

MUSIC EDUCATION IN IDEMILI NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ANAMBRA STATE: PROBLEMS, PROSPECTS AND IMPORTANCE

Ifeoma P. Okechukwu

Introduction

Music education in Nigerian secondary schools took a different and contrary dimension in 2007 and again revised in 2012. In 2007, it was coined under Cultural and Creative Arts (C.C.A.) comprising Fine and Applied Arts, Music and Drama. Later in 2012, another revised version of the curriculum came up in form of Fine and Applied Arts, Music, Dance, Customs and Traditions as Cultural and Creative Arts (C.C.A.). According to Obioma (2012), the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) first published Cultural and Creative Arts in J. S. S. 1 – 3 in 2007 and revised in 2012 so that the curriculum can be adapted for such special needs as nomadic education, non-formal education and education of the musically challenged (pp. ii – iv). This concussion, without doubt, led to the problems of music education in Nigeria as a whole and in Idemili North Local Government Area secondary schools in particular. There and then, the teaching and learning of music in the secondary schools started dwindling and encountering serious sickness. This also led to the lack of in-depth knowledge of the course (music) which without doubt started witnessing falling from its standard because students and teachers lost interest in the lucrative and the interesting course - music. If we recall what music used to be before the year 2,000 in our secondary schools up to tertiary institutions, it was regarded as double major courses. This implies that it cannot be combined with any other course(s) because of its branches and contents. This was done to help the learners to be self-reliant and professionals as soon as they finish their programme.

However, today, the reverse is the case and it is high time we rectified this issue before more damages are done to the course. As such, the instrument to be used is solely music education. Thus, the prospects will be of good help so as to put the suggested points into action in order to bring sanity and normalcy to the course because a stitch in time saves nine.

Concept of Music Education

Education is the art or process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Therefore, music education is the art or process of teaching, training and learning music which can be formal or informal because education originally starts from conception. As such, music education starts in the home informally as traditional folk or indigenous music of one's society. Ezeugwu (2016) states:

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. The study of music seeks to develop the whole person. It is a basic life skill just like walking or talking. It has so much to do with person's moods, emotions, feelings, attitudes and opinions. Hence, it is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. Every normal child naturally is endowed with the basics of musical activities which include singing, dancing and playing of musical instruments. Again, the aim of music education is to develop the child's knowledge and skills on music and the arts in order to be useful in the environment. This means that process of continuity from what is obtainable in the child's environment should be made available in the school environment (p.1).

Music education also means the interpretation and implementation of a well-planned curriculum by the teacher in the classroom through the process of teaching and training the students/learners so as to be useful members of society. Elliot in Onyiuke (2011) affirms that music education has at least four basic meanings. He continued to inform that;

Education in music involves the learning of music making and music listening; education about music involves teaching and learning formal knowledge (or verbal information) about music.

For example music making, music listening, music history and music theory; education for music may be taken in two ways – either teaching and learning as preparation for beginning to do music or teaching and learning as preparation for a career as performer, composer, historian, critic, researcher or teacher, and education by means of music overlaps with the first three senses each can be carried out in direct or indirect relation to goals such as improving one’s health, mind and soul (p. 101).

Music education also means the all-round inculcation of musical practices by an expert into his amateur/learner so as to equip him musically in his environment and to face his life challenges musically. Ojukwu (2011) avers that;

Music education is a process by which individuals become aware of, and sensitive to music. The programme enables the learner to come to grip with the socio-musical values established for his/her worthwhile musical values in accordance with the changing time and circumstance (p. 239).

Music education is built up of two words that has two way traffic involvement with a triangular representation of the teacher, the learner and the subject and its materials for teaching it. It uniquely refers to music planned to be taught in schools or colleges. Agu (2009) posits that:

The term “music education” refers to school programmes designed to teach students to make music and to listen to music. Music is one of the oldest artistic forms in the tradition of African societies. In Nigeria, it constitutes a rich, varied and vital functioning part of the traditional culture. The prominent position it occupies in the social lives of Nigerians lays credence to the fact it could be useful in generating development in the society (p. 1).

Music education as stated before covers both traditional and western music education as regards unplanned (informal) and planned (formal) curriculum. Ibekwe (2009) states that “traditionally, the music training of the Igbo child does not require pre-planned or elaborate classroom set-up. It goes or with daily life’s experiences. Naturally, music training of every Igbo child takes its root from the

mother's womb" (p. 53). In addition, the music education is made up of two words just like teaching and learning that also go together and are very relevant in terms of knowledge exhibition and acquisition. Onyeji (2012) avers that;

Music education could be defined as a process of training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in music for effective functioning in the society. It encompasses a broad training for the acquisition of skill and knowledge of theory, practice, creativity, education, appreciation and performance of music in diverse cultural and stylistic forms (p. 148).

Concept of Importance

Importance means something that has great value. It has much to do with positive concern or having great influence and authority. It also means relevance, good, qualitative and nice attributes. According to Hornby (2015), importance is the quality of being important or having value (p. 753). Importance can as well mean gainful, profitable, valuable, excellent and decent characteristics. Importance also means adequate and/or lucrative; hence, the importance of music education in our secondary schools in Idemili North and Nigeria.

Concept of Music Education Problems

Problems of music education are the difficulties that are being encountered in the teaching and learning processes in music. They are also the challenges accruing from music as a subject in its teaching, training and learning in the homes, schools, colleges, universities and the society at large. In Nigerian secondary schools especially in Idemili North Local Government Area, a lot of problems, challenges and difficulties are militating agents against effective teaching and learning of music for a better society; hence, the need to correct and redress the challenges in prospect and retrospect.

Concept of Prospect

It means an expectation. What one has in mind to be fulfilled. A wish to be set into action: something or action to be considered useful or requirements from person(s), body or an organization. The possibility that something good might happen in future; i.e. the likelihood of some future events occurring

Concept of Retrospect

Retrospect in music education means thinking back or recalling what music education was in the past, then connecting it to what it is at the present situation; retrospect in music education can also mean reflecting at what music education used to be and equating it to its present stage. Thus, what was teaching and learning music was before and what it is now; to ascertain whether we are having it right or wrong and to know whether we are to revive the situation through the curriculum. The retrospectives will help us to look into the importance of music education for a better tomorrow.

Problems of Music Education in Idemili North Secondary Schools

Idemili North Local Government Area is one out of the twenty one local government areas in Anambra State of the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. In Idemili North Local Government Area, secondary schools are facing numerous difficulties/problems and challenges causing lack of interest and seriousness in the teaching and learning music. This lack of seriousness and interest is reflected on the teachers, the students, parents, state schools education services commission, education curriculum planners, the government and the society at large. Since the problems are not only caused by the teachers or the students, there is the need to look into the different bodies as follows:

Students: Looking at the students' side, some of our children and students in the schools regard music as a subject that has no value and does not earn anyone good popularity. They claim the course to be a subject meant for the vagabonds and unintelligent students who cannot be fitted in to study law, engineering, medicine or political sciences. They also regard it as a course meant for those who has lost admirations in other areas of interest and can use music as "waiting-room" subject to gain their desired entrance into the university. Thus, they desert the course and its department at a time they wish leaving it empty so that the teachers will not have a handful of students to teach and be prepared as future teachers, lecturers and professionals of music for continuity purposes. Ojukwu (2011) affirms that:

The discouragement and loss of interest by students in the study of music have been so critical, thus needing serious attention. The teaching and learning of music in the secondary schools

have not yet appeared to produce much desired result. There is yet scanty musical achievement, minimal learning and low musical standard in the Nigerian society (p. 239).

Not only on the children and students' part, other factors contribute to the cause of the problems which needs to be rectified.

Parents: Some parents because of pursuit of unruly fame without positive base push their wards to study some subjects that are not fit for their talents. Some of them wish to be addressed as parents of an engineer, doctor or lawyer. That is engineer, doctor or lawyer's dad or mum. Hence, they inappropriately encourage their wards to study the subjects/courses that they are not naturally talented in. Then discouraging them from studying the ones they are naturally gifted and talented in like music. This is a serious misfit and causes much problem to music education in our secondary schools. Even when their wards see the need of their studying music up to university level, they put stud by refusing to carter for their welfare or refusing to sponsor their education entirely. Instead of allowing their wards to make choice of the ones they can study, the parents will rather choose for them.

Teachers: These are the implementers, trainers, counselors, advisers, educationists, professionals and curriculum actors/actresses in the classroom and the society. They make the curriculum to be a reality. However, some of these nation builders show laxity and lack of interest in this particular subject. Some of them lack adequate knowledge and appropriate teaching methods for effective teaching and learning to take place. In addition, most of them do not apply appropriate materials and correct teaching aids in the classroom approach; thus, killing the subject as well. Anya-Njoku (2012) states that:

West African examination annual results show that music is not a popular subject in Nigerian secondary schools. This paper investigated the teacher factor to this anomaly using the teachers at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka secondary school. The outcome showed that though the school, unlike most of her counterparts, had enough equipment, music study ended at W.A.E.C was very low; there was no choir, no dance groups, and band existed just for morning assembly. It became evident that

Ifeoma Okechukwu: *Music Education in Idemili North L. G. A. Secondary Schools...*

the teaching procedures applied by the teachers could not motivate enough interest on their students to embrace music as a subject (p. 163).

The above statement is clear because the teachers, students and parents pay nonchalant attitude to the subject. The curriculum planners on their own murdered the subject by the concussion of mixture called Cultural and Creative Arts (C.C.A.). This is the last straw that broke the camels' back in our secondary schools music education. As regards this, the educationist and the government, especially the state education commission, haphazardly supervise the work on music education. In addition, the government failed to train and produce the appropriate personnel and professionals that will handle the concussion they called cultural and creative arts. The planners just prepare the curriculum without checking the teachers, materials, students or the environment where the normal teaching will take place respectively and effectively. This is a serious blunder, academic offence and a great ignominy to all important and one of the oldest arts that started with creation (music). As a double major course, it should stand on its own as a separate discipline with its tributaries such as applied music, theory and composition, African music theoretical studies, orchestration, etc. Ojukwu (2011) affirms that:

The music curriculum is expected to, at the end, produce people who are musically literate and competent both in theory and practice. From the primary to the tertiary levels of education, the cumulative nature of the curriculum should lead to the end. Unfortunately, this goal seems to be a herculean task. These problems emanated from the government's attitude toward music to the problem of music educators themselves (p. 241).

Likewise, the government, education policy makers and curriculum planners give preference to some subject areas without looking into the lucrateness/importance of other courses like music.

Ibekwe (2009) posits:

The national policy on education is a defective one, in the sense that it does not accord equal prominence to all programmes of study. Some courses are ostensibly christened core subjects while others are regarded as electives. Even where the relative merits of those courses are guaranteed, the already generated

complex or bias in the minds of people has become a serious impediment towards the study of such courses (p. 60).

Moreover, these bodies of curriculum planners and policy makers do not put into consideration or show regard to the learner's environment and cultural background to help the teachers, students, and materials so as to move and proceed from known to unknown. Ezeugwu (2016) avers that:

There is a gap between the music studied in the classroom and that which is obtainable in the cultural or the learner's environment. This has brought about poor response and lack of enthusiasm to schools' music. Students wish to be actively involved in their programmes, but the content of music is obtainable in schools, especially at the upper basic level of education, has no provision for such participation. The curriculum content is foreign and mostly theory based. Learning is said to be more effective if it is preceded from known to unknown (p. 2).

Society: The problem of music education in Idemili North, Nigeria and Africa at large is also caused by diverse and many ethnic groups. Hence, the community and society pose their own challenges and difficulties. Adedeji (2011) notes that:

Various pertinent problems which had hindered effective school music education in Africa need to be re-examined in order to progressively move ahead. Some of these problems have been highlighted by scholars. The most significant of these problems is the heterogeneity of African ethnicity and cultural practices (p. 47).

Therefore, the problems of music education in our secondary schools in Idemili North cannot be attributed to one particular sector, but the main cause is from the combination of all the double major courses which is supposed to be studied separately as a discipline. Hence, looking back at music in the past and now, the difference is very clear as we can see in the music education of Idemili North secondary schools among their ten (10) towns respectively.

The Situation

The researcher in her work observed that there are ten (10) towns in Idemili North. Out of the ten (10) towns, the schools that study music in their junior and senior secondary schools were outlined. The names of the towns are as follows:

1. Obosi
2. Ogidi
3. Umuoji
4. Nkpor
5. Abatete
6. Oraukwu
7. Uke
8. Ideani
9. Eziowelle
10. Abacha

Names of Secondary Schools in Idemili North

From the statistics, the state secondary schools that are in Idemili North are as follows:

1. Awada Secondary School Obosi – A. S. S. Obosi
2. Union Secondary School Obosi – U. S. S. Obosi
3. Community Secondary School Obosi – C. S. S. Obosi
4. Abanna Secondary School, Abatete – A. S. S. Abatete
5. Notre Dame High School, Abatete – N. D. H. S. Abatete
6. Government Technical School, Nkpor – G. T. C. Nkpor
7. Urban Secondary School Nkpor – U. S. S. Nkpor
8. Mathra Amabili Secondary School, Umuoji – M. A. S. S. Umuoji
9. Community Secondary School, Umuoji - C. S. S. Umuoji
10. Community Secondary School, Uke - C. S. S. Uke
11. Community Secondary School, Ideani – C. S. S.
12. Community Secondary School, Eziowelle – C. S. S. Eziowelle
13. Boys' Secondary School, Ogidi – C. S. S. Ogidi
14. Anglican Girls' Secondary School, Ogidi – A. G. S. S. Ogidi

Secondary Schools that Offer Music as a Subject

From the statistics, the researcher observed that out of the fourteen (14) secondary schools in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, only eight (8) schools are offering music under Cultural and Creative Arts as a subject.

Moreover, the eight schools are doing it only in the Junior Secondary School level. Hence, there is nothing like Cultural and Creative Art subject or Music as a course in their senior secondary school level. Thus, we can see that the naturally gifted students in music are dumped in the areas they will not do their best.

Presently, the names of the Junior Secondary Schools that study music with their teachers and some of their phone numbers are as follows:

S/N	Names of Schools	Teacher's Name
1.	Abanna Secondary School, Abatete – A. S. S. Abatete	Obiageli Uche Okoye
2.	Urban Secondary School, Nkpor – U. S. S. Nkpor	Chike F. Nkemjika
3.	Community Secondary School, Obosi – C. S. S. Obosi	Patricia Onuigbo
4.	Union Secondary School, Obosi - U. S. S. Obosi	Euchaira Akunede
5.	Anglican Girls Secondary School, Ogidi – A. G. S. S. Ogidi	Ngozi P. Ikebuaku
6.	Community Secondary School, Uke	Martina U. Anike
7.	Community Secondary School, Ideani – C. S. S. Ideani	Nchekwube H. Eke
8.	Community Secondary School Umuoji – C. S. S. Umuoji	Helen Obidike

From the above illustration and statistics, it is observed that merging and muddling of five (5) separate/different subjects as one under Cultural and Creative Arts worsens the whole situation, thereby creating problem in the teaching and learning of music. In addition, the illustration also proves that there are no sufficient qualified secondary school music teachers because those schools which

do not offer music or that baptized Cultural and Creative Arts both in the Junior and Secondary Schools exposes the incompetency. Some of these teachers also read music with combined courses in their tertiary institution. As such they did not do the in-depth study of music. Moreover, they cannot teach the students or inculcate the right musical value as the case demands. In addition, they are easily harassed and convinced to teach other subjects rather than being firm in teaching music. Such subject combinations with music are music combined with Christian religious knowledge; music combined with English and music combined with social studies, etc. This type of combination makes a student “jack of all trades but master of none” among all the trade. Some educationists and supervisors are nonchalant towards the teachers of the subject during their field work at supervision in schools. This is laxity on the part of the teacher, educationists and supervisors because they neglect the importance of music education in the society and in the life of the individual.

Importance of Music Education in the Secondary Schools

Having seen the problems of music education in our secondary schools, it is widely known that music education is very important and relevance in the upbringing of children, training of students and redressing of adult character. Therefore, the problems which music education is facing can be solved so as to pave way for better improvement. Therefore, the presence of music education in secondary schools will go a long way in helping to achieve the following:

1. Creating job opportunities for junior and senior secondary school leavers
2. Helping them to be self-reliant.
3. Training of talented and gifted musicians
4. It creates room for popularity and famousness
5. Through music education one can earn a living effectively.
6. Gives a qualitative background at the early age of a child.
7. Music education promotes the students' skill acquisition attributes
8. It promotes continuity because the knowledge gained through music education is handed down from one generation to another
9. Encourages an amateur to be interested in studying the course up to higher level since a journey of many miles starts with a step. Early music education handled very well can produce future academic music professors.

10. It is used in teaching and learning other subjects e.g. in the teaching of numbers or counting figures in Mathematics, a child can easily learn counting using music as a mnemonic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Music education is very useful in our homes especially in our secondary schools and our entire society. Therefore, it should be taken seriously in our secondary school system. All hands should be on deck to support music education – the students, teachers, parents, curriculum planners, policy makers and the government. This will help to encourage the sustenance of the subject area. Taking it seriously as a course in the secondary school level will help us to produce those that will study it in the tertiary institutions to qualify as future academics. Thus, it will help in creating self-reliance and job opportunities for individuals and school leavers by generating pianists, guitarists, violinists, choristers and general music performers; which curbs the issues of unemployment as well as promote human capital development in the local government, state and federation at large.

References

- Adedeji, F. O. (2011). School music education in Africa: The Meki Nzewi method. In Y. S. Onyike, I. O. Idamoyibo and D. C. C. Agu (eds) *Mekism and knowledge sharing of the musical arts of Africa*, pp. 47-53.
- Agu, D. C. C. (2009). Music education in Nigerian schools: Implications for national development. *Alvan Journal of Music and Humanities (AJOMAH)*. 1, 1-9.
- Anya-Njoku, M. C. (2012). Learning theories and music educators in Nigerian schools: A survey. *Nsukka Journal of the Musical Arts Research (NJRMA)*. 1, 163-171.
- Ezeugwu, F. O. (2016). Enhancing music education in Nigerian schools using indigenous music performance. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*. 12, 1-17
- Hornby, A. S. (2015). *Oxford advanced learners dictionary of current English*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Ibekwe, E. U. (2009). Traditional music education and national development: The Igbo child experience. *Alvan Journal of Music and Humanities (AJOMAH)*. 1, 53-62.
- Obioma, G. W. (2012). *Federal ministry of education, 9 –year basic education curriculum; cultural and creative art*. Lagos: NERDC Printing Press.
- Ojukwu, E. V. (2011). The state of music education in the junior secondary school in Anambra State, Nigeria: *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*. 8, 239-251.
- Onyeji, E. O. (2012). The prospects of music education in the rehabilitation of Nigerian prisoners: A case study of Nsukka prison. *Nsukka Journal of the Musical Arts Research (NJRMA)*. 1, 143-153.
- Onyike, Y. S. (2011). Music education, music curriculum and national development. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*. 8, 101-114.