and 4,379 in the world. Obafemi Awolowo University was ranked 79 in Africa and 4,433 in the world, while University of Jos came 88 in Africa and 5,040 in the world; the only private in Nigeria that made the list is Covenant University, Ota, 94 in Africa and 5,489 world over. The most surprising discovery on the table is that not only 17 South Africa universities made the list but the country produced the first 8 universities in African universities ranking. (15)

This briefing is to express the degenerative state of education in Nigeria that ASUU is committed to reviving through her misinterpreted struggle or say strategy. On a clear standing ASUU is not fighting for personal interests, her fight is for the interest of the Nigerian child. Education is a right for the average Nigerian child and quality education should be for the interest of the nation. If you build a house and give it to a child that is not well trained, he will destroy that house. If the children and youths of today go through a kind and fair educational system then the future of Nigeria will be kind and fair thus the nation will be developed.



## Chapter Five

### FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings and Observations

This research work interrogated and probed the problems of industrial disharmony that arises from various misunderstandings within and outside the university. ASUU tried justifying the incessant industrial disharmony that has long existed and still exists between itself and the University Council and Management and by extension Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), while the government, for its part, tried to condemn both the strike and ASUU. However, post production evaluation shows that the performance of “Gbuji”, the workshop sessions and above all, the follow-up session succeeded in conscientising the parties in conflict. The production has engendered in the two parties a cooperative attitude that made them change the competition and win-lose approach to the resolution of the conflict. Hence, the study was able to establish and defend Theatre-for-Development as one of the most potent keys that can be applied in sanitising the society of its ills and anomalies as it affects the Ivory Tower and the problems that have lingered in the institutions for countless number of years. The Theatre can always be taken as an alternative means of conflict resolution no matter how it is viewed today. “Gbuji” has graphically demonstrated efficient and effective ways of attaining peaceful resolution between the ASUU, the University Council and Management and by extension, FGN without any blood bath or closure of the universities for a second. The production achieved this by circumspectly dramatising the inherent conflict and the horrifying consequences of the deeds and the people involved. “Gbuji” also revealed the true students’ experience; ASUU position’s, University Council and Management and by extension FGN’s adamant posture in refusing to address the grave situation of Nigeria academic story; consequently, “Gbuji” has argued for a way forward

for Nigerian academic situations, especially the warring parties in University of Port Harcourt to think wise and stop further washing of their garment in the public place. Such methods comprise lawfully agitation of one's right, taking responsibilities when the need arises, owning up to one's fault, pursuit of peace with determination, justice for the deserved, equity and fair play, without which no meaningful development can flourish. It has also addressed the government's refusal to honour agreement it freely entered with ASUU as a union. These are the secret keys of sustainable development in any nation building. The research identified the adverse effects of breakdown of academic calendar through industrial disharmony in any nation, the shock, hazard, emotional trauma, psychological breakdown, etcetera, which culminate into the lives of thoroughly bred students and academics. To this end, this research finds industrial disharmony condemnable and unacceptable in an enlightened world like ours.

"Gbuji" production has shown that Universities must remain the primary tool for Africa's development if the continent desires to advance in all ramifications instead of internal squabbling. The Theatre can always be taken as an alternative means of conflict resolution no matter how it is viewed today; it is no longer an optical illusion in this context as was perceived by many in time past that theatre cannot speedy up conflict resolution. It was discovered that whenever ASUU declares her indefinite strike actions, the union punishes the sons and daughters of the poor Nigerians, leaving the children of the politicians to wallow in their stolen wealth, carelessly gallivanting and luxuriating in foreign universities. It was also discovered that the mainstream of the lecturers in Nigeria universities who agitate for all manner of packages are not productive.

It was also gathered that in some universities, lecturers do not have befitting offices, and even when some are allocated offices, their offices lack trending research aids. It was discovered that

in some developing countries, the university provides the needs and leadership, as such, they attract grants, own patents which in turn develop their counties, but in Nigeria, the staffers daily agitate for their belly. It was also discovered that those political appointees who do well in government are like expatriates, imported from overseas. It was discovered that there are multiple causes of ASUU industrial actions in Nigeria, which include the breakdown in collective bargaining, failure to implement agreements and refusal to recognize the union among other factors. It was discovered that the funding for the university education has nosedived from 11.12% in 1999 to an appalling 4.4% in 2004, 2000 respectively.

The research found out that in Nigeria universities, some engineering workshops operate under zinc sheds and trees. The research discovered that many science-based faculties are running what is referred to as “Dry Labs”, due to lack of reagents and tools to conduct real experiments. The study gathered that 74% of lecturers in the Plateau State University (BOKKO) were merely visiting lecturers. It was discovered that Nigeria's university system is in crisis of manpower. Instead of having no less than 80% of the academics with PhDs, only 43% are PhD holders while the remaining 57% are not. And instead of 75% of the academics to be between Senior Lecturers and Professors, only about 44% are within the bracket while the remaining 56% are not. The staff mix in some universities is alarming.

It was discovered that when financial crises broke out in 2007 and banks were in trouble, government brought out N3 trillion to bail out the Banks. It was also gathered that some lecturers compel credulous female students to bed against their will. It was equally discovered that some lecturers aid some universities by cutting corners during NUC accreditation by posing as lecturers in sister universities, just to allow the universities remain afloat. This very act of

malpractice has further denied many universities the opportunity of addressing the issue of understaffing.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Using the “Gbuji” Tfd template, this research therefore recommended that henceforth Nigerian government should take the issue of funding university education seriously, as constant nose-diving of her budgetary provisions in this sphere will forever portend doom.

The researcher recommends that University Management and Governing Council and by extension, Nigeria government should learn how to respect collective bargaining, implement agreements unanimously reached with the unions and recognise the unions in order to circumvent future industrial disharmony and improve Nigerian universities in the world rankings of universities world over.

The research recommends that University of Port Harcourt Management and Governing Council to amicably settle all the ongoing disputes in the university swiftly without regularly washing the dirty garment publically. Hence, Prof Frank Ugiomoh should be recalled and Prof Andrew Efemini be pardoned.

The research recommends that University of Port Harcourt Management and Governing Council should mind the kind of policies it makes in order to avoid restlessness from the students’ wing.

The research recommends that the citizens should press the national assembly into making legislations that will clearly define and set the basic conditions for holding public offices so that the universities will no longer experience industrial disharmony.

ASUU should overhaul her membership and encourage them to go into intensive cutting edge researches and landmark discoveries which will provide direction, the needs and leadership that are currently lacking in the country. Researches that will revamp the face of Nigerian economy,

diplomacy, politics, engineering, medicine, law, education, sciences, the arts and foreign policy and direction, thus, assuming her position as the real giant of Africa and by extension competing in the global space.

The research recommends that Nigerian government should remember that the engineering sphere of her universities is the face of modern cutting edge technology, as such, FGN should henceforth think of moving the engineering workshops from zinc and under tree sheds to building and equipping engineering workshops and science laboratories.

The researcher therefore challenges all responsible academia, students, parents, government, opinion leaders and members of ASUU to continue in delivering their good mandates and wake up to their responsibilities and do the needful for the Nigerian universities to take her proper position in Africa and world at large.

It also recommends that ASUU should henceforth caution members of their union never to go the press but should rather handle their misunderstandings with objectivity. It equally recommends that the university management should henceforth not see some members of ASUU as treat to the administration; they should rather see them as partners in progress.

### **5.3 Contributions to knowledge**

Trade disputes, especially those that exist between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Uniport Management and Governing Council and by extension, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), have not received the needed scholarly attention that it deserves, especially from academics who incidentally are the most affected by these incessant strike actions. This study is an eye opener to warring factions in industrial conflicts. The researcher's application of Tfd production in the resolution of industrial conflict is unique. This new advocacy strategy through

TfD as it affects the resolution of industrial disharmony cannot be ignored. The play that came out of the workshop remains a major input the researcher has made in the development of Theatre for Development and mediation strategies. Hence, ASUU, FGN and other critical stakeholders in the educational sector to be better informed and empowered. This study is momentous to the extent that it has contributed to ensuring sustainable industrial harmony between ASUU university management, governing council and by extension, the general public. It has potentially proffered pragmatic solutions to the regular industrial disharmony in Nigeria in general and the university sector in particular. This research is a source of information for scholars in particular and unions in general and will stimulate attitudinal change in the university system especially the trade unions. It has changed the mindset of FGN and ASUU in considering better approaches to dialogue and negotiations.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

The researcher is of the opinion that all those blind, unbeneficial and ungodly politics which in the time past have surrounded the Nigerian Ivory Tower and have hindered it from making meaningful progress, thereby limiting her from competing globally with other developed and developing countries be completely abolished. Underfunding the Nigeria educational sector is the same thing as under-developing that sector. Every effort should help in improving the Nigeria educational sector to enable it compete favourably in the global space and skyrocket development.

This research has meticulously and painstakingly established the thrust of ASUU's struggle to see a Nigeria where her quality of education is of international standard, where Nigeria will be home like UK, USA, Canada and the likes for educational tourism. Education is the key but then the question is Key to what? The answer of course is obvious; it should be the key to national

development. Looking at UK, USA, Russia, France, China, Japan and even South Africa and North Korea, people may say that technology is the brain behind the successes of these nations. Of course, it is true but then how was it made possible? It was made possible through their educational endeavour. To even gain the knowledge of science and technology one must have been taught to improve and make advancements to the already known, then research must have followed. All these are made possible in a standardised educational system fitted with up to date equipments and the best of facilities just as in Harvard and Cambridge Universities. This expression is to prove that education is at the forefront when it comes to development in any nation. Education itself is development because for one to develop, he must learn and when one learns he is developed. Granted the above, ASUU may want to feel jealous that her universities cannot compete with her counterparts' world over. Nigeria educational system has got to the point that for one to be well respected and dignified in the academia he must have studied abroad. This is so ironic because on a wide thought, education ought to be culturally conditioned, hence, those who studied abroad suffer a minus in terms of cross-breeding and as such require synchronising with the system here to be able to interact and impact properly.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire for An-In-Depth Survey of a TFD Workshop Facilitated by Azunwo, Eziwho Emenike {Doctoral Dissertation}

Kindly tick the bracket as appropriate

#### Section: A

1	Did the performance meet your expectation?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Indifferent [ ]
2	Do you think politics plays a vital role in addressing Industrial Disharmony between ASUU and FGN?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Indifferent [ ]
3	Can “Gbuji” address the current cataclysm in Nigerian Universities?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Indifferent [ ]
4	Did the subject matter of the drama hold your attention?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Indifferent [ ]
5	This TFD approach is apt for the society, do you agree?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Indifferent [ ]

#### Section: B

- i. Age Bracket: 18-25yrs [ ], 26-30yrs [ ], 30yrs and above [ ]
- ii. Sex: M [ ] F [ ]
- iii. Status: Student [ ] Staff [ ] Others [ ]



## **Appendix II**

### **(Interview)**

#### **Gbuji Production, Post-Production and Pre-Production Interview**

- 1) Please sir may we know your name?
- 2) How was the Gbuji performance?
- 3) So did it meet your expectation?
- 4) What essence did this production achieve when it comes to the issue of ASUU and federal government? Did it address the issue on ground?
- 5) Do you think that politics plays a vital role in addressing the industrial disharmony between ASUU and the federal government?
- 6) What is the impact of ASUU strike on the Nigerian Economy?
- 7) What do you think is the negative implication of the ASUU strike?
  
- 8) What is your view about the “Gbuji” resolution? Is it realistic?
- 9) During the ASUU strike, students are quit affected because some people who are supposed to graduate this year will stay longer. I heard that in the course of strike, salaries are not paid. Does it not equally constitute the negative effects of the strikes?
- 10) From this production, how can we achieve industrial harmony and national development? Is ASUU planning on embarking on any strike?

#### **Appendix 3 (Interview)**

#### **Gbuji Production, Post-Production and Pre-Production Interview**

##### **Interview One**

**Interviewer:** Please sir may we know your name?

**Interviewed:** My name is Austin Sado

**Interviewer:** And you’re a professor I suppose?

**Austin Sado:** No, I’m not a professor

**Interviewer:** How was the Gbuji performance?

**Austin Sado:** Well I think it was a good performance. I think it was a good interpretation by the performers. And I also think that the issue in question was properly captured.

**Interviewer:** So did it meet your expectation?

**Austin Sado:** My expectation is a very tall thing to meet. I think that you will never be able to get it all, but on a scale of 1-10, I should think that they had 6 and above maybe 6.4.

**Interviewer:** What essence did this production achieve when it comes to the issue of ASUU and federal government? Did it address the issue on ground?

**Austin Sado:** My first reaction actually was to ask for a copy of this production, because I thought that it actually captures the essence of our struggle in terms of funding of university. And I also think that the reaction of the public and the students, which abinitio was contrary to what ASUU had always stood for shows that a number of persons in the society do not really understand the core issues involved in ASUU struggle, and it would have been a tool of educating the people about the struggle we have engage ourselves in ASUU and I wish that someday we could have that. And also hopeful that the future, I hope it is not so far from now, when we will have the privilege of hosting the National Executive Council Union probably be asking this for a presentation.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that politics plays a vital role in addressing the industrial disharmony between ASUU and the federal government?

**Austin Sado:** I do not think it is politics, I think it is lack of intellectual capacity. Many of the people who carry certificates and perhaps for fear of them invading into any persons' profession, but a number of persons who have gone to school and well certificated, probably do not have the intellectual capacity to think, because if they do, they will appreciate that education is the corridor to development. And if anybody wants to develop and has an intention of putting money in research and development, that person is living a dream. And I just wish that this people will develop the capacity to think deeply and determine and realise the fact that without education, we will only be crossing development and it will remain a mirage. So, I think it is type of intellectual capacity rather than politics.

**Interviewer:** What is the impact of ASUU strike on the Nigerian Economy?

**Austin Sado:** Massive! I have a friend in the Broadcast industry who couple of times has talked about university, the attitude of lecturers and all that. I took him on a tour round the university to see the impact of ASUU struggle on my own university and I don't think there is any university in Nigeria I have not gone to, and at the end of the day, his exclamation was "without ASUU so there wouldn't have been this university". And I will like to challenge you, go round this university specifically and you will see the number of TETFUND on NEEEDS ASSESSMENT Projects. You can also go to the registry or the director of academic planning to get a statistics on the number of students that have been sponsored to do programs either within or outside Nigeria that were made possible only because of ASUU struggle. Without ASUU, I can tell you that there wouldn't have been any university in the last twenty years and if it remains where we are right now, except that the people, if the people do not understand that we need to stand together with ASUU, we probably might be saying goodbye to Nigerian universities in the next ten years.

**Interviewer:** What do you think is the negative implication of the ASUU strike?

**Austin Sado:** I will find it difficult to know the negative because; there is no option, when you're left with no alternative. I read a book by Frederick Frosich and he said "When you leave people with no alternative, you leave them with the devils alternative" so in this case, I think that anything outside what we do in ASUU will be leading us to the devil's alternative and that is whichever option you choose, men must die and I don't want men to die.

**Interviewer:** What is your view about the “Gbuji” resolution? Is it realistic?

**Austin Sado:** For an academic work, for the theatre but I really think Thespians are dreamers and I will leave it at that.

**Interviewer:** During the ASUU strike, students are quit affected because some people who are supposed to graduate this year will stay longer. I heard that in the course of strike, salaries are not paid. Does it not equally constitute the negative effects of the strikes?

**Austin Sado:** What’s the alternative? You talk about negative as if there is an alternative. It is either to go on strike and loose six months today and protect the future or you get three months today and loose the entirety of the future. So we are left with no option.

**Interviewer:** From this production, how can we achieve industrial harmony and national development?

**Austin Sado:** Number one, government must be willing to negotiate and fulfil and implement all negotiations particularly with respect to education. Secondly, we must look inward. There is pressure on admission in Nigeria and that pressure is because of lack of capacity to take sufficient students. But if government is willing to stabilize the university through the improvement in funding, we can have two streams of admission every year and if we have two streams admission every year in Nigeria universities JAMB will no longer be relevant. This is because you will be struggling to have students to fill the vacancies then you can open up the space for foreign students. In our time, hardly will you get to Nigerian university and you do not see South Africans, Egyptians, Camerounians, Ghanians, and even from Central African countries. But today, even people from Benin republic do not come to Nigerian universities instead Nigerians go to Togo, Ghana and Benin republic but that was the reverse.

**Interviewer:** Is ASUU planning on embarking on any strike?

**Austin Sado:** Whenever there will be a strike in ASUU, the public will know.

## **Interview two**

**Interviewer:** Please sir may we know your name?

**Interviewed:** My name is Prof. BarisuaNwinee (Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt)

**Interviewer:** How was the Gbuji performance?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** The concept was quite beautiful; the acts presented a good account of what causes strike and the issues surrounding strike action in the universities.

**Interviewer:** Did it meet your expectations?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** Yes it did, except that there are a few grey areas that needs answers, one of which is how do we resolve the problem of strike in Nigerian universities? The play ended with the person I suspect to be the president of the country coming out to say, appointing certain persons to work along with him to resolve the lingering problem of education. But, it goes beyond that, because that is quite utopian, every member of the society must learn to appreciate the problems of the various subsets that make up the unit called Nigeria.

**Interviewer:** Do this address the cause of industrial disharmony between ASUU and the Federal government?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** It did very well. Even the students themselves in the play also showed that there was a communication problem between the union and themselves and also between the parents and the union and I think that meeting where all the parties were called together, it was very obvious that the Minister of education and the NUC boss were round pegs in square holes. What that tells us from the play is that Nigeria should have someone that has not just education at heart but understands the problem of that sector and that why I support the National assembly that the next set of Ministerial screening, portfolio should be attached, so that the man comes prepared to face the challenges of the particular portfolio he is given.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that politics play a major role in addressing the industrial disharmony between ASUU and the Federal Government?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** There are technocrats that support all the parties. My advocacy is that; use the technocrats, that is use those with penchant that have the passion for the various areas. For example, you do not need to be an agriculturist to head the agriculture ministry, but if you understand what the problems of the agricultural sector is in the country, you should be able to head the agricultural sector. Just like nobody read football as it were, but if you have passion for football, you will be able to address the problem of both administrator and the athletes that you find in the sport sector. So it is in the education ministry, the bedrock of growth and development in any country is educational sector and once you miss it, you have miss development.

**Interviewer:** What is the impact of ASUU on Nigeria economy?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** You know that ASUU is very focused union. ASUU has not gone on any uncalled for strike. All strikes by ASUU have meaning. ASUU has demonstrated maturity and patience. ASUU has also demonstrated respect for the rule of law. They have also demonstrated civility in all that they do so I think ASUU has contributed to the national question and the debate that the education sector in Nigeria needs attention.

**Interviewer:** What is your view about the Gbuji resolution? Is it realistic?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** I consider it to be simplistic or utopian. We pray and hope that we have a president that will just appreciate that his lieutenants had failed and take or bite the bullet directly himself and resolve the problem in the academic sector.

**Interviewer:** From this production, can we achieve industrial harmony and national development?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** Certainly yes, we can because in the play you saw the president was very concerned. He called all the parties back to hear from intermediaries, he heard it from the students, from the lecturers and the parents, and everybody contributed and marshalled out their points and it was very obvious to him that there was a kind of disconnect in the kinds of information he was getting from his lieutenants. I must say that the play was properly conceptualised, well scripted and as I said in the beginning, the cast performed creditably.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any general comment to make?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** well the general comment I need to make has been made along the lines that as a country, if we are desirous of moving forward, we should pay particular attention to the educational sector. The educational sector is nearly dying in the country, and once the educational sector is dead, the country cannot develop. Education is a main ticket to many things, it opens up your view of the world and that is it. But if you are uneducated, you have a limited scope and span with which you can work and your abilities are mostly limited so education is it if this nation must move forward.

**Interviewer:** How has the strike affected you personally?

**Prof. BarisuaNwinee:** I do not support parents that try to, and that is one aspect of the play I liked, where parents were being very selfish, but they are not addressing the problems of the other party. They do not look at the rationale behind the strike; nobody wants to go on an incessant strike. A typical academic is a conservative individual. He is self reliant and the greatest joy any teacher has is to see that this young man that he tutored has grown into a very big man or woman in the society. So the joy of any teacher is that his product should be bigger and better than him, to improve on what he was unable to achieve. When parents try to back down from giving support to ASUU, they are not being fair to the system. How can a chemistry student not know what a chemical look like? Know what a lab looks like? Know what an acid look like? It is not right. A mechanical engineer and there is no cars, for you to even look at machines to have practical hands on experience? How can you be able to be creative? To think outside the box? There is no reason why we should be talking about electricity. The various electrical departments should have been able to develop transformers and other things for electricity. But these things are just theoretical, because there is lack of facilities in their training. So it limits creativity and their God-given talents which these individuals should have had and what we are just having is stunted growth.

### **Interview 3**

**Interviewer: Please sir may we know your name?**

**Interviewed: My name is SomieariIkiroma-Owiye** (Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Port Harcourt)

**Interviewer:** How was the Gbuji performance?

**SomieariIkiroma-Owiye:** Quite exciting, interesting, creative, projective, and a reflection of our present educational situation in Nigerian universities.

**Interviewer:** Did it meet your expectations?

**Somieariikiroma-Owiye:** Yes, because I had always thought that theatre as a medium is a mirror of the society, it should reflect the society the way it is. Because if I have a mirror in my house and I cannot see myself well, it means that mirror is not doing its job but this play is reflecting the situation in which our tertiary education has found itself.

**Interviewer:** Did it address the cause of industrial disharmony between ASUU and the Federal government?

**Somieariikiroma-Owiye:** The issue here is that the way the play ended is how the show works in our society, even though we did not watch the full play, we all watch a sketch up play, but the way the play ended is what we have been praying for to happen where stakeholders sits on a round table and reason for the benefit of our children because every father wants his child to be better than him and your child cannot be better than you when you do not give him a quality education. Every child should have access to quality education that is what the play is talking about. From primary, secondary to tertiary level. But the caretaker of your child, who is the teacher, should be well taken care of. In countries like India, they spend 2% of their annual budget for teacher training and retraining, because they have find out that a group of teachers led them to their present state of technology, and for them to move forward, they need to replace those teachers, that's why it amounts to 2% of their budget, for teacher's training, not for education but for teacher's training. So a country like Nigeria, when you know that you want to attain technology, every community should have quality schools with quality teachers. The issue of unemployment will be an issue of the past. When you train the teachers well and they train the students well, the children will go into the communities and train the upcoming children and all those coming out of this training will be civilised citizens, then we can attain technology and whatsoever we want we will get. So the play has addressed the fundamental issue that stakeholders should not mind who caused his groan, come together and reason the best for our children because the best should be in our institutions; primary, secondary and tertiary institution.

**Interviewer:** What is the impact of ASUU strike on the Nigerian society?

**Somieariikiroma-Owiye:** On the question of ASUU strike on the Nigerian society, a lot of people do not understand why ASUU go on strike. Some people think that ASUU go on strike because of personal interest, no, ASUU is going on strike because of the interest of the Nigerian children. People in government, their children do not school in Nigeria. Anybody you see in government send their children out to learn foreign culture and false education. Real education is in Nigeria. The beginning of education is the study of self; you must study yourself first before you know what you are studying. When you go outside to study someone else, you cannot plant it in your country. So ASUU is of the opinion that people in government should send their children to schools in Nigeria, they should not go out for medication and for other things which they can get in the country.

**Interviewer:** Do you think politics plays a vital role with the issues involving ASUU and the Federal government?

**Somieariikiroma-Owiye:** Politics plays a vital role. You know a lot of politicians do not go to school. When you have the type of democracy we operate now, the "Abuja democracy", most of the uneducated politicians do not know the importance of education, that education is the solid

foundation on which any society is built. So politicians who are uneducated will not know that those children outside are the people that will lead us to where we are going to, that is the children of the ordinary folk. So if you go to some states and you see the state of classrooms, the state of where children learn, the kind of building they learn in, you will know that politicians are not ready to move Nigeria forward, that is the crop of politicians we have now, because if they want to move Nigeria forward, education is the key, education is the solid foundation. If you look at the definition of education, you will know that without education no society can grow. With education, corruption will just be ceased out, but when you do not have a well structured educational system, you will have problem. But you refine our education now and provide the basic necessities and facilities these senators and other politicians are enjoying, bring them to the institutions in the next ten years, Nigeria will be a different place, everybody will want to come to Nigeria, because we have it all.

**Interviewer:** From this production, how can we achieve industrial harmony and national development?

**Somieariikiroma-Owiye:** Yes, this production needs to be carried out in other institutions for stakeholders to see the point of view of ASUU, the point of view of the students, the point of view of parents and the point of view of every other stakeholder so that they will know the real cause of the problem. That the UN had decreed that every country should allocate 30% of herb annual budget to education knowing the value of education, how much has Nigeria put into education? The situation where nomads rule the country, people who are not well educated and enlightened, they find themselves in the political space, they will not know the value of education. The Ambassador of South Korea came to the University of Port Harcourt some time ago. He gave a lecture stating that after the Korean war, South Korea was about the poorest country in the world, but it is different today because of education. Quality education for every child. When you talk about sports, it is hinged to education, agriculture is hinged to education, and every social activity is hinged to education. If you want to contain youth restiveness, it is education. Even recreation is hinged to education. If you look today, you see our youths are not even together, there is no play, no end of year activity to engage the youths like cultural festivals, sports festivals, even inter-house sports is dying, and they all belong to education. The development of any society is hinged to education. When you invest in education, you invest in your development that is why ASUU strike, this production should be carried all over, let stakeholders see the real situation. ASUU is not fighting for personal interests, they are fighting for the interest of the Nigerian child, that the average Nigerian child should have quality education. If you build a house and give it to a child that is not well trained, he will destroy that house. MaitamaSule said that “the joy of a dying father is a worthy successor”. We once manufactured iron in Enugu before the civil war. But today we are importing iron. Meanwhile the iron we manufactured before the civil war has the same quality or even more quality than those produced anywhere in the world. So this production should be carried out, let the leadership of ASUU see the production, other institutions see the production, let the stakeholders see the production, let the national assembly see the production so that they will know that ASUU is fighting a just cause.

#### **Interview 4**

**Interviewer:** Please ma may we know your name?

**Interviewed:** My name is Florence OkosimiemaKalio (Former S.A. to the Hon. Commissioner of Information and Culture, Rivers State, Former S.A. to the Managing of NDCC)

**Interviewer:** How was the “Gbuji” performance?

**Florence OkosimiemaKalio:** Having watch the play I got more informed about the plight of the lecturers and also I think it is important that government invest more on education and funding public universities. And I also think it is important that the university community become innovative. Find ways to raise funds. In the play, they mentioned Harvard, Harvard do not necessarily get funds from the United State government. Harvard has become innovative and you see that they do not only get funds from the Alumni, they also have other programs where they raise funds from like the summer school, so I think the university should become innovative and look for other ways of raising funds rather than waiting for government. Also I think ASUU is selfish and they should become less selfish and also consider the plight of students.

**Interviewer:** Do you justify the strike actions?

**Florence OkosimiemaKalio:** When a child goes on strike, because the parent did something wrong once, it could be understood but when it becomes reoccurring I think something is wrong with the child.

#### **Interview 5**

**Interviewer:** Please ma may we know your name?

**Interviewed:** My name is Dr (Mrs) AdedamolaOlutoyinOshoOnyeaso (Faculty of Education, former Associate Dean, Student Affairs University of Port Harcourt and former ASUU Investment Secretary, Uniport Chapter).

**Interviewer:** How was the “Gbuji” performance?

**Dr (Mrs) AdedamolaOlutoyinOshoOnyeaso:** The play-let is very exciting, the information and communication in the play-let is very concise, and straight to the point and drives the important message to the parents, students and even the government and all stakeholders. It addresses the issue bothering them. But on the play-let itself, sincerely as I was watching I said wow! Theatre Arts, I would not have done well if I am a student in Theatre Arts because the cramming, you know I am in health science, so I do not really like cramming long, and they spoke issues bothering from 1999 till date. So they really researched into whatever government has written, whatever ASUU has written which means there was a lot of hard work on both the student side, the director of the play and also the writer, he really went deep to get information and I was so excited. Also the drumming, at a point I felt like jumping but I thought if start dancing the students will be looking at me, but I was moving and in fact there was no dull moment. Everybody was carried along you could feel the heart of the people that are involved. So the playwright did so well, the students equally did well, there was enough supervision and everybody was able to perform their role. So it was a well monitored and a very good presentation, it makes me happy. I feel proud of UNIPORT, I am happy about it. In fact it should



be packaged to Aso Rock, yes I can facilitate it, I can go as far as Aso Rock to give them a glimpse of this so that they will understand what we are talking because they seem to be detached, but this can help the government get to the grass-root, because the play is really getting to the grass-root and getting the heart of the people that are involved.

**Interviewer:** What are the impacts of ASUU strikes on the Nigerian society?

**Dr (Mrs) AdedamolaOlutoyinOshoOnyeaso:** As a lecturer, as a parent, as a stake holder, in at least three aspects I was affected. My son entered medical school in 2008 a program of six years he ended up spending eight years, he never failed, he was a four pointer at the first four years of pre-clinical in the university setting, a very high grade but could not proceed because of the strike so I was here crying at the same time did not have salary to eat. So I was affected in every area. Strikes is not good but wish the government will have the political will to do the right thing but if these clips are getting to them, it will touch them.

**Interviewer:** What was your view about the “Gbuji” resolution? Is it realistic?

**Dr (Mrs) AdedamolaOlutoyinOshoOnyeaso:** Very realistic. It is telling us what is going on in the society. What destroyed the world is communication, “The Tower of Babel” and this communication that can now bring us together to remove rebellion from ASUU, students or whatever because if a student has a wrong impression of why the lecturers are striking. There is inadequate communication but clips like this will orientate the minds of the parents, the students, the lecturers and everybody can come. This is an advocacy and it is one of the strongest weapons you can use to get the government. So it has my 100%, if not maybe 99% perfect to me. The students are doing well.

**Interviewer:** Do you believe there is other ways of handling ASUU issues beyond going on strike?

**Dr (Mrs) AdedamolaOlutoyinOshoOnyeaso:** Yes, this is a way. I said we should send this clips to the government. By the time they watch it, it goes on You-tube, it can get to UN and then they start asking Nigerian government questions. It can go far, beyond the students learning and the academic environment. It can actually get to the service provider up there, even the international level. When they watch this and they know it’s a research work not just somebody trying to be funny. It is real; it is what is happening to students, parents and the lecturers, all of us are suffering it.

## **Interview 6**

**Interviewer:** Please ma may we know your name?

**Interviewed:** My name is Prof. Nathaniel Abraham (HOD, Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt)

**Interviewer:** Did the “Gbuji” performance meet your expectation?

**Prof. Nathaniel Abraham:** Well, my colleague Emenike mentioned that there will be a performance about ASUU and their struggles. Being a member of ASUU I wanted to come and see him and his students dramatise the ASUU strike issue. I am yet to see the play, but I am sure that by the time we see what you put forward, it will be better equipped to know what to say but we know that ASUU over the years have been struggling for a better deal for universities in Nigeria, that our classrooms, our laboratories, our learning environment should be properly equipped, like universities should have, that our students should be given opportunity to learn like students in other parts of the world do. That has been the central theme of ASUU struggles all these years. It has not necessarily been mainly for the welfare of individual members of ASUU but for the betterment of the entire system, that the university should function like a university, proper funding and such things.

**Interviewer:** What are the impacts of ASUU strikes on the Nigerian society?

**Prof. Nathaniel Abraham:** Certainly whenever ASUU down strolls, there are many consequences. In the first place, they truncate the academic calendar. Somehow in the Nigerian university system, a student may know when he or she starts a program but may not know when the program will end, because if there are strikes, some stretching for months, time is lost. Sometimes a whole session or close to a session is lost. Children in private schools or those abroad will finish a record time and those in public universities most times overstay. That is one of the effects of ASUU strike. To us as members of ASUU, whenever we go on strike, the government tries to starve us, they withdraw our salaries, there are some of us, both husband and wife like myself are members of ASUU. So you will find a situation where there is no source of income for the family, no money coming in through the husband and the wife and the entire family suffers. It's also exposes our students, when they are not profitably engaged in the school, some go about doing unwholesome things. Chances are that some of them have been involved in accidents, and in things that probably should have been avoided if they were in school. So it has so many effects on the individual members, the entire society, the students and everyone.

## **Interview 7**

**Interviewer:** How was the Gbuji performance?

**Interviewed:** It is a revolution, and as such it is a positive one. So I think more of this should be seen around our environment and our society so that we can push for the positive change. The production suffered some breaks, a lot of breaks and it affected our cast so much in that when we break, coming back for the next session, we must have lost a lot of intricacies as regards the production. So bringing ourselves back becomes a problem. One of the actors said "How many leader have the university produced in our country?" none. But in some developing countries the universities produce leaders that are true. So "Gbuji" as a play itself is a very interesting one and one that project the struggle of ASUU. So I think if the government looks into the academic sector of this country, I think unnecessary strike will stop and the country will move forward.