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INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES IN THE FACE OF GROWING COMPETITION IN TEXTILE MARKETS: A STUDY OF SMOCK/FUGU INDUSTRY IN TAMALE METROPOLIS, NORTHERN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

There has been a decline in the textile industry of Ghana in recent years. This is attributed largely to the growing competition posed by imported products. This competition affects the entire industry with the traditional sub sector being no exception. With smock, and for that matter, the smock industry, which is a traditional textile based in the Northern Regions of Ghana gradually gaining recognition in the broader textile industry, this study examined its state in the market.The study aimed at assessing the industry to determine whether it can survive global competition within the broader textile industry. This paper aims to contribute to knowledge by making recommendations to inform policies towards the survival of traditional textile products in Ghana. The research employed the exploratory design. Stratified sampling, purposive sampling, accidental sampling and the snowballing technique were adopted. In all, the research covered a total of 272respondents comprising 120 smock merchants, 50 craftsmen/weavers of smock textile, 100 smock users and two (2) institutions in the smock industry. The paper found that, the industry is in good state despite the growing competition in the broader textile industry and key actors do not see the industry at risk. The industry has survived the growing competition by virtue of the cultural tag given to it and its responsiveness to changing demands by the users. The industry is faced with many challenges and problems like inadequate finances to operate, inadequate supply of materials to the merchants, poor marketing, lack of regulation and continuous lack of political will to develop the industry. It is recommended that, patronage of indigenous textile products should be encouraged and smock makers should exhibit their products during fairs to create more awareness, the smock industry should be well integrated into government policies aimed at promoting the textile and garment industry.

INTRODUCTION

For over two decades after Import Substitution Industrialization was started in Ghana, the textile sub-sector dominated the manufacturing sector and contributed significantly to livelihoods (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2002). It employed about 25,000 of the labour force, accounted for 27 percentof total manufacturing employment and operated at about 60percent of plant capacity (Ghana Statistical Service, 2001:Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2002 and Klutse, 2014). There has been growing exposure of countries to world markets due to liberalization attempts by governments, with Ghana being no exception (Traub-Merz and Jauch, 2006: Dargin, 2010). This has exposed products in local markets to competition from imported items.

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This has been the case of the textile industry in Ghana. The sector is witnessing intense competition due to its exposure to the global market which has exposed it to imports from other countries as several facts have pointed (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2002: Quartey 2006: Bruce-Amartey Jnr *et al*., 2014). A study conducted by the Ghana Employers Association in 2005 revealed many facts conforming the increasing competition to local textiles. According to the group, at the end of the first quarter of 2005, imported textile prints accounted for 48percent of total textile prints in the Ghanaian market. Local production had been substituted with imported fabrics and garments. Imports increased from $35 million in 1992 to $57 million in 1998. Unfortunately, the increase in imports coincided with a decline in textile exports which used to be a very important source of foreign exchange to the country (Bruce-Amartey Jnr. *et al*., 2014). Also, market share of the local textile manufacturers has also decreased over the years to only 30 per cent with pirated, smuggled and under-invoiced textiles enjoying 70 per cent market shares (Ghana Employers Association, 2005: Abdullai, 2010), The increase in imports of textile and garments over the past few years shows extensive competition in the sector. The competition can serve as both an advantage and a threat to the industry. The increase in imported textiles has exposed Ghanaians to a variety of textiles for consumption. This has increased the choices available to consumers in the Ghanaian market. It also creates incentives for local production. Though the above mentioned positive influences have resulted from the competition, the competition has also posed a threat to the Ghanaian textile industry (Egu, 2009: Akwada, 2012). According to Egu (2009), in the last two decades, the textile industry in Ghana has gone through some difficult times resulting in shutting down of production lines of most of the companies in manufacturing sector of the textile industry. According to Egu, (2009:26),

Ghana Textile Print, (GTP) which once produced a very good textile brand the GTP brand is reported to have shut down its spinning and weaving departments and laid off many of its workers. This was a company, which was known to have competed with multinational textile companies in the past. The story is not different for Ghana Textile Manufacturing Company limited (GTMC). GMTC shut down its production line way back in December 2005.

The gradual decline in the textile and garment industry in Ghana has not gone unnoticed (Kwakuvi, 2004)and government has kept in place several initiatives to revive the sector (Bruce-Amartey Jnr., 2014). Some of the measures to stimulate the industry and in particular to take advantage of Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) include the provision of cluster networks, Presidential Special Initiatives (PSI), tariffs, credit and new administrative procedures to check smuggling and trade malpractices (Kakuvi, 2004). These efforts have focused on improving local made textile as well as preserving indigenous brands. However, the preservation and growth of indigenous textiles have been slow and stunted (Aigboduwa & Oisamoje, 2013).

In Ghana, there are many traditional textiles which contribute to the growth of the entire textile industry and are therefore affected by the competition. Prominent among the traditional textiles are the kente and the smock (Tettehfio, 2009). Limited research have however been done to explore the current status of these textile industries and further investigate into the critical success factors that have kept them alive in the face of growing competition.

This paper therefore revisits the current state of indigenous textile industries and critical success factors in the time of competition. However, this paper focuses on the smock industry because it is new in the broader industry and has seen little research in its current state. This paper thus seeks to address the knowledge gap by identifying the factors keeping the smock industry active in the competitive market. The main objective of the study is to find out whether traditional textile industries can survive the growing competition within the broader textile industry. The specific objectives are to investigate how the smock industry is faring within the growing competition in the broader textile industry; understand the reasons behind the current state of the industry; discuss the effects of some known government policies that are meant to promote the industry; and examine the challenges hindering the industry in the competitive market. In achieving the set objectives of the study, the smock industry in Tamale Metropolis is used as the focus. This was chosen because of the vibrant nature of the smock business in the area and the urban nature of the place which exposes its markets to various textile products. This therefore presented a good environment for studying the smock industry in an entity or area characterized by a vibrant broader textile markets.

The “Fugu” /Smock of Northern Ghana

The fugu is a product that is exclusive to Ghana, being fully hand woven and has its origins in the Northern regions of the country. Smocks are produced in many towns in Northern part of Ghana. Trading activities of smocks are however concentrated in Tamale, Bolgatanga and Wa; the regional capitals of Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions respectively. There are also patches of well-established smock making and trading activities in other areas like towns like Yendi, Daboya and many others spread across the three Northern regions. Smocks traditionally were worn by Chiefs and king makers of Northern Ghana. They were also worn during specially occasions like festivals and casually in few areas. In these modern times, smock has become designer clothes worn by ordinary men, women and children in Ghana and many other parts of the world.

Smock is a variety of loose garments sewn from strips of cloth woven on traditional looms in Northern Ghana. The Smocks of Northern Ghana are made of fabrics of pure cotton, however, the use of synthetic strings for weaving are becoming common. The smock mostly has white background having captivating colour stripes of different kinds and is not as complex as the “Kente” (Tettehfio, 2009) found in Southern Ghana. Colours generally seen in the “fugu” fabric are formed by the warping design of the cloth with white being the predominant. This is attributed to indigenous knowledge of the relevance of colours as white colour reflects the sun rays so as to limit the heat generated. The most common smock textile is the” kpan kobgu”. Modern day demands are however expanding the colour choices of smocks to include almost all possible preference of users.

Plate 1. Smock Textile

Plate 2. Smock Garment

Just like the case of smock textiles, garments are made of different variation. Smock garments (See Plate 2) are also made in different styles and lengths with each having its distinct name. Some of the distinct types include; "banaga" (short smock with sleeves), "dansiki" (short smock without sleeves) and "kutunbi" (long outer smock with long sleeves). In modern times, the common type worn by many is however the "dansiki". Combinations of these fugu types with a corresponding hat are also made and generally referred to as "kutunbi suit" (long outer smock (kutunbi) with long sleeves, short sleeveless inner smock (dansiki), trousers and hat (Tettehfio, 2009). Smock garments were generally made for male but recent trends are leading to introduction of female design garments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the qualitative approach is largely used with a little quantitative because social as well as cultural phenomena are being studied. The choice of qualitative method is also based on the fact that the study is explorative in nature. The choice of exploratory research is because it is easier to make new discoveries due to the less stringent methodological restrictions and this is much in line with the aim of determining how the smock industry is operating in the broader industry. The study population consisted of the craftsmen who weave the textile, the merchants who sew and sell smocks, the users or consumers who serve as the final destination of the product and relevant institutions in the operations of the smock industry. These institutions are the Metropolitan Assembly and the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI).

In this study, the stratified sampling, purposive sampling, accidental sampling and the snowballing technique were adopted. Different actors in the smock industry were studied with each actor having different characteristics and interest in the industry. Four main strata were considered: the craftsmen, merchants, users and institutions. The purposive sampling was employed to select the institutions relevant to the study. Accidental sampling was employed in selecting respondents for the merchants and the users while the snowballing was employed in selecting respondents for the weavers due to their difficult to locate nature. The research covered 272respondents comprising 120 smock merchants, 50 craftmen/weavers of smock textile, 100 smock users and 2institutions. The selection of the merchants targeted two specific clusters of smock merchants in the area which were the Tamale Central Market and Ababoa Market with 60 and 40 structured interviews undertaken in those locations respectively. On the part of the weavers, the absence of sample frame resulted in picking up any weaver the researchers came across using snowballing. In selecting the users, the researchers could not use any sample frame because almost every resident in the Metropolis and beyond is either a user or a potential user. Hence, the researcher using intuition interviewed100 people who were accidentally spotted wearing the smock on streets and at the markets. All elements in the institutions stratum were however observed. Data was collected using mainly structured interview guides, and direct observation. The structured interview guides were used for the merchants, weavers and users because of their low educational level and nature of the study. The structured interview guides were also used to collect data from the institutions because the researchers wanted to probe into detail on issues. Data gathered from respondents were categorized, tabulated, and recombined to address the initial purpose of the study. The data was then edited and coded for entry into SPSS for analysis. Analysis was largely done with the support of qualitative data which made use of strong inferences drawn from researcher's own observations, data from field and by comparing with earlier related works done by others to enable the researcher explain and describe the variables under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study. Discussions are presented in line with the objectives set for the study.

Background of Respondents

Understanding the background of respondents is relevant to give a general overview of the nature of people involved in the production and consumption of smock products. On the part of the weavers, all respondents were males indicating that the weaving sub-sector of the industry is male-driven. This was attributed to the physical nature of smock weaving which makes it difficult for women to engage in. This was also attributed to the culture in the area where smock trade is a reserve for males. This, they attributed to the history of smock were women only take charge of preparing the strings from cotton. Things were not different on the part of the merchants as98.3 percent of the respondents were males and 1.7 per cent being females.

The tedious process of sewing smock garments was the main reason attributed to this. On the part of the users of smock garments, 96 percent were males while the remaining 4 percent were females. This was mainly because smocks were originally made for males but it is just in these modern times that fashion evolution in the industry is beginning to change things resulting in the making of female designed smocks. It is clear that; the smock industry is male dominated especially in the weaving sector (a male-dominated industry or occupation contains 25 percent or less women in total employment

(Catalyst, 2013). The recording of few females in the smock merchandise is good for the industry as it can encourage other females to explore the prospects in the industry. It must however be noted that, the involvement of females is limited to just the selling aspect but not the sewing aspect of the merchandise.

The key actors in the smock industry varied across different age groups. On the part of the weavers, 8 percent were children while those above 65 years formed 4 percent. The remaining 88 percent of the weavers were in the workforce group who are expected to be actively engaged in economic activities. On the part of the merchants, children below 15 years were 5 percent while those above 65 formed 8.3 percent. Those between 15 and 65 years formed 88 percent of the merchants. This shows that, the industry provides employment for different categories of people including children who are mostly in school and only help outside school time and the aged who are part of the most vulnerable groups in society. The recording of the aged in the industry also means the industry provides some sort of safety net for the old age to improve on their living conditions. The Large number of youth in the industry also implies that, it provides a good platform that engages the youth in order to prevent them from engaging in violent activities in the area. The data on the part of the users shows that, there is demand for smock from almost all the age brackets and this is important for the growth of the industry since merchants can vary designs to suit the fashion demand of all ages.

Analysing the educational attainment of the key actors in the industry, especially the weavers and the merchants is very important. This is to have a clear picture of their comprehending ability and ability to interpret policies, programmes and projects to be implemented to promote the growth of the industry. From the study, 76 percent of the weavers and 88 percent of the merchants can read and write as against 24 percent and 13 percent among the weavers and the merchants respectively who have never been to school and cannot read and write. The data present similarities in status of education for the artisans. This has a greater potential of impacting positively on programmes and policies that will be formulated and implemented in developing the industry (Cena, 2013). This also implies that, the merchants will have the ability to serve different customers from other backgrounds using English as a means of communication.

How the Smock Industry is faring in the Era of Growing Competition in the Broader Textile Industry

Business Growth in the Smock Industry

The growth of the industry depends on how businesses fare in the period of growing competition. The key actors were asked of their views on the growth of the industry taking into consideration their businesses. On the part of the weavers, 92 percent shared the view that the industry is growing despite the competition with the remaining 8 percent unable to respond to it. However, none of the weavers indicated a decline in business. There was also a unanimous response from the merchants who noted that their trade was growing. This was confirmed by the employment levels of the various merchants and weavers, about 86 percent of the merchants had employed at least three more people in the last one year as a result of expansion. This was not different with the weavers of which 82 percent had employed two or more people to meet market demand. This raised the average number of employees per-business in the industry from two in 2012 to three and five in 2013 for weavers and merchants respectively. In the area of sales, 81.6 percent of the merchants recorded 20 percent or more annual increment of sales which will obviously reflected with the weavers who supply materials to the merchants.

It was obvious from the responses that, from the views and experiences of the key actors and confirmed by the business operations, the industry is growing. This is based on the scale of business operations, which has grown over the years. This shows that, despite the growing threat of broader textile industry in Ghana, the smock sub-sector still stands out and is really performing well in terms of growth of its businesses and the industry at large.

Perception of Effects of Other Textiles on Smock

Although the respondents all attested to the fact that the smock industry is growing, there was still the need to understand how key actors view the effects of other textiles based on their experiences. This was done by finding out what they really thought about the effects of other textiles on smock products. Views were therefore sought from the merchants and the ordinary consumers who actually purchase smock on whether other textiles have effects on their products and whether the presence of other textiles affects their demand for smock respectively. About 97.5 percent of sampled merchants were of the view that, other textiles had no effect on their market whiles 2.5percent thought they had an effect on their market. Merchants who responded in the affirmative noted that, smock products were actually unique with regard to its "*texture, designs and prestige"* and can therefore not play substitute roles for other textiles and garments. They were therefore of the view that, smocks have no substitutes since they play certain unique roles other textiles cannot perform for users. The traditional role of using smocks of festive occasions was cited as a key example to the unique role it plays. Respondents who were of the view other textiles affects the smock noted, patronage among the youth was low due to other textile products. They further asserted, the youth rather prefer the other foreign products in the market. The view shared by these people is an affirmation of the assertion that, the effects of globalization threatens the viability of locally-made products as it diverts attention from traditional commodities (Levin Institute, 2014).

On the part of the users (consumers/customers), 12 percent indicated that other textiles affect their patronage whiles 88 percent said the presence of others do not affect theirs patronage. Those who shared the view that other textiles had no effect on their patronage think smocks are used for different purposes from the other textiles. They shared the view that smocks are special garments which they do not use very often and so they have no relation with the other textiles. Smocks add value to them when worn which the other textiles do not and they are used for some cultural activities which the other textiles cannot be used for. This was best captured when one user stated that “I use my smock for special occasions and so I don’t think its usage is compromise by the other textiles”. The uniqueness of the smock garment is captured by the nature which makes it prestigious to adorn as noted by 70 percent of the users. The side of these users confirms the assertion of the merchants who do not see other textiles as threat to their businesses.

Those who said other textiles affect their patronage based their views on the fact; they had different kinds of textiles as clothes which instead could have been smocks. They were therefore of the view that, if those textiles were not there, they would have had many smocks and it could have become their daily attires. One user captured this view by noting that “I have just one smock which I use at all occasions, I could have had more for my every day wear if other textiles were not available”. This is to say, the competition in the broader textile industry do have an influence on how people patronize smock products.

Perceptions of Risk

From the survey, 84 percent, 93 percent and 72 percent of the weavers, merchants and the users respectively noted that, the industry was not at risk while 16 percent of the weavers thought the industry is at risk with 7 percent of the merchants sharing that same view.

In general, key actors who noted the industry is risk shared the view that, other textiles in the system were beginning to take away the cultural value of the smock. They thought the youth now buy more into the ideals of the western world and therefore appear to value western dressing than the cultural dressings. However, those who thought the industry was not at risk based their argument on the fact the industry is becoming more attractive to the youth with many young people now picking up smock making. Approximately 62 percent and 60 percent of the merchants and the users respectively noted modernization and fashion changes among smock- makers are enough to sustain the industry. They were of the view that, the current use of modern raw materials (synthetic strings) in weaving and the modernization of the textile designs, as well as the modernization of the garment to suit modern young men and women, means the industry is responding well to the broader textile industry and is therefore not at risk in any way.

Reasons behind the Current State of the Industry

Some of the reasons for the survival of the smock industry as gathered by the study include the following;

The smock has grown to become attire for everybody and almost everyone wears it regardless of the person’s ethnicity. This was shown in the socio-economic characteristics of smock users as 78 percent were Dagombas, 12 percent Ashantes , 4 percent Ewes, 4 percent other ethnic groups and 2 percent foreigners. People now have value for smock and even high profile persons who are not northerners tend to use smocks for special occasions. This can be seen on national events where prominent people use the smock garment. This has increased the demand for smocks and has contributed to the survival of the industry in the area. The recording of foreign users in the survey tells the extent to which the smock is now valued and used. Another reason gathered from the study as to the survival of the industry is the unique nature of smocks. Smocks are high profile garments which people value and use for special occasions. People wear smocks for certain cultural activities like festivals for which other textiles and garments cannot be used. Cultural activities like the Damba festival are events where chiefs and other prominent people can only use the smock garment. Smocks by nature are also thick and appear to be durable for the user and are therefore preferred. This has helped preserve the industry in the area as the culture of the people is attached to the garment.

Also, the role of culture in preserving the smock industry cannot be overemphasized. The industry has been able to survive the growing competition due to the cultural value attached to the industry. Most users of smock (45 percent) appear to patronize smocks because they see it as their cultural heritage which they should preserve. People buy smock because they want to identify themselves with their origin and ethnicity. Another reason for the survival of the industry is its ability to attract the youth. The smock industry was originally for the old but the industry has been able to attract young people who are helping in its growth through innovative ideas. The youth in the industry are more vested with what the modern day user demands and so they have been able to help preserve the industry. The ability of the industry to attract the youth can be seen in the background of the weavers and the merchants as noted in the early part of this chapter.

Finally, the survival of the industry is also due to the responsiveness of the industry to changing demands. The industry has always modernized its activities to ensure it meets the demand of the users. Originally, smocks were either plain white or the ‘guinea fowl’ design but changing demands have been met by varying designs of different colours. This is not only applicable to the weaving sector as the garment sector of the industry has also been very responsive. Smocks are now made of different designs to meet the requests of the users. The garment sector has also made use of technology to meet the growing demand and this can be seen from the use of sewing machines in sewing the smock as against the original hand sewing methods which is slower in terms of output.

Effects of Policies Meant to Promote the Industry

In almost every industry, government policies affect its operation and for that matter this part is dedicated to discussing the effects of some policies which are expected to affect the traditional textile industry. The two policies considered were the PSIoTG and AGO

The United States African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

This was an Act enacted at the One Hundred and Sixth Congress of the USA, held at the city of Washington on the 24^{th} day of January, 2000. (The U.S 106^{th}Congress Report, Jan. 24, 2000). The Act authorized a new trade and investment policy for sub-Saharan Africa, expand trade benefits to the countries in the Caribbean Basin, renew the generalized system of preferences, and to reauthorize the trade adjustment assistance programmes. To ensure that the Ghanaian textile industry benefits from this Act, the government in 2001 initiated *the President's Special Initiative on Textiles and Garments (PSIoTG).* The Textiles and Garments initiative was one of the six (6) priority areas introduced under the comprehensive programme of action in August 2001 by the then government. This initiative was designed to build a new and internationally competitive garment manufacturing and export industry in Ghana that can take advantage of the significant opportunities created under the US AGOA. As part of the initiative, the traditional textile industry, of which the smock is part, was meant to benefit from it as a non-traditional export product.

As part of assessing the policies of the government, the key actors were asked about their knowledge of PSIoTG. From the data collected, only 2 percent from both the weavers and merchants were aware of the initiative and had benefited from it. These beneficiaries were large scale smock merchants suggesting that, the small scale merchants were relegated to the background in terms of the benefits of the initiative. This has a negative effect on the growth of the industry since the industry is generally dominated by small scale operators.

The study also examined whether the artisans had any idea about the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) since it has a link with the President's Special Initiative. The finding was that, not even a craftsman had knowledge on the policy. This finding confirms the assertion made by Tettehfio (2009: p. 166) that, awareness on the concept of AGOA and PSIoTG was not intense. This shows that, government policies for the textile and garment industry are less popular to the traditional textile sub-sector and would have limited effect on its activities and products. This finding confirms the assertion of Essien (2008) that indigenous industries lack encouragement through government policies.

Challenges Hindering the Smock in Competing in the Broader Industry

Like many other industries, the smock industry faces numerous challenges as realized from the research. Some of the major challenges facing the smock industry include the following;

Financing the operations of the industry was a major challenge that was raised. This was raised by 86 percent merchants and 92 percent weavers. Even though the government has established the Export Finance Company (EFC) to provide financial and non-financial support to producers and exporters of non-traditional products, financial support, according to the artisans, is difficult to come by due to the demand of collateral securities before the financial institutions grant loans. Also, the United Nations Human Security Programme entrusted to the Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA), a Non-Governmental Organization, to provide financial support to them. Though the financial support from that source seems consistent, its coverage is still limited as it takes care of only sixty merchants out of the many. Additionally, lack of regulation of the industry was one major problem. All weavers and 98 percent of merchants complained of low quality smock textiles and smock garments in the market. The weavers thought the absence of an established association is actually hindering the control of weaving and this has led to poor quality materials in the market. The merchants on the other hand also thought poor regulation in the industry had resulted in some low quality garments in the market. They noted that, the lack of regulation affect the entire industry as quality control is important in the growth of textile products. Another challenge facing the smock industry in the area is neglect due to the location of the industry. It was realized that, government policies meant to promote textile and garment appeared to neglect the smock industry. Only two percent were aware of the government policy meant to develop the industry. Not even a single person had heard of AGOA and the PSI on textile and garment. This clearly shows government policies of promotion of such products undermine the traditional textiles sector.

Finally, there is lack of political will to develop the industry. Over the years, the industry has not been given maximum attention by the government. This is because, the institutions responsible to see to the development of small scale industries at the local level, the NBSSI, has not been resourced to do so. The institution faces problems of finance, logistics and human resource to man the office. The Metropolitan Assembly has also been weak in the area of support for the industry and this was confirmed by the fact that the Assembly has never had a specific project meant to develop this indigenous industry.

Recommendations

Recommendations that will inform policy towards the findings from the study include:

Firstly, no product can ever grow without sufficient demand and for that matter, the patronage of indigenous textile products must be encouraged. Establishments like schools, banks and other institutions should adopt the different smock textiles apart from their usual traditional wear in order to increase patronage of the product. The use of smocks as part of the normal Friday African wear should be encouraged instead of using imported textiles in this regard. The Center for Traditional Textiles should be established to promote the activities of traditional textile products. The center should be focused towards the survival of traditional textile products. It should not just focus on protecting the popular one but also promoting the less known traditional textiles. This will help boast their activities and put them in a stronger position to compete in the broader market.

Furthermore, financial constraints were a major challenge to the industry. To solve this, it is recommended that, financial assistance be extended to operators in traditional industrial sectors. A fund should be set up by government and other relevant organizations to provide resources to businesses in the traditional textile industry at low interest rates. In the terms of specific actions, the Metropolitan Assembly, financial institutions and relevant NGOs should extend financial support to the industry. This should be in the form of loans which are easily accessible. It must, however, be noted that, this cannot be successful with educating the artisans on the need to seek financial support to expand their operations.

Improving access to credit has a tendency of increasing production to make it more visible in markets. Also, there should a national traditional textile fair which seeks to expose and sell Ghanaian traditional textiles like the smock and kente to the rest of the world. This should be a national event organized annually to create more awareness of these products. On the part of strategic actions at the grassroots level, smock makers need to expose their product during trade fairs to create more awareness of the industry to the outside world. Smock festivals need to be instituted and be celebrated annually, like the case of Bonwire in the Ashanti Region as this will help in the marketability of smocks. By itself, tourism, during the festivals, will help boost the economic prospect of the product. Funds raised during the festival can also be used to institute a smock fund where artisans can access easy and soft loans.

Furthermore, the smock industry should be well integrated into government policies aimed at promoting the textile and garment industry. The industry has not really benefited from policies like AGOA and PSIoTG and so efforts must be made by all relevant stakeholders to integrate the industry into these initiatives. Implementation of this should be led by the District Assemblies along with the key players in the smock trade. This will help expand the market base of the industry as it will make the smock a non-traditional export. This will market it as a textile and a garment to the outside world, hence promoting its patronage and survival.

One way of develop and sustain traditional textiles like the smock is to give it a policy backing. Government should formulate and implement strategic policies to serve as a blue-print or action plan to guide and accelerate smooth production and sales operations of the traditional textiles. Developing such a policy will require effective collaboration between all relevant agencies involved in production, marketing and distribution of traditional textiles. Finally, monitoring and regulation should be adopted to promote the industry. There should be a regulatory entity within the industry to ensure only quality products are produced. The local government units must collaborate with the associations in the industry to set up regulatory body in each sector, weaving and merchandise to effectively guide the nature of products. The entity should also take charge of all activities relating to the promotion of the industry. This will control activities of the industry and give it a strong voice in the broader textile industry.

Conclusion

Liberalization and globalization have brought increased opportunities for business developers to create profitable enterprises over an extensive geographical range. It must, however, be noted that, opportunities are not equal for everybody and despite the recent economic growth on the African continent, there are increasing tendencies towards social and geographical differences (Kaiser 1996; Stein and Nissanke 1999 cited in Krishianes S. and Mbwambo A. 2003). Local and cottage industries are easily marginalized in open competition in the broader industries and will therefore need policy measures to survive (Brenton and Hoppe, 2007). The encouragement and promotion of indigenous industries should form part of any package deal of any nation which is aimed at developing from the grassroots (Krishianes, and Mbwambo, 2003 and Dornbusch, 1992). The importance of the smock industry in the lives of people cannot be over-emphasizing as it serves as the only source of livelihood to many people in the study area. It must, however, be noted that many factors hinder it from realizing its full potential. Some of these are inadequate finance, inadequate market stores, raw materials, poor working conditions as well as the lack of political will to develop the industry. Despite all the challenges, the industry has been able to survive the growing competition due to the cultural attachments of the industry, the responsiveness of the industry to changing times as well as the unique nature of its products. Despite its survival, there is a persistent need for growth of the industry and it is therefore vital that the policy recommendations outlined above be given the necessary attention by all stakeholders to help promote the sustenance of the industry for the realization of the needed socio-economic transformation in the lives of the people of TAMA and the nation at large.

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