

EMERGING ISSUES IN NIGERIAN MUSIC EDUCATION: THE SITUATION WITH POLICIES

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Introduction

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It occupies a prominent position in the building of a self-reliant nation through the building of a self-reliant individual. Building a self-reliant person means making one to be independent in the context of self-reliance, through self-employment. Self-employment reduces the incidence of unemployment syndrome, which is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. This in part may account for the conclusion of music education in our school curriculum because it has the ability to satisfy the needs and aspirations of both the individual and the society at large.

Musical development is part and parcel of total mental and material development of human society. Like every school subject, music seeks to develop the individual totally touching all the domains – Cognitive, Psycho – motor and Affective domains. The duality in function of school music-entertainment value on the one hand while academic knowledge on the other –gives it a unique position in the curriculum as well as in the life of the school community and, is recognized as an important feature by most teachers in Nigeria. Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE) (1998, revised), has provided for music as a school subject at the various levels of schooling. The way the government's position is interpreted and the level to which it has been implemented are part of the the reasons for this paper.

Various music education scholars have, in their researches document the background development of Music Education at the different stages and levels of Education in Nigeria. They include, Okafor (1992), Agu (2001), Omibiyi-Obidike (2007), Vidal (2008), Emielu (2011), among others. Accordingly, they all submitted

in their findings that there is progress but that the progress is very slow and sometimes confusing. Music Education requires a greater commitment than any other school subject because it requires skilled, highly trained staff dedicated to year after year of patient toil. It requires quality curricula and books, and in this digital age, computers and multi-media. It requires buildings and other infrastructure. This is because, we live in an age of transition, the transition from a resource-driven economy, society and culture to the new and emerging economy and culture which is knowledge based, technology-driven and responsive environment concerns.

Issues with the National Policy: Regards to Music

Considering the fact that every educational system has its goals and objectives, the curriculum of each school programme, as well as its mode of implementation or mode of putting into effect need to be assessed and evaluated as much as possible to establish its effectiveness. This paper is specifically concerned with music as a school subject in its implementation with the attainment of Nigeria's education goals and objectives.

On that note, one of the objectives of music education as is contained in the National policy on Education (1981) stated:

The acquisition of appropriate skills abilities and competence both mentally and physical as, equipment for the individual to live in, and contribute to the development of his society.

In conformity with the above statement, Omibiyi-Obidike described music education as a comprehensive education system geared towards a functional and artistic career in the society. As a functional career, therefore, music education has the potential and ability of making or training a learner to be self-reliant on graduation. Agreeing with the above, Ademefun (2001) observed that:

Music Education is highly useful because its occupational content offers the students the opportunity to acquire skills, attitudes, interests and knowledge to perform education, socio-political and economic activities that are beneficial not only to themselves but to the society in general.

The Philosophy of Music Education

Music Education is far more crucial to the survival of society than is generally and presently appreciated; this is because it is concerned with the study of human value, not merely its national apprehension. It involves conscientious engagement with questions of value, with their scrutiny and assimilation by the individual. The ultimate purpose of the music education is the formation of social, ethnical, aesthetic and religious contemporary society; its disparate ethnics, ambitions and values. The philosophy of music as outlined by Ekwueme (2010) includes:

- i. Preservation, promotion, projection, perpetuation and transmission of the people's culture;*
- ii. Provision of opportunities for the inculcation of permanent literacy in aesthetic arts;*
- iii. Provision of opportunities for pupils to see the usefulness and relationship among art subjects;*
- iv. Increase awareness; interest and sensitivity towards our culture and other world's cultures;*
- v. Provision of basis for moral character training and the development of sound attitudes;*
- vi. Promotion of culture Education by providing information in developing a sense of culture and social responsibility and encouraging social participation in school and the community (p.220).*

Consequently, the Nigeria Education Curriculum and Development Council (NERDC) on the directives of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) reviewed and published new curricula for secondary schools with effect from September 2007. The curricula comprised the new 9-years Universal Basic Education curriculum and the 3 – years Senior Secondary Education Curriculum.

According to Ekwueme (2010), the new curricula were designed to fill the gaps in the curricula; introduce new subjects to replace obsolete ones; redefine core subjects and to meet the targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). These targets according to NERDC are expressed as: values re – orientation; poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and employment of the citizenry through education. Cultural and

Creative Arts (CCA) which comprises; Music, Fine Arts and Drama has been listed as one of the core basic subjects by NERDC in the new curriculum.

The Issues

According to Ekpo (2015), as societies change, so are instructional and other programmes in school to meet societal needs. It is therefore, imperative that societal needs be fully relevant to be achieved. Since Curriculum development is a dynamic process, changes in society and in the subject content calls for review in the form of reforms and improvement of curriculum.

In line with the Federal Government of Nigeria's directive, the NERDC, established to carry out the Nigerian Educational aims and objectives reviewed and published new curricula for Secondary Schools with effect from September 2007. The curricula comprise the new 9 – years Universal Basic Education (UBE) and the 3- years Senior School Education (SSSE) Curricula. The Curricula are designed to include the Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum, in which music is a part. It is not only important for the government to propose curriculum review, but it is also much more important to ensure that it is well guided to an anticipated conclusion. It should be understood that Cultural and Creative Arts is not a synonym for any of the art subjects but an inter-disciplinary arts which should be taught and learnt as an integrated subject.

Ekwueme (2010:48) described Cultural and Creative Arts as “the product of an integrated activity which underlines an effective interplay of the various components of the art”. She further posits: “as a curriculum, it is a planned sequence of activities designed as a guide to the teaching of an integrated arts programme”. Empowerment is the goal we have for our programmes. It refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered, developing confidence in their personal capacities. Furthermore, it is the process through which managers enable and help others to gain power and achieve influence within the organization.

Philosophy of Cultural and Creative Arts

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in the National policy on Education (2004:7) outlines the philosophy of the Cultural and Creative Arts as:

- i. The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
- ii. Full integration of the individual into the community;
- iii. Inculcation of national consciousness, national unity, right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigeria society; and
- iv. Acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical, social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society.

The National Teachers' Institute Course Book – PES, Cycle 1 Module 1, explains further the philosophy of the Cultural and Creative Arts, thus:

- i. Cultural and Creative Arts can develop the Nigeria child fully into a good citizen, as a useful member of the society
- ii. The mental capacity of the child is developed as the child learns the theory, practice and literature in dance drama, music and visual arts;
- iii. The social capacity is development as the child expresses his feelings of either joy or sadness in the performance of creative arts. The physical capacity is developed through the process of work exercise of the body in the creative arts activities;
- iv. Cultural and Creative arts can help the child to develop the ability to perform in the area of manipulation of tools, equipment and materials. This ability helps the child to adapt equitably to his environment and develop all the potentials necessary for well- being.

Ekwueme (1991:220), in her understanding of the philosophy of Cultural and Creative Arts explains further that the Cultural and Creative Arts as a subject should encourage:

- i. The preservation, promotion, projection, perpetuation and transition of our cultural heritage;
- ii. The provision of opportunities for the inculcation of permanent literacy in aesthetics using musical, performing, creative and visual arts;
- iii. The provision of opportunities for pupils to see the usefulness and relationship among concepts that makes up a Cultural and Creative Arts.
- iv. Increased awareness, interest and sensitivity towards other cultures;
- v. The provision of basis for moral and character training and the development of sound attitudes;
- vi. The development of the basic skills in various art forms; and

- vii. The promotion of cultural education by providing information in developing a sense of cultural and social responsibility and encouraging social participation in schools and the community.

The Nigeria Education Development and Research Council (2007) and Creative Arts curriculum for schools points out that the above educational demands go beyond the acquisition of bits of information from Fine Arts, Drama and Music and that, for Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum to adequately reflect the provision of the National Policy on Education, the curriculum should do more than catalogue some set of facts, concepts and generalization as its content. It is an integration of Visual Arts, Drama, and Music which is primarily concerned with the role arts and culture can play in the education of the present and future generations as the search for meanings. The integrated approach is emphasized in order to produce artistes that would understand and appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of the arts.

The Crisis

Perhaps the most difficult curriculum to design is the truly integrated one because it is largely motivated by a child's interests. This is a curriculum in which children immerse themselves completely in a topic of study or area of interest that they examine from all points of views. Ideas and resources are networked, and the boundaries between subjects are blurred or eliminated. In this design, as pointed out by Hendrick in Ekpo (2014), there is no separation among subjects; they all form part of a larger whole.

Music education faces the crisis of relevance in Nigeria when compared with other school-subjects. The digital age has kindled the fierce demand by industry for graduates who can use their "heads" and their "hands". Any kind of education that does not prepare and equip the recipient to be numerate, to think analytically and to be eager and open to new ideas, is done for. The seeming inability or unwillingness of educators, curriculum makers and teachers to find a common ground to reverse the sliding trend or the confusion in Music Education has not helped matters. For any discipline to continue to be relevant, it has a duty to continually re-invent itself, its methods and processes. Rather than wallowing in self-pity, it is only through introspection and systematic openness to best practices

(emerging trends) from elsewhere, that the Music Education in Nigeria will not only survive but also thrive and flourish.

Approaching the Cultural and Creative Arts Integrated Subject

In a recent study on music teachers' motivation and students' achievement in secondary schools in South-South Nigeria by Udoh (2015), it is reported that there is serious confusion in the approach to implementing the curriculum in the schools where there is no music teacher, there is no music teaching, except some half-hazard singing and cultural dance done as "recreational activity". But its most interesting yet pitiable situation here, is that music as well as Fine Arts and drama all put together is a compulsory subject in the final Junior Secondary external examination.

Ekwueme (2010:51) points out that "the integrative nature of the Cultural and Creative Arts programme requires integrated learning activities involving listening, singing, analyzing, describing, dancing, stretching, miming, acting out, blocking, drawing sketching, painting, conducting, composing and improvising". The implication here is that an appropriate teaching method for Creative Arts instructional model should be developed. It is important to state here that the conventional classroom is inappropriate for teaching Cultural and Creative Arts because the nature of its teaching and learning calls for a laboratory or workshop environment. The environment must be one that promotes practical activities, group work, experimental, creative improvisation, group music making – vocal and instrumental ensembles, dance experiences, manipulation of arts and sound objects, play-making and acting experiences.

For a teacher to produce students with long lasting skills, he must have in-depth knowledge of the subject in other to create a classroom environment that can expedite learning. The inability of the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to realize that teachers have their areas of specialization before designing a curriculum in the Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) is one serious problem that must be made known to the Federal Ministry of Education. The present situation is that, every teacher is groomed to have his specialty subject areas and so, these areas of specialization pose some difficulty because no one can give what he does not have. It is inconceivable that teachers are subjected to teach Cultural and Creative Arts as a subject which they have no

knowledge of. It must be noted that the amount of creative and practical work the students are exposed to depends on the teachers' experiences.

Several years after the integration of Cultural and Creative Arts into a single subject, it was gathered that almost all the teachers still lack the awareness and knowledge of its concept; they do not show enough eagerness about the subjects and it gives series of complains and make mocking remarks about the seriousness of the subject and its implementation thereby making the impossibility of achieving effective teaching and learning unbelievable.

Generally, Nigeria lacks Cultural and Creative Arts teachers to teach the subject as an integrated subject in the Junior Secondary School. The case is not different even when the different concepts comprising the subject are treated separately. There are no facilities and equipment and so teachers still use the traditional method of teaching to teach what requires a modern approach. In fact, the researcher is not aware of any public secondary school in Nigeria where the new technology development that has brought audio-visual aids may be available. There are no relevant text books; no studios, no workshops and no space for practical lessons. The worst of it all is that there is neither sponsorship nor motivation and no secondary school Cultural and Creative Arts teacher is ICT compliant. The resultant effect is that the whole process is fruitless.

The National Teachers Institutions (N.T.I.) Kaduna is charged with the responsibility of training and retraining Nigerian teachers; while we gathered that point out that the National Teachers Institute has been organizing workshops and seminars for many disciplines both in primary and secondary schools but none has been arranged for teachers of Cultural and Creative Arts. Almost all the teachers complain that they are not given adequate orientation on the requirements of the subjects in terms of workshop before the take-off of the programme. This confirms what Ekwueme (2010:42) said, that "the teachers never had any orientation on the implementation process for Cultural and Creative Arts." The situation needs urgent intervention in order to address the decadence that is currently retarding the growth and achievements of the objective of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is important to lay a solid foundation at this basic level instead of messing up the future of the children and the nation through a curriculum that has not been supported.

The Way Forward

In my conclusion, which will as well serve as recondition. First the issue of who should develop or review curriculum is an unsettled one, which needs to be settled. Everybody should contribute towards curriculum development/review since viewing education as democratic requires input from several sources.

In the words of Ekpo (2014), the improvement of music programme, like any other instructional programme, requires

- i. A planned approach – directed by the teacher who brings the child in close touch with problems and needs of his immediate environment;
- ii. Project strategy – a planned programme of work that requires time, effort and planning to complete. These include musical activities which bring the child face to face with the realities of his environment and the practical world.
- iii. Resources for teaching music – curriculum materials, educational materials, instructional aids, visual aids and audio-visual aids that aids effective teaching.
- iv. Adequate space – rooms for the teaching of music – studios with furniture's and equipment, practice room, etc.
- v. Equipment, instruments and textbooks.
- vi. Qualified Cultural and Creative Arts teachers.

Music Education which metamorphosed from its inception as hymn singing in Mission schools has passed through the digital changing world of ours. This changes at various levels have also affected in no small measure the teaching and learning of music. Let me end this discourse by borrowing Nzewi's saying that the philosophy and content of our literacy in Music Education must derive from our African resources and realistic experience.

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