

# **MUSIC IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD IN ANNANG CULTURE: THEN AND NOW**

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## **Introduction**

Annang society places importance in education of the child and sees it as a necessary factor in the development process of the child. It is their belief that education enhances the ability of the child to face challenges of life and grow into an adult that is not a threat to the society. One of their ways of achieving this is through the use of music. The type of education the Annang child receives informally, the methods used and how music contributes to the general education of the Annang child in Annang society - then and now, are some of the highlights of this paper. This research tries to bring to the fore, the importance of traditional music in general education and development of the Annang child as some suggestions advance towards effective use of traditional music in contemporary Annang society and beyond in a recessed Nigerian economy.

Annang society refers to the geographical area and the people who speak Annang as their language. It is the third major ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The Annang-speaking people occupy the western part of Akwa Ibom State in the South-South Zone of Nigerian geographical region. They are bounded by the Ngwa and Ndoki (Igbos) in Abia State in the North; the Isuogbu on the East; on the South by Ibibio and on the West by the Adoni and Ogoni in Rivers State. The Annang now occupy eight out of the thirty-one Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. These are Ikot Ekpene, Essien Udim, Obot Akara, Ukanafun, Abak, Ika, Etim Ekpo and Oruk Anam (Udoh, 2012).

The Annang traditional society had and still has its ways of training its children. Human beings live in either their traditional societies of modern society.

According to Okafor (1988), the primary or the traditional society is the one which the bulk of our people have grown straight out of its culture and profess, uphold, maintain and conserve it with all its tenets. The traditional society is not chaotic; it has its roles, its systems of maintenance of law and order, its systems of continuity and governance.

On the other hand, the modern society also has its rules, its systems of maintenance of law and order, systems of continuity and governance but with some differences. This paper, therefore, takes a look at how music was used in Annang traditional society in the educational development of the Annang child (then), and how music is used in Annang modern society in the educational development of the Annang child (now).

### **Education in Annang Traditional Society**

According to Sifura (1990), education is the whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to succeeding generation or the process by which people prepare to live effectively and efficiently in their community. Speaking about education in the traditional African Society, Manly and Duruji (2013) submit that;

*In old African society, the purpose of education was clear: functionalism was the main guiding principle. African society regarded education as a means to an end not as an end in itself. Education was generally for an immediate induction into society and preparation for adulthood. In particular, African education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, spiritual and moral values. Children learnt by doing, that is to say, children and adolescents were engaged in participatory ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration. They were involved in practical farming, fishing, cooking, carving, knitting and so on.*

In Annang, there was traditional system of education with its indigenous principles before the introduction of Western Education in Nigeria. Western Education in Nigeria was largely introduced by religious organizations - Christian missionaries and foreign traders (the Arabs). In the traditional cultures/societies,

education can be said to be non-formal in process. In fact, learning was through observation, imitation, practicing and character by the whole way of life of the people, that is, culture. It was Emenyonu (1987) who said literature had existed in Africa before the coming of Europeans. According to him;

*This literature was basically oral, known as oral tradition; it consisted of materials transmitted by tradition either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. Oral tradition had a definite purpose; to instruct the young in the principles of right and wrong. It was directed at the young and all who molded opinion and character. The imagery was non-human, the values human. (p.10)*

Manly and Duruji (2013) added that the above submission brings to bare the literacy power of the African even before the advent of Europeans.

In an earlier submission, Tafuwa and Babs (1974) had noted that “every society whether simple or complex has its own system of training and educating its youths and education of good life has been one of the most persistent concerns of man throughout history” (p.15). They also argued that traditional African education (even in Annang culture) was by the indigenous people of Africa even before the westerners colonized their continent. The difference between western education and traditional African education is being regarded as formal and informal (non-formal) respectively.

The scope of traditional education was its cultural process since it was all the cultural forces and surroundings that the child relied on to educate him/her. It was an approved way of life as lived by majority of members of society. The group values were built into the individual. This education system prepared each child for the roles he/she had to play in the community and society. So its education was from infants throughout to adulthood and for life to death. One never ceased the learning culture, that is, education from womb to the tomb. The teachers were anyone, everywhere as the need arose during the daily interactions and did not rely on so-called formal instructions mainly because the focus was on practice, thus acquisition of practical living. This is an apprentice type of education where the learner learns as working or performing the job. Individuals had to get practical

skills plus an understanding of their place in society, gender, roles and to be aware of what the environment offered them and others.

Education in Annang traditional society fits the description of Udo (1993) that usually the entire environment/society is the school, all activities constitute schooling. According to him, all adults are teachers. Each person can teach many things if not all things. This is because the quality of knowledge to be passed on is limited in such a society and usually; such education is non-literate, having developed no art of reading and writing. In another much earlier submission about the traditional society, Mannheim and Stewart (1962) disclosed that the main educative agent is the community in which the child lives and the objects which these people have created; their relationships, their culture and their connections with a still larger society beyond.

The characteristics of traditional education in Africa (Annang inclusive) are aptly summarized by (Moumouni, 1988:20) thus:

1. The great importance attached to it and its collective and social nature.
2. Its intimate tie with social life both in a material and a spiritual sense.
3. Its multivalent character, both in terms of its goals and the means employed.
4. Its gradual and progressive achievements in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child.

Because indigenous education failed to conform to the ways of the Westernized system, some less well informed writers have considered it primitive, even savage and barbaric. But such contentions should be seen as the product of ignorance and due to a total misunderstanding of the inherent value of informal education. When evaluating any educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at any given time. According to Fafunwa (1991), "traditional African education must therefore be judged not by any extraneous consideration or some foreign yard stick but by its performance within a given social context. Many European observers tend to ignore this important factor." (p. 17)

## **The Role of Music in Educational Development of the Annang Child**

Studies reveal that the community is built as one and the individual comes second to the community because the community provides one with a spiritual, sexual, social and intellectual identity. Hence the individual has to conform to the community's demands. Traditional music in Annang land is used in the educational development of the Annang child. The essential values that are passed on to the next generation, for instance, sanctity to life, hospitality, honesty, sacrifice, obedience, humility, respect for elders.. Most of these essentials centre on propagation of life and of acquisition. And the transmission of peoples' heritage in the form of beliefs, totemic system is to ensure continuity and survival of the clan (identity).

The aim of traditional African education is multilateral and the objective is to produce an individual who is honest respectable, skilled, co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day. Although the educational objectives cannot be neatly distinguished, according to Fafunwa (1991) seven aspects can be identified:

1. To develop the child's latent physical skill.
2. To develop character
3. To indicate respect for elders and those in position of authority.
4. To develop intellectual skills
5. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs.
7. To develop, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large .Suffice it then to say that this education was aimed at training a child physically, developing his character, intellectual training, vocational training and respect for the elders and peers.

According to Manly and Duruji (2013), traditional education of children in Nigeria (which Annang is part) can yield the following results: Physical training, development of character, respect for elders and peers, intellectual training and vocational training. It should be on note that music plays major role in achieving these feats. A study on the importance of music in traditional education reveals that storytelling, based on every day experiences, is used to pass on information

and knowledge. Songs, dance, drama, poetry, oral literature, music and tales (“folk media”), are important for nourishing the educational, spiritual, and entertainment needs of the people, but they also reflect the peoples' interest in and priorities for different parts of their environment. Folk media are also a means of communication on current events.

The Annang people, for example, sing songs that entertain, educate and inform. Still supporting the folk media as a strong means of achieving the goals of traditional education, Omolewa 2007) submits that;

*Informal and vocational training constitute the core of indigenous education in Africa. Under this traditional system, each person in the community is practically trained and prepared for his/her role in society. It is a holistic system, in which storytelling, proverbs and myths also play an important role.*

Let us consider the roles music plays.

**Physical training:** The African child likes to explore his immediate environment; observes adults in their activities, and imitate them – he enjoys discovering new situations. In traditional Annang society, the child intuitively jumps, climbs a tree, dances or performs a balancing act because his siblings or his elders do the same (most times with folk songs). Every child discovers his limbs and in no time at all he also discovers their uses. It is a natural process of growth and the physical environment (no matter how limiting) challenges the child to try out new things. The African child, unlike the European child, has unlimited access to the stimulating world of African music and dance. He observes the adults and other children and naturally falls in step. The infinite variety of African/Annang dance movements offer the child one of the best media for physical exercise. The dance and the music also serve as cultural vehicles, which encourage team-work.

**Development of character:** Indigenous African education places considerable emphasis on character-training. Indeed it is the corner-stone of African education. The parents, siblings and other members of the community participate in the education of the child by the use of folk songs that reflect on

character. Everyone wants him to be sociable, honest, courageous, humble, persevering and of good repute at all times. Such good characters include:

- i. Sanctity to Life
- ii. Hospitality
- iii. Honesty
- iv. Sacrifice
- v. Obedience
- vi. Humility

**Respect for elders and peers:** Closely related to character-training is the respect for elders or those who are in authority, particularly the chief, the cult leaders, the diviners, relatives (especially uncles) and other neighbours. Greetings play a major role here. The Annang people have a greeting system. There are special polite greetings or salutations for parents, elders, peers, and chiefs. There are morning, afternoon and evening greetings; there are greetings for various situations – playing, dancing, drumming, sitting, standing, farming, fishing, weaving, swimming, walking, convalescing; and there are special salutations for different kinds of festivals and ceremonies on such occasions as birthdays, burials, marriages, yam festivals, observance of ancestor worship, and others.

**Intellectual training:** Traditional African education encourages intellectual growth and development. Observation, imitation and participation are some of the major learning processes even in this modern age. The Annang child learns the local geography and history of his community. He is very familiar with the hills and dales, the fertile and the non-fertile areas; he knows the rainy season and when to expect a dry spell; he knows the time of the hunting and fishing seasons. These are mostly taught through traditional songs. Local history is taught by the elders in each household and the songs of praise which accompany many of the historical events make the oral traditional history a stimulating experience which is hard to forget.

**Vocational training:** It is fair to say that the aim of education in traditional society is character-training and job-orientation. We can roughly divide the various traditional vocations into three groups.

1. Agricultural education: for example farming, fishing and veterinary science (animal care and animal rearing).

2. Trades and crafts: for example weaving (baskets and cloth), smithing (iron, silver, gold, etc), hunting, carving (wood and bronze). Sculpturing, painting and decorating, carpentry, building, barbering, drumming, dancing and acrobatics, hair plaiting, dress-making, leather-working, soap-making, singing, pottery-making, mat-making, bead-working, catering (frying, baking, grinding), food-selling, wine-selling, wine-tapping and trading in all kinds of merchandise (manufactured goods and agricultural products).
3. Professions: for example doctors, priests, witchdoctors, civil servants, village heads, chiefs and kings, tax-collectors, heralds, judges, councilors, police and messengers, shrine-keepers, soldiers, etc.

## Conclusion

Vocational training in traditional society is largely run on the apprenticeship system and is a time-honored device for educating Annang youths and adults. Usually the children are not trained by their parents but by relatives, master-craftsmen in particular fields or friends in order to ensure discipline and concentration.

Education enhances the ability of the child to face challenges of life and grow into an adult that is not a threat to society. One of the ways of achieving this is through the use of music. Music contributes to the general education of the Annang child in Annang society, even then and now.

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