



EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract- This paper is designed to evaluate the national council for arts and culture in a bid to examine how the ministry has been able to foster national unity and development in Jordan. Issues of culture and arts presently lies in the control of the national ministry of culture. This paper will evaluate the ministry by examining its origin, past policies and present policies. The terms arts and culture will be defined in details with references and be related as collocates. The history of the Jordanian state will also be discussed in this paper so as to link history and modernity. Selected pictures will be us to buttress some assertions so as to effectively evaluate the Jordanian ministry of culture.

Keywords: culture, Arts, Ministry, Jordan

I. INTRODUCTION

Around the world, the issue of culture and arts has gain prominence in issues of governance. Most countries create a comprehensive ministry delegated with issues related to arts and culture. Jordan as an independent nation also deems it necessary to have her own ministry of arts and culture that is responsible for the management of arts and culture.

There is no country that can perfectly delineate itself from issues related to culture because arts and culture is encrypted into the history of independent countries around the world. To better understand the past, present and even future conditions of a state, it is apt that detailed information about the arts and culture of such state is examined. This paper is designed to examine the arts and culture of the Jordan state by comprehensively examining the council responsible for arts and culture in Jordan.

The National Council of arts and culture has been legislatively entrusted with the authority to effectively handle issues of arts and culture in Jordan. A thorough analysis of the acts that created them, their objectives and achievements will reveal the structure of arts and culture in the Jordan state.

Note that every ministry, council and agencies created in a state is for the sole purpose of developing such state. This will form the basis of this study. The study will examine how the council for arts and culture have formulated policies and enact such policies to develop the Jordan state.

Definition of Culture

In simple terms, culture have been defined as the way a people in a particular area live their life. So it is clear that culture cannot be relegated in issues of prominence in a society because it involves individuals and groups in a society.

Kluckkohn (1951) defines culture by listing out certain features which involves the seen and unseen actions of individuals and groups which can be summed up to mean their culture. He listed such features as a way a particular people think, feel, react and the physical artefacts they create to express their believes. This shows that culture is indeed an essential part of a people.

Shein (1990) sees culture as a term that describes culture as a set of values, beliefs and concepts that a people esteem and reflect in their behaviour. Culture then can be related to behaviour and actions that a person or individual uses to determine how his life will be patterned.

Bodley (1999) summarised culture in 3 ways:

He defines culture as what people think

He defines culture as what people do

He defines culture as the materials people produce.

Bodley definition is realistic. Culture according to his definition can be understood in two ways. He defined it as an unseen or abstract concept when he said:

What people think.

Then he defines it as a concrete or material concept when he said: ...

what people produce.

These definitions then clearly show that culture is an integral part of the human society. This is true because it concerns what we think, the actions we take and the things we produce to help us enact our thoughts.

The ministry or council vested with the responsibility of examining the culture and arts of a state is by no means a tag along organisation. They have heavy responsibility to fulfil. The national council of arts and culture for the Jordan state will be examined to observe their relevance in the state and their contributions to national development. However, most nations usually join the ministry of culture to arts, the question now is: Does arts relate to culture? Are they distinct or the same? To answer these questions let us define what arts as it concerns culture is?

Definition of Arts

Cambridge Dictionary defines arts as objects, images, music, paintings that are good to look at and reflect the feelings of the artist or creator. It then shows that art is not abstract. Paintings, sculptures and music are concrete experiences that we can see, touch hear (music and musical displays) and feel.

Beardsley (1982) defines art as an arrangement of conditions that is able to reflect aesthetic

experience when evaluated. This definition creates rooms for some artful display to be regarded as art based on the fact that it elicits a response from the viewers or listeners.

Zangwill (2007) defines art in a different way. He said art must not only be based on the aesthetic qualities of the art work but mentions that other non-aesthetic features can be noticed from the artwork based on the appearance of the art.

George Dickie (1974) Defines art in two ways which have been accepted by some as a comprehensive definition. He defines art as:

An artefact -which means that art can be a historical object that is well decorated.

Arts is a set of objects whose appearance is able to elicit appreciation from people because of the beauty expressed by such art work.

Robert Stecker (1997) argues that an art work should be able to fulfil a function during the period of its creation. Art then is intended to elicit response from onlookers and also reflect the time period when it was created in terms of beliefs, economy and any other eventful experience.

In the light of this, it is obvious that art is a concrete object or condition that expresses beauty which can satisfy senses of the creator and admirers.

Art too has a historical function which reflects the period of time it was created.

Relationship between Arts and Culture

It is obvious in many countries that art and culture are collocates in expression and even definition. In Jordan for instance, the council of arts is merged with culture. This shows that there is a bond or relationship between arts and culture.

There are many reasons why art and culture are considered as related concepts.

Lopes (2008) observes that culture which is the way people in a specific area think and act is embedded with artistic experiences such as dancing, music, picturing, painting and others.

This definition makes it clear why culture and arts are considered as collocations. When a people think about how they can get entertain they create a dance step which reflects their beliefs (culture) Paintings, sculpture works and music are arts which people create according to their tradition to reflect what they believe or their perception of life.

So arts are simply the physical or literal way in which a people show their culture.

A walk into the museum will offer the visitor opportunity to see and sometimes touch art works that are historical materials which reflects the culture of a certain group of people.

Art works are not abstract but are defined as material aspects of a culture. Some Arts are named according to the culture value they represent. Below are some examples from Jordan.

Arts in Jordan that Reflects Culture



Source: www.Pininterest.com

This is an art work that expresses the dressing mode of most women in Jordan. The country is an Islamic state and this picture realistically presents the cultural dressing of most women in the Jordanian state. This art work originated from “thinking” which is based on culture and the real life representation of such thought has now been presented in a concrete mode.



Source: Jordan Times

This is an art work from Jordan that presents the architectural design of a place in Jordan called Yasser Dwaik. This is an artistic impression of a real city in Jordan where arts is highly valued. Again this art work has presented the cultural structure of a city in Jordan.



Source: wikipedia

This sculptural art was unearthed from the ancient city of Ain Ghazzal. This artistic work is valued by archaeologist and other scholars because it reflects the grooming and economic situation of Jordan hundreds of years ago.

These examples indicate that art is that aspect of culture that saves the cultural thinking of a people and concretises such concepts so that they will not be lost if it only lies in verbal transmission.

History of Jordan as an Ancient Kingdom and Modern Government

Kingdom of Petra has been described to be among the early root of Jordan. However, World powers such as Mede-Persian empire and the Roman Empire have been reported to have taken control of this kingdom.

In 1516, Jordan was turned into an Ottoman Empire. It became an Islamic state under the control of Moguls. However, the Western part of the state which is close to Jerusalem in Israel was exempted from this.

Ottoman empire finally collapsed, this paved way for the British empire to take control of some Islamic state and Jordan was among their bounty. The British controlled them for about 20 years but by 1946, the Jordanian state got her independence.

Today, Abdullah, the 2nd is the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. The state runs a parliamentary system of government where The King exercises his executive authority through the prime minister and the Council of Ministers, or cabinet. Jordan is seen as a modern Arab nation; its culture is based on a tribal system with traditional attributes and values. It has a pro-Western regime, with close relations to all parts of the world.

Origin and Operations of the National Council for Arts and Culture

Jordan is an ancient state that is privilege to have her name and culture embedded in such great books as the bible and Quran. As an ancient city is having a lot of cultural heritage that reflects historical experiences.

In Jordan there are relics of ancient civilisations and ruins which archaeologist cherish so much.

The present ministry of culture in Jordan was first established in 1977 as the Ministry of Culture and Youth. The sole reason then of creating the ministry was for the popularising of the cultural heritage that the country is blessed with. The ministry then organised lots of seminars and festivals to achieve this aim.

In the year 1990, a National charter was released and it mandated the Ministry of culture and Youth to work under the Islamic Arabic Culture in reflecting ideas, art and creativity.

The Islamic Arabic Culture provided guidelines that the Ministry was expected to adhere to, the guidelines were:

Arabic language must be adhered to.

Libraries, information centres, theatres, exhibitions and museums should be used as tools to promote cultural heritage.

Writers of all fields in Jordan were mandated to accept foreign cultures but copyrights law were updated to control publications strictly.

In 2003, due to some unsettled issues and misunderstandings, the ministry was closed 13 years after (2003), for a year.

King Abdullah in 2007 arranged a meeting with intellectuals with the sole aim of refining the ministry so that it can better achieve its aims.

In 2005-2010, the meeting Abdullah held materialised into the creation of the Jordan city of culture.

The Jordan city of Culture was created to encourage the use of mobile, children and state libraries as a means of promoting the culture. To a reasonable extent, this policy boosted the ministry into achieving great results.

The Ministry of Culture was established by a legislative act to manage issues of national culture. This ministry is authorised to formulate cultural policies that will reflect the historical and modern structure of the Jordan state.

Since Jordan is an ancient state, it has a great deal of heritage that will need the partnership of different ministries, agencies and institution to better evaluate these heritages. The ministry of culture then partners with other ministries and institutions to be able to fully realise the aim for which the council was formulated for.

Al Mawred Al Thaqafy(2009) in his research project mentioned six partners that the Ministry of culture works with to aid them in realising their aims. They are:

Ministries of Education (arts education),

Higher Education and Scientific Research, Information (the media),

Tourism and Antiquities (cultural heritage and tourism),

Municipal Affairs, the Higher Council for Youth (heritage and contemporary culture, including history and religion),

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and others

Khamis (1998); reports that the ministry of culture at the national level operates a seniority or rank system of administration. There are cultural centres that are affiliated to the national ministry. Each of these centres in various regions are headed by a representative from the national ministry. Issues about funding and generation of funds are to be approved by the Prime Minister who is the head of all ministries.

Objectives of the Ministry

The idea behind the creation of the ministry has been to mainly promote the national heritage of Jordan by arranging programmes and projects that can publicise these heritages to the people of Jordan and the world at large. To achieve this main objective, complementary guidelines or objectives were formulated.

They are:

To create the infrastructure of the culture and art sector in all fields which include public and private institutions.

The Ministry is expected to decentralise its departments.

The Ministry is expected to formulate a fund generating means to support the promotion of cultural values.

The ministry is mandated to ensure that Jordan as an Arab state gains prominence in the Arabian Peninsula and the international community.

Tourism development and sustenance is part of the objectives of this ministry. They are expected to stage events annually to promote Jordanian culture.

Achievements of the Ministry

The ministry has succeeded in creating a cultural agreement with other nations, It has formed agreements with many Arab nations which is part of its objectives.

The Ministry was also mandated to ally with foreign nations culturally and this too they have achieved. Presently they have French cultural centres, Russian Cultural Centre, Turkish cultural centre, The Goethe Institute, Spanish Cultural centre and others.

To make the Ministry more efficient and in keeping with the mandate given to the ministry, the ministry of culture is funding the development of two cultural industries. These industries are expected to generate funds and promote the Jordanian culture.

The small minorities include the Circassian, Armenian, Kurdish, Chechen and Druze. They maintain their mother tongues and cultures and have their own clubs, events and popular groups. They co-exist in harmony in Jordanian society. I

Unlike what happens in some parts of the world like Africa, where most tribes have lost control of their mother tongue, the Ministry of arts and culture in Jordan have ensured that tribes still maintain their mother tongue. The Circassian, Armenian, Kurdish, Chechen and Druze minority tribes have been

endowed with cultural clubs of their own. They have the right to form popular groups and organise large events where culture and art is promoted.

Gender issues has been properly handled by the ministry of arts and culture. To this end, women have been granted opportunity to occupy politically elected offices. In 2007, 20% of seats were reserved for women in all municipal councils. This is a great achievement because it is not a common practice in Islamic countries.

The use of Information and Computer Technology (ICT) is not heavily restricted in Jordan because the ministry was able to create policies that guides the operation of social media and other internet activities.

There are over 280 public cultural institutions in Jordan. They involve all forms of creativity, such as poetry, novels, fine arts, music, theatre, arts criticism, handicrafts and folk music.

The Ministry of arts and culture have ensured that national and international festivals are held regularly in the country. Some of the festivals are:

Meeting Points Festival for Contemporary arts

European Film Festival

Jordan Festival for Short Films and Video

The Fawanees (performing arts)

The Contemporary Dance Festival

Fete De La Musique in collaboration with Trance and others.

In 1986, King Hussein founded the National Centre for Culture and Performing Arts and today its activities have been subsumed into the ministry of Culture. However, PAC which is a short name for National centre for Performing Arts is internationally recognised and have been able to promote cross cultural events such as the hosting of Arab Children congress. Television programmes, documentaries and other media publicity programmes have been locally and internationally aired to promote the Jordanian culture.

The ministry has ensured that cultural houses and cultural clubs proliferate the Jordanian society. The local municipalities have been mandated to handle local cultural centres based on nativity. In these centres sometimes the Ministry host local and international events to promote harmony and relevance.

Benefits of The Ministry of Arts and Culture to The Jordanian State

The ministry has been promoting national identity which is a remarkable achievement

The Ministry has created a platform for gender equality which fosters unity

The Ministry has been able to attract foreign investors to Jordan by means of its alliance with foreign cultural groups

The ministry has been able to create a background for performing arts to thrive with a view of promoting local and international culture

The ministry has been able to involve national, regional and local governmental authorities to cohere in promoting culture by means of the cultural centre structures

The Ministry have worked with archaeologist to unearth artefacts of ancient Jordan with a view of giving identity to the state and preserving history.

The Ministry has given support to the performing arts which can be noted in dance festivals and even in production of movies.

The Ministry have also ensured that modern means of communication like social media is not too restricted since the means can be used to show case the culture and people of Jordan

The ministry has laid the groundwork for folk arts, architectural arts and other visual arts to effectively promote the culture and people of Jordan.

Some Islamic state like Jordan restricts social rights and limit the relationship her citizens have with the Western world. **The Jordan Ministry** of Culture has ensured that healthy relationship is maintained with foreign countries and that cross-cultural festivals are held in the state.

The Ministry has ensured that writers, authors and journalist are to a reasonable degree given a leeway to explore and express their creativity in writing and speaking.

II. CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the royal family of Jordan have to a great extent succeeded in maintaining the status of the State and as ancient nation which still wields influence in the modern world. Some nations invest heavily in economic policies and consider culture and arts as trivial but the success of the Jordan state in prominence and tourism cannot be excused from policies formed by the vibrant ministry of culture. Though more still need to be done to integrate cultural values in the blood line of the state, much have been achieved. The successes of the ministry are not minute because its impact in other social, economic and educational ministries holds sway. It is justifiable then to conclude that the ministry has succeeded in promoting national unity and value.

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