

MUSIC EDUCATION, MANPOWER AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Music education in Nigeria is geared toward the acquisition of practical and applied skills, which will enable the graduates to manipulate musical instruments and apparatuses, as well as to acquire the basic scientific knowledge for adopting and operating modern scientific equipment along the line of the changing world. The knowledge so acquired would equip the individuals to participate and or contribute to the national development. Unfortunately the programme has been bedevilled by such inadequacies as lack of facilities and equipment, paucity of qualified manpower, lack of interest and poor funding on the part of the government, poor societal attitude towards music. Despite the inadequacies, high level manpower who have made contributions to national development have been produced.

Introduction

Education the world over, is the key to industrialization and economic growth which on the other hand is national development. Music education on its part can contribute in transforming Nigeria through her citizenry into a developed and self-reliant nation. Notably, the business of music education is the teaching and learning of music with the sole aim of developing in the students musical intelligence, competencies and appreciation (Ekwueme, 2002:5). Music is not only an academic subject, rather a skill-oriented, glamorous as well as technological -oriented subject (Aninwene, 2003:1).

The responsibility of transforming the Nigerian society from peasantry and anti-skill to occupationally wealthy society is bestowed on music education, and gladly enough, the impact is being felt and equally appreciated by everyone. Olaitan (1998:2), advocating for Vocational Technical Education, observed that "Indicators of success and efficiency point to the non-realization of the roles of Vocational Technological Education for occupational efficiency and for technological transformation of the society hence branded unsuccessful." He further stated that "Among the indicators is the gap between what an ideal Vocational Technical Education should be and what it is now". Music education shares in the cross-road. This paper discusses the concepts of music, music education, manpower and national development in the first section. In the second section, it discusses music education in Nigeria and equally discusses the Nigerian experience of music education, highlighting the inadequacies and societal attitudes toward music education in the third section. It discusses the impact of music/music education on our national development in the fourth section and concludes with suggested opinions for better achievement.

What is Music?

Some of the commonest things in life defy precise definition. Taking music as one example, Shakespeare sees music as "concord of sweet sounds." Politoske (1975:5) defined music as "sound organized within time. Both definitions present music as completely sound. Nwachukwu (2000) in Aninwene (20002:2) further attempts some inclusiveness defined music as "that one of fine arts which is concerned with the expression of thought or feeling." Here music is concerned with the expression of thoughts and feelings and not sound. Other schools of thought see music as a " cultural expression" as "universal language", and as "system of communication." Whichever way it is conceptualized, everyone should recognize and appreciate it anywhere, everywhere and anytime.

Music Education

The definition of music education is not separated from the definition of education. Since the latter is, in general terms, associated with the process of impartation of knowledge, the former squarely rests on the system of imparting musical knowledge to individuals, especially children (students) by their adults, through formal or informal circumstances.

Music education had begun in the traditional societies before the coming of the whites, with the embracing of early knowledge of folkore- folk stories, clan mythologies, music and dance, etc. (Aninwene, 2002:4). The study of music was by apprenticeship, temporary affiliation and from observer role to participatory role. By the introduction of formal education, children were taught alien songs, church songs and some musical concepts of rhythm, time, melody, and instruments/performance from primary to tertiary levels.

Historically, formal music education according to Okafor (2002:4) "started about the middle of the 19' Century with the introduction of the Arabic schools and western schools." He further stated that "the principal aim

was to produce musicians who could perform religious songs, chant and recite the Koran, teach Arabic music in line with Arabic culture, and those who could teach church songs in choirs". It was on these plains that music education began to develop on one hand.

Music education on the other hand is geared toward the acquisition of practical and applied skills, which will enable the graduates to manipulate musical instruments and apparatuses, as well as acquire the basic scientific knowledge for adopting and operating modern scientific equipment along the line of the changing world. It is an integrated programme for the acquisition of knowledge, attitude, skill development and manipulation competencies of the individuals for effective participation/performance in the world of work.

From whichever perspective it is viewed, music education and its concepts is focused at producing musically literate, skillful, competent and self-reliant individuals who would be useful to themselves and the society at large, through their contributions to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Manpower

This concept simply means human resources. Mohammed (1998:92) states human resources as "the ultimate determinant of the character and pace of the economic and social development of a nation". The principal mechanism for the enhancement of human resources of course is Education -indeed formal education.

In recognition of the importance of human resources to national development, the National Policy on Education (1981 Revised), by its egalitarian nature, integrated human resources development to produce sound and effective citizenry at all levels, who would make effective and adequate contributions to the nation at large. The government created a level play ground, in this regard, through the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system. This educational system has continued to develop the needed manpower which have continued to thrive in the development of the country, the limited number as in the case of music education notwithstanding.

National Development

National development is the improvement on the resources of the nation. Since resources is the means of producing wealth, a nation aims at developing when its resources is found on a sound footing. When our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increases, when the general sphere of the economy stabilizes, that is national development. Music education in national development, aims at developing the skills, attitudes, appreciation for all types of Nigerian music, creativity in the individuals and active participation in performance, in occupational entry of its graduates, to enable them contribute their bit to the nation. Furthermore it aims at developing the individuals' capabilities for self-employment or paid employment.

Music Education: The Nigerian Experience

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1981 (revised) articulate the aims and objectives of music education. The principles underlying the operation of the programme, notwithstanding, there seem to be a deviation from the expected as justified by the following points:

- (a) Abounding misconception about music education as a course for never-do-wells, school drop-outs, etc.
- (b) Gross lack of interest and attention on music education on the part of government;
- (c) Gross inadequacy of facilities in educational institutions, especially the secondary schools which are feeders to the tertiary institutions.
- (d) Gross under-funding of music education stemming from lack of budgetary provision;
- (e) Inadequacy of manpower/manpower developmental incentives for music educators and practitioners, especially at tertiary level;
- (f) Inadequacy on the part of music curriculum;
- (g) Poor societal attitude and parental influence on students and or wards.

It is sad to note that the operation of music education currently in Nigeria, does not follow THE principles. Inadequate facilities, paucity of qualified teachers and limited opportunities for supervisee operation of such programme still exist. Despite this, students continue to graduate under such conditions. This means "outputs" are ill-equipped to face world of work. Since music education is competency - based, they can neither profit the graduates nor society much.

Despite the National Policy on Education, the public still sees no dignity in opting for music education because of the erroneous belief that the course/subject is meant for academic failures who could not read medicine, engineering, law, etc. According to Nwaokolo (1998:4), " no government policy would work, if the value of vocational preparation of their youths is derogatory." Even when government has amended its stand, the public perception on music as a school subject career remain unchanged.

Inadequacy of Qualified Music Teachers

Another factor hindering the growth of music education is the acute shortage of suitably qualified teachers. As a result, out of the 252 secondary schools in Enugu State, (PPSMB Enugu) on/about 10 schools study music. Presently, out of the 33 colleges of education (Federal, State, Special etc.) only 9 study music. On the part of Universities, out of the 32 universities (federal, state and private) only 7: UNN, NAU, UYO, OAU and LASU, OKADA, DELSU, have music departments.

How then would enough manpower be produced to satisfy the yearning of the country with the above trends? Shocking is the fact that majority of the graduates produced opt to serve in other sectors than music. Among the reasons stem from shallow knowledge, low prestige, to societal dreadedness of the career. Until this low prestige, and status are addressed by the authorities, we will! undoubtedly continue to have "half-baked" graduates and as well lose them to other fields of endeavour.

Inadequacy of Facilities and Equipment:

Nwaokolo and Ekwue (1998) stated that "certain facilities are specially designed to enhance the teaching of certain skills in some subjects without which such designed skills cannot be acquired." Observing the increasing complexity of world system, the need for specialized and sophisticated facilities has so much risen.

In most of our secondary schools, there are no music laboratories, classrooms, musical equipment such as instruments (Western and African), books, films and film projectors, etc. yet the secondary schools were supposed to be feeders to the tertiary institutions. In like manner, our tertiary institutions (Colleges of Education and Universities) lack facilities such as music auditorium, practice cubicles, sound-proofed music/recording studios, complete orchestral equipment, keyboards, up-right pianos in lecturer's offices for applied music tutorials, synthesizers and equalizers, etc., to facilitate sound musical knowledge. The music teachers are therefore, faced with frustration and job dissatisfaction. No wonder most of the music graduates opt for other areas of employment.

Inadequate Funding

Ulinfun (1992) in Nwaokolo and Ekwue (1998:6) states that "this problem has become a hydra-headed monster that cannot be conquered by government." Basic equipment are disturbingly lacking because of poor funding. The governments: federal and state, have never considered it necessary to make any budgetary allocation/provision for music education, yet they attach great importance to musical performance entertainment on official ceremonies and reception of local and international guests and functionaries on formal visits to Nigeria.

Since music is tied with culture, the Federal Ministry of Education should receive equal funds for music education like its counterpart in culture, to enable the schools to procure modern equipment and infrastructure for music education.

Music is a multi-dimensional subject. It is a skill oriented, glamorous, expensive and technological oriented subject. The functions of music create career opportunities, means of livelihood for individuals, and even generate revenue for government therefore, the business of music education demands for serious government attention and interest.

Poor Societal Attitude and Parental Influence

Music education has much to offer to individuals and the society. It is involved in the promotion of health (release of tension and therapeutics), acquisition of knowledge and educational advancement. Nwaneri (2002:2) stated that it is involved in "moulding and reshaping of character, promotion of religion, maintaining political stability, creation of socio - cultural awareness, boosting a country's economy." Music education creates job opportunities, promotes and projects our culture and cultural heritage, enhances ethnic harmony. Despite all its utilitarian values, the Nigerian society dread music as a career. As stated by Nwaneri (op.cit.) "people seem not to accord it much or any recognition as a course". Those who opt to study music in schools are jettisoned as the music teachers are nicknamed with derogatory nomenclatures. Parents would not want to hear or see their wards register music among the subjects chosen for junior school certificate examinations (JSSCE). The negation is surprisingly more with the elite in the society. Nwaneri (2002:3) further stated that "people love music. They listen to it, dance to its rhythms and eventually employ it in virtually every occasion; but they dislike its pursuit as a career and treat it with all amount of impunity."

Retrospecting from the colonial era when formal music education was included in the nation's school curriculum, it suffered much negation from the school authorities, hence it was not part of the subjects for terminal or annual examination/evaluation, unlike Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, etc. This of course is the genesis of music's negation as a serious subject. On the school's time-tables, it is placed towards the last periods when both the students and teachers are worn-out. Most schools use the period to make up lost grounds on

other subjects.

It is worthy to note that the nation's educational system includes music as one of the core subjects in the junior secondary school system. The core and crust of this negativism towards music education is ignorance and lack of musical enlightenment/awareness. Music education is not mere singing and dancing but an intellectual subject which contributes a great deal to the psychological, sociological, economic, political and general growth and development of the individuals as well as the society at large.

Inadequacy of the Music Curriculum

Barrow (1978:14) equates the curriculum with "a good ship lollipop which sails without a captain thus the good ship lollipop does not have a captain. It is run by an able crew in which every member is competent in his own field, and sails the ship to its right destination".

The ship of education, therefore, sails/could sail not without a coherent view of its destination, but with a crew some at least believe that this state of affairs is positively desirable.

What after all is the curriculum? In its broadest sense it is synonymous with the content of education. Etymologic ally it is the course to be run in any statutory educational institution. The Encyclopedia Americana (1995:340) defined curriculum as "what is taught by a school, particularly the subject matter ... The programme of studies". On its part, the Academic Americana Encyclopedia (1989:393) sees curriculum as "a plan for what is to be taught in schools." This definition raises the question: for what or to achieve what? Aguokogbuo attempted to answer the questions as he defined

curriculum as:

The planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the school for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal - social competence.

A good curriculum, therefore, should be made to address all the necessary experiences which the students are supposed to acquire. It should further aspire to meet the objectives of the educational policy in all its ramifications. But where the content and learning experiences were not properly selected and organized in line with the educational objectives, and how the children learn, the entire framework becomes futile. The educational objectives of the music curricula at all levels, should be balanced, meaningful and relevant, for the achievement of national development.

Aninwene (1999:2), states the objectives of the music curriculum in the junior and senior secondary schools thus:

- (a) Introducing students to the language of music, and the science of combining them for creative purpose;
- (b) Helping students to develop good musical ears (musical aptitudes);
- (c) Teaching students the elements of music and its relationship with dance;
- (d) Leading students to acquire knowledge for appreciation of music including Nigerian music; and
- (e) Enabling students to participate actively in performance.

The objectives for the tertiary institutions, towing the same line with the secondary schools, are aimed at producing competent manpower who would fit in the nation's field of work.

In the traditional societies, the curriculum was a reflection of life-rites and the musical experiences the local communities have to undergo. The traditional drummer for instance, manipulated and directed his son to become even more .proficient than he was. The traditional musician earned and enjoyed respect in his vicinity. Okafor (2002:7) buttressed this fact by stating that "the musician was thus relevant in the life of the society. This resulted in some societies investing their outstanding musicians with traditional tittles or other acts of honour". Within the popular music setting, the aim of music education was, according to Okafor (2002:8) "to produce practicing musicians, performing musicians who could contribute to the social life of the society." The society gave its own evaluation in terms of the quantity and quality of patronage it offered. Good popular musicians made wealth as they equally gained respect, honour and popularity in the society. Hence some were bestowed with our National Merit Award, in recognition of their immense contributions to national development.

The formal music education which exist in the secondary and tertiary institutions have the curriculum which cover more of Western music. The aim of the curriculum is to produce music teachers and musicians. But the curriculum according to Okafor (op. Cit.) " laid more stress on Western music and music of Euro-American cultures than African music." He further stated that "the musician evaluated himself by how much classical music he knew, how many choirs he could conduct and how to show himself off as a musician in many other categories of life. The contents of the music curriculum do not include a lot of the Nigerian music. There is not much of Nigerian society

and our cultural affinities were not considered relevant as to be imbibed in the music curriculum. The curriculum for music education, either at the student -level or the teacher -level did not include, or rather would be said to include very little of popular music. By this educational shortcoming, the Nigerian people have been shut off from the type of music making that make essential part in the lives of Nigerians, day in day out.

Those who passed through the curriculum had to struggle at being employed either in the service bands of the Army, Air Force, Police, etc., in the electronic media houses such as radio and television, in school system, and advertising industry. Apart from teaching, these other areas have fewer positions. The products of teacher education and university education in music had to be judged in terms of how much they have contributed to Nigerian life and culture and how much use they have made of Nigerian cultural materials in their music. As stressed by Okafor (2002:8), "most of the products of teacher and university education found themselves rather on cross-roads of life because the society was not giving them as much recognition as they required because their training had not prepared them (very well) for the life of the society." The training of the academic musicians prepared them more for leadership in certain musical directions.

As our developmental/educational planners are producing more and more musicians of that quality, and as the demand for them are more, the society was not utilising and or absorbing as many of them as may be acceptable. Rather the society saw the popular and traditional musicians as "those who move with the society and live in the society, those who can move the society themselves into various strains of thoughts and action" (Okafor, 2002:9). These are the musicians that are recognized by the society. That is why it seemed as if the academic musicians are not making any impact in the national development. That is again, the social dilemma of what to do with the products of the formal music education in Nigeria. In the opinion of Okafor (2002:9) "that is also why there is a dilemma in the music curriculum planning in the country.

Music in National Development

To contribute effectively to national development, professionals in their various fields should adequately utilize their abilities and capabilities, interests and values in their referred occupations. (Aninwene, 1998:7). But where people exhibit narrow perspective, inadequate knowledge and experiences in their fields of endeavour, the issue of national development and its success becomes a failure.

Fortunate enough, musicians through their various training (here we mean academic and non-academic musicians) have not fallen short of their glory in the nation's ship for national development. They have reasonably contributed their bit, even though one group might have performed much better than the other.

The ideals of our society have been promoted and projected through music. The tertiary institutions have produced professionals from our educational system, who are employees or service men in the teaching field, in broadcasting, in the service forces: Army, Police, Navy, etc., band corps ;as, professors, lecturers, tutors, producers and directors/controllers, composers and performers. The presence and contributions of these musicians have been immensely felt by the proliferation of recording studios, production of VCD/CD and audio tapes from which they and their dealers pay reasonable amount to the revenue generating machinery of the nation. They have equally provided employment opportunities to alleviate poverty in the country. According to Aninwene (1998:7), "practitioners get self-employed and employed others in their various bands and groups, thereby reducing unemployment problem of the government." He further stated that "these musicians have earned foreign exchange from which they pay huge taxes, through their international concerts".

On the political scene, musicians have composed party songs, slogans and even highlighted party symbols and manifestos in the local languages. These musicians have equally contributed to electioneering campaign with their music caravans' at political campaigns. They have projected the images and characters of aspirants in various categories.

On the commercial sector, musicians have been responsible for the production of various jingles used for the productions of goods and social services. Government programmes such as HIV/AIDS scourge; EPI, All Africa Games, CHOGOM, ECOWAS etc., have been promoted through enlightenment programmes with their music. The contribution of music to our national development is indeed numerous.

Conclusion

It is the position of this paper that all is, yet, not well with music education in Nigeria. To realize the objectives of the National Policy on Education (1981 revised), the music curriculum should be reviewed to include popular music education and music entrepreneurship education. This would enable music graduates to be well grounded in practical musicianship and be able also, to embark upon private practicing in music. They would increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation and above all improve the much -canvassed science and technology policy for the country.

In countries like China, Japan, India, United States of America, Britain, etc. music education has been given

a pride of place because of the realization of its importance in the growth and well being of their countries. In Italy, music/music education is an act of parliament. Ekwueme (2002:3) buttresses this fact by stating that "when Verdi died, his funeral involved the municipality of Milan. Schools closed down until the funeral was over. The Italian Senate gave up one sitting entirely to speeches in his honour and memory. So proud was Italy of its great composer."

Music education should be accorded the regard it deserves since the country can hardly do without music, right from the Government to the local communities. The necessary institutions offering music should be equipped and incentives provided for its practitioners. This would enable them to contribute more to our national development.

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