
THE FOODS AND PREFERRED APPARELS OF AKWAIBOMITES: A DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The Akwa Ibom people over times did not lay much emphasis on the delicacies, God given unique foods found in nowhere else but in the land of promise. Our young stars, do not appreciate, neither do they value the elevation, promotion, greatness, expansion and wealth that comes with knowing how to cook and cooking it well to the taste and acceptability of everyone. However, they looked out for the least opportunity to be employed. Job opportunity seem to be a story for the next generation, youths do not put their eyes down to grab skills and leave the white collar jobs, problems of feeding, dressing and housing became on hike. Moreso, desperateness make our young girls to do all manners of things they should not, in order, to survive. This paper spells out the opportunities available in entrepreneurship putting ones hand to cook, sew, weave, do something that will end one a living also, expand and promotes. This paper utilized desk literature survey to take a look at how youths will be engaged in various skills to actualized Dakkada philosophy of Government Udom Gabriel Emmanuel in order to enable the Youths to have a fulfilled lives. Entrepreneurship processes are here in discussed, for self-assertion until one achieves self-reliance.

KEYWORDS: Foods, Preferred Apparels, Akwaibomites

Introduction

God created man to have dominion, or authority, over everything upon the face of the earth. Man was all God created in his likeness, and God thought of better ways to make him feel good, be at liberty, be connected, and have communication with him (Williams 2021). Moreso, man, being a free moral agent, explored and imagined a better way by himself without turning, looking, or getting the lead on how to go about it. Man ended up committing sin, which automatically drives him away from the presence of God. He decided to look for coverage to hide himself from shame, confusion, and stubbornness. However, this action pushed man to look for leaves to cover his nakedness, but he could not cover the damage from his maker. How be it, God, being a good and merciful one, gave man a second chance. The man started struggling with everything. Ukpanah (2018) reminisces on her professional life and recollects that she decided early on in her career to take her future in her hands when it was obvious that whatever she wanted to be was up to her. Again, she shared her experiences, which have become invaluable lessons and are as relevant today as they were yesterday. They are as follows:

- (1) **Faith in God and Hard Work:** There is a deep sense of fulfilment when you see evidence of what you have done and reap the reward of your hard work and sacrifice. James 2:26 says that "faith without work is dead".
- (2) **Discover Your Talent:** Essien (2017) opines that everyone has something he or she is good at. Ukpanah (2018) asserts that having what they are good at shows that their talent is a free gift from God. Moreso, she went up to say that to discover your talent, carry out a 'self-inventory.' Howbeit, start by asking yourself:
 - (a) What is your passion?
 - (b) What do you have an aptitude for?
 - (c) What are you trained or educated in?

Also, itemize your talents and find a way to make your skills pay off.

- (3) **Practice and Master Your Craft:** Ukpanah (2018) is of the opinion that practice makes perfect; regularly evaluate your strengths and weaknesses to determine where improvements are necessary. Moreso, Austin (2020) suggests that you throw your whole heart into what you are doing.
- (4) **Step Out of Your Comfort Zone:** Many people dream of owning their own business but waste years holding back out of fear. Step out of your comfort zone. However, Austin (2020) views that if you try something and it does not work out, move on or walk away; keep trying till you succeed. Moreso, history is replete with highly successful people who failed over and over before they achieved success.
- (5) **Build a Network:** According to Obot (2019), expand your network by developing and sustaining relationships. However, being part of a network means that you can derive value from and also add value to your contacts.
- (6) **Have a Plan and Act on It:** Bob (2021) asserts that, as the popular saying goes "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail". So, therefore, set goals and lay out a plan for achieving them.
- (7) **Focus on Solutions, not Problems:** Imagine you are driving through a pot - hold - littered road. The solution is certainly not to stop and bemoan your lot. You simply find a way to get around it and keep going. Moreso, be a problem solver, not a worrier (Essien 2017).
- (8) **Have a Mentor:** Look at your work and at your life in general, and ask yourself:
 - (a) Who do I know who is doing the kind of work that I want to do?
 - (b) Who do I know, who is living the kind of life that I want to live?
 - (c) What changes would I have to make in my life to be like that person? Bob (2021) opines that there is no need to reinvent the wheel, where as you can use the successes and achievements of other people as a road map.

- (9) **Remain a Student:** Ukpanah (2018) is of the opinion that one should never stop learning. You are never too old to learn new things. Also, every day presents an opportunity to enhance your knowledge base and develop yourself. Read! Read! Read! No knowledge is useless.
- (10) **Give Back:** Austin (2020) is of the opinion that you have value to add to the world and lives to impact. Moreso, rather than giving people fish, teach them how to fish.

You are the boss of your life; others can help guide you, direct you, channel you, point you in the right direction, and even give you an opportunity. However, no one else can make the critical decisions that will determine your future and your fortune. Whatever you are doing today is nowhere near what you are capable of doing tomorrow. Stand up to greatness, Dakkada. Udoh (2018) was of the view that Myles Munroe, one of the world's greatest motivational speakers, once said that the greatest gift God ever gave man was the gift of vision. It was therefore not a fluke when Mr. Udom Gabriel Emmanuel, the Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State, took the visionary step of launching the Dakkada Initiative in September 2015. However, it was a bold and deliberate attempt to bring a divinely inspired vision of reorienting Akwa Ibom's minds and attitudes to fruition. Although, through programmes, projects, and activities steered by the state government's Directorate for Marketing and Brand Management, which is tasked with implementing this noble initiative, Dakkada inspires the citizens to pursue their dreams. Moreso, in less than a year following, several bold strides have been undertaken in not just propagating this philosophy but in entrenching it into the Akw Ibom DNA with tangible evidence as to its efficacy. Otu (2018) opines that the second phase commenced in July 2016 in the form of a recruitment and entrepreneurship campaign. The campaign was meant to identify individuals and turn them into small to medium-scale enterprises and build their capacities towards enhanced productivity and profitability through business clinics. These business clinics culminate in the beneficiaries being inducted into the Dakkada Business Forum, another wealth creation and empowerment initiative. Moreso, these enterprises are exposed to expert counsel and information on improved entrepreneurial practises and access to financial assistance. How-be-it, the programme was basically aimed at empowering individuals and groups to work to earn a living rather than beg for a living. The exploration was initiated to cover the following:

- (a) Dakkada team inspecting private farmsteads across the state.
- (b) Calculate an ongoing business clinics for farmers, for example, fish ponds.
- (c) Visitation of elderly farmers at home to see their achievements. Obot (2019) asserts that the state governor is commended for his foresight in launching the initiative to create a conducive atmosphere for citizens and visitors alike to live, work, and excel.

There is Power in Your Hands.

According to Ivy King (2018), no one was born to be a failure. No one was born to wallow in lack and frustration or to be beggarly and dependent on another's magnanimity for survival. We were all born to add value and contribute positivity and meaning to the world. Everyone on Earth was born with a seed of uniqueness that, if properly nurtured, gains expression and blossoms into something purposeful that adds value not only to the individual but to other people. The question is, "Are we using what we have? If one is determined to succeed in life, he will need to run with his unique gift,

pushing against life's limitations. Moreso, it is those who think and push beyond the boundaries of limitations to discover and develop what they have who live an impactful life in society. Also, those who fail are the ones who dwell on confidence-deflating thoughts that they do not have anything useful to offer or hold tenaciously to any and every excuse for their inadequacies. However, in this era where graduates and non-graduates alike are hunting for non-available jobs, entrepreneurial skills development becomes a necessary option for many. Sadly, many unemployed people scoff at the prospect of stopping to put their hands to gainful use, folding their hands instead in wait for jobs in multinational companies. Daring to rise up and take the bull of employment and idleness by the horns is no child's play. There will be twists and turns as you navigate towards making a living. Moses (2019) suggests that in the twists, turns, and manoeuvres, you will not only learn important skills but also gather experience and self-confidence, uncover opportunities, and perhaps discover what you truly want to pursue.

Akwa Ibom Delicacies (Foods).

According to Mfon (2018), Akwaibomites boast arguably the widest cuisine in Africa. This is possible with the massive and fertile landmass, which produces an abundance of nourishing and mouthwatering delicacies. You cannot go wrong. It is famed for possibly the widest array of soups, which include the 'legendary' Afang, Edikang -ikong, Abak, Etighi (Okro), Etidot (bitterleaf), Afia Efere (white soup), Editan, Mkpafere, and Atama soup. How-be-it, all these can either be taken with gari, fufu, usung udia (pounded yam), or anyan (ekpang and semovita). Williams (2021) opines that Akwa Ibom's list of highly nourishing local delicacies inexhaustibly includes Ekpang Nkukwo, cocoyam porridge, Asa-Abakpa (corn meal), Ubobok Ukom (plantain porridge), roasted plantain and yam, rice of various types, jollof, rice and stew, and so on. Mfon (2018) suggests that all meals are well spiced and "punctuated" with some of the following: beef, chicken, fish, oysters, snails, and periwinkle. Ekwere (2021) is of the opinion that snacks are not left behind in the delicacies, pointing out that suya spot (meat of cow or goat) is used, roasted chicken is well garnished, cake, chin-chin, donuts, puff-puff, and lots more are added with locally prepared suya bean milk, coconut juice, and palmy, and finally, it could be taken with sharwama or pizza. Jones (2021) is of the opinion that the Akwaibomites are well known for decency, cleanliness, and their God-given talents, including their ability to cook unique, special, and unavailable meals that will just make one salivate at their mere appearance. Emeka (2020) opines that the ability to cook decent foods has gotten so many Akwaibomites girls husbands.

Musa species (parasiaca and sapientum) are simple plantains and bananas that people have been struggling to eat every day in various manners and patterns. Plantain could be prepared in so many ways, such as fried, porridge, boiled, eaten with sauce, stew, or pepper soup. It could also be prepared as chips or even pounded plantain (amala). Udoh (2018) is of the view that sapientum (banana), when ripe, is an edible fruit that clusters with a yellowish appearance, but the unripe ones stay green. How-be-it, the green ones could be cooked as porridge, which is usually prepared for children, especially babies. The plant Musa sepientum (banana) belongs to the family Musaccae. It has two stems: the underground stem and the upper pseudostem, or stalk, which bears the fruits and leaves. Moreso, Austin (2020) asserts that cultivation is done by cutting the sucker, and the whole stalk, which bears the fruits and leaves, is wasted. The textile artists, after the cutting of the fruits, collect the wasted pseudostem, pill it, scrape out the inner side watering aspect, wash, dry,

and weave the fibres and filaments into useful objects such as a fan, purse, jewellery containers, belts, dance costumes, farmers caps, lawyer wigs, mats, wine containers, and plates.

Fibers Processing Technique

Akpan (2019) argues that the process began with the fall of the plantain tree, with or without fruits. The fibrous leaf folds are separated from the unfolded layer; however, the next step is scraping off the inner core with a blunt knife on a wooden board to bring out thinning, fine fibres or filaments. Also, it could be placed on the floor for convenience. The fibres are brushed for convenience. Fibres are brushed in a continuous and repeated motion in one direction until white, soft, water-like particles emerge, are washed, dry, and ready for use. The weaving can commence with or without dyeing the fibres, depending on the objects to be woven. Akpabio (2019) posits that plantain pseudostem can be used in the preparation of pulp, paper making, regenerated cellulose, and the conventional sugar process into sugar. Also, Udofia (2019) fabricated fibres into ceiling boards, wigs for ladies' hair, and floor tiles.

Conclusions

This paper has encouraged all unemployed youths in Nigeria, specifically in Akwa Ibom State, to look inward. They are guarded against using their hands to create wealth. The youth are to get involved in skill acquisition with much seriousness and open-mindedness.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were encouraged and made accordingly:

- (1) Mounting of regular food cooking Competition to show our Youths the value of knowing how to cook.
- (2) Mounting of regular exhibitions by artists, fashion designers to show case various fibers and their finished products.
- (3) Nigerian schools should emphasize on students getting involved in home economics and cookery in order to be good home makers, great cooks in future.
- (4) Textile technology and fabric out fits should be exhibited in international exhibitions by Nigeria industries and commerce to attract foreign exchange and promote tourism.
- (5) Proper attention should be given to model exhibits and entrepreneurship education through exhibitions.
- (6) A multi- technology, complicated designs should be encouraged with foreign exotic technologies blended together for better results.

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