

Indigenous Music in Nigeria: Its Role Towards National Development

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Abstract

Indigenous music is a way of life that carries the attributes and value of the culture it identifies. Increasingly, focus is shifting from the traditional music in developing the nation or preserving the cultural heritage of the Nation. Attention is then being given to borrowed culture in the name of civilization. The issue of enculturation in Nigeria has turned to be the order of the day, whereby Nigerians in other to be updated (modernize), drop what belongs to us and embraced Western borrowed culture. Recently, Nigerian government is working and encouraging all Nigerians to support her in achieving the vision 20:2020 aimed towards National Development. This paper aims to support this initiative by discussing the value of African music and its roles towards national development.

Keywords: African Music, National Development, culture

INTRODUCTION

African music is one of the cultural indices that make Africans Africa. It is a cultural identity that has to do with singing, playing of instruments, dancing and use of various artifacts. Music, over the ages, “has proved to be one of the indispensable arts cultivated by man for growth, nurture and transfer of his institution and value to future generations” (Vidal 2002:2). According to Bikeway (2009), the growth and development of any nation depend to a large extent on the ability of its citizens to harness it’s naturally imbued resources as well as putting into good use other man-made features, skills, and talents. Indigenous music in Africa and Nigeria in particular is a complete institution, which is based on the societal phenomenon of the people it represents. Its concept is based on societal fact and values through musical arts.

In Nigeria, indigenous music had its origin and identity before the pre-colonial and Islamic era. (Omojola, 2002). Since then, it has been consistently practice and nurtured to sustain the values of the society it identifies. In the same vein, Isaac. (2009) writes “the society places a high premium on music and by extension musician”. This is born out of the fact that they are seen as the tool for the preservation of their culture. Hence, loss of indigenous music of a society will be disastrous to culture identity and future wellbeing of the society, which may lead to cultural extinction of the society. It is on this note that we can see how important indigenous music is towards National development in Nigeria. A nation that has lost her indigenous music practice has surely lost hope of building a viable future because in the aspect of moral upbringing of a child, indigenous music plays a prominent role. A child can also be exposed to many other positive acts in the society through music,

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which automatically prepares such a child to be an instrument for national development

The key problems this paper aims to address is as follows: Lack of interest in traditional music; Lack of adequate cultural studies in Nigeria institutions; Difficulty in learning how to play traditional musical instruments; Little or no traditional musical instrument technology in Nigeria institutions. It is imperative to address these issues because it will enlighten and expose Nigerians to the values and contributions of indigenous music towards the development of a Nation. It will also create awareness for the need to include cultural and creative arts in schools' curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

National development in a short form means Nation Building which is a compound word from two different words – separately – Nation; The Longman's Dictionary (2005: 1093) in its perspective, considered it in relation to its people and its social or economic structurea large group of people of the same race and language". Likewise, development, which in another word can also said to be building, from the same source (p.192) means, "the process or business of building /developing something". Precisely National development as the case may be has no definite definition. Nevertheless, the coinage of the two words National and Development could possibly mean, building a Nation/ race to attain greater heights. As has been remarked earlier, the growth of any country is multidimensional. It extends to both human and environmental developments. Expressing it further, it also involves societal reformation, freedom from political colonialism, or what may be called political emancipation. In the examination of the pattern of political leadership in Africa,

Emenyeonu (1994: 135) disclosed that, "what African countries need most in their march towards progress and development in a nation is one thing "good leadership". This is a good observation because African nations have witnessed series of rise and fall in government, even economies that once were booming and viable are collapsing with reckless abandon, while famine and hunger have reduced most countries to mere beggars due to political instability. Political development in this dimension requires drastic and radical transformation for responsible and effective leadership. It is only when there is good leadership that other factors that promote national development will be effectively utilized and implemented such as " Indigenous music in Nigeria: its role towards National Development". It is at this juncture, that we can say that we are developing a nation and not focusing on a particular channel and leaving the others unattended to. Therefore, National development should not be seen as one facet problem, it is all embracing; and it is only when other factors left behind are put in place that a nation can realize her developmental goals/ objectives as it is in Nigeria...The Vision 20:2020.

INDIGENOUS MUSIC

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines "Indigenous" as naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place. Indigenous music is a term for the traditional music of the indigenous people of the world, that is, the music of an "Original" ethnic group that inhabits any geographical region. [The term depends upon the political role an ethnic group plays rather than upon its strictly musical characteristics.] Traditional Music can claim to be the expression or art that is most accessible to human beings in any situation in their lives- crises or calm, work

and worship, play or war, recreation or reflection. Music is implicated in life, and people go all out to use music to communicate, to move, to express emotions and ideas, and to mobilize people or rally their solidarity. The national music of any people is a rallying point, a marshalling point for expression of solidarity (Okafor, 2005).

In many occasion, indigenous music is used interchangeably with traditional music because the two words carries the same philosophies, ideas and expression. Next to the local language, traditional music is the most widely used medium of expression for all manners of occasion and at all times and period of life. African music runs through the brain of an average African man like the blood does. The pulsation disposition of an Africa man to music is as great as the man feels when blood runs through his veins. Traditional music has so much influence in the life of an African man and everything we do; even in our traditional occupations like, farming, weaving, blacksmith, carpentry, dyeing, hunting, etc. Africans craftily form danceable rhythmical patterns with the tools, and often complement the beats evolving through deliberate manipulation of the tools, with indigenous tune.

NIGERIA NATION: The Nigeria culture is shaped by Nigerians multiple ethnic groups. The country has over 500 languages and over 250 dialects and ethnic groups. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani who are predominantly in the North, the Igbo who are predominantly in the Southeast and the Yoruba who are predominantly in the Southwest. Other ethnic groups are the Edos whom predominantly in the region between Yoruba land and Igbo land. 80% of Edo people tend to be Christians while the remaining 20%

worship deities called 'ogu'. This group is followed by the Ibibio/Annang/ Efik people of the coastal/ South South Nigeria and the Ijaws of the Niger Delta. The rest of Nigeria's ethnic groups (sometimes called minority) are found all over the country but especially in the Middle Belt and the North. Most Hausas are Muslim and the Igbos are predominantly Christians. The Efik/Ibibio/Annang people are also mainly Christians. The Yorubas have a balance of members that are adherent to both Islam and Christianity. Indigenous religious practices remain important in all of Nigerian's groups and these beliefs are often blended with Christian belief.

The music of Nigerians includes many kinds of folk and popular music, some of which are known worldwide. Traditional musicians use a number of diverse instruments, such as the Gongo drums.

THE VISION 20:2020

In the analysis of the federal government blue print, Akpan (2009) stated that the vision 20:2020 has seven objectives: To make Nigerian one of the 20 largest economies in the world; To make Nigeria an international finance centre; To evaluate Nigeria's potentials using development; To make Nigeria to be Africa's financial hub where most of the international financial transactions in Africa would be connected with Nigeria; To help other African Nations move out of financial doldrums; To move Nigeria out of third world country state to an industrialized status. Generate 60, 000 megawatts (mw) of electricity in the year 2020

Similarly, MDG'S GOALS are to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal

health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability and Develop a global partnership for development.

VALUES OF INDIGENOUS MUSIC:

Dejo (2003) states that the study of indigenous music would on a wider view allow for cultural alignment and continuity in individual. Pedagogically speaking, an individual is what he is (African, European, and Arab etc.) by virtue of his or her background (Culture). Americans were more famous with this principle. They reflect this phenomenon in all facet of their life and educational philosophy. Suffice it to say that the study of African music will put students in proper orientation and perspective to the overall culture of their land. Since it is an emblem, courier, and carrier of their cultural practices.

Based on the foregoing, it could be summarized that the need to study our indigenous music is paramount. These include:

- a. To cultivate and understand music of our land and thereby propagate it in its unadulterated (original) form.
- b. For other cultures of the world to know and appreciate the beauty of our music; in all its ramifications.
- c. To develop our music to the standard of the music of other civilized/ developed societies.
- d. For other music to accommodate and utilize modern preservation devices (print and electronics/ technologies e.g. recording).
- e. The future generations of our society to continue with the good legacies of their oral inheritance.
- f. The world to accept the reality that most musical traditions (songs instruments, costume etc.) of the

Americans and Brazilians, in particular were reminiscences of legacies of the Africans in the Diaspora

- g. To retain cultural identity as black people/ that are naturally endowed with very rich musical tradition.

CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a great difficulty in maintaining or achieving developmental balance in Nigeria. This is because of so many factors, which need to be properly harnessed before they yield good result. They include various schemes and projects that can help to better the lot of the people such as:

Social Services: If a citizen of a nation grows, certainly it means the Nation itself is growing. Therefore, it becomes obvious that any nation, which bears the growth of her citizens at heart, her utmost target, would include fair distribution of social services and amenities. No nation's development is complete if the welfare of the inhabitants are neglected. Consequently, Abenga (1993:54) notes that:

The problem of rural development is therefore not only limited to Agriculture and the development of infrastructure. It includes the development of other aspects of the rural community such as improvement in health and nutrition, trade, arts and crafts that are necessary for enhancing development; and the provision of basic amenities like water and electricity and small scale industries. (p.54)

Music is one of the basic social services that need adequate consideration. No nation's social life is worth living without music. It sensitizes, criticizes, mould character,

entertains, communicates, and heals, just to mention but a few. On the other hand, music is an ardent social mobilizer. It awakens the society on the goings on of event in the country. Okafor (1989:19) states that, "Social mobilization programme has several directions, - political direction, social direction, and economic direction". Music, especially traditional music has an answer to whichever direction the mobilization takes. Suffice it to say that music is one of the essential services needed if the nation were to grow/develop. However, in Nigeria, little or no attention has been given to Nigeria's indigenous music. Even at the various academic institution level, emphasis is always given to western world cultural music and that of indigenous Africa (Nigeria) music is often left un-emphasized

Culture: Culture is another factor for the wheel of development of any nation. A society is distinguished from another as a result of culture. Culture constitutes the totality of customs, rituals, norms, and values that regulate the people's pattern of life. The Nigeria (1998:5) Cultural Policy for Nigeria defines culture as:

The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization thus distinguishing a people from their neighbors.

The above definition is supported by Okafor and Emeka (2004:154) as they define culture as, all the knowledge, belief, customs, values and skills available in a society and by which the society can be compared to or differentiated from others. It could also be added that culture can only be felt through societal expression of it and that is what

portrays the nation's identity. Any nation that respects her culture normally, preserves, promotes and keeps it alive through social activities. This view automatically underscores the importance of music as a culture promoter. Music performed by every society carries the social cultural nuances and messages of the society. It is always said that development is a function of culture because people cannot be developed outside their experiences and cultural ethos. Through cultural exhibitions which music is part of, the nation achieves economic and social growth. This encourages tourism, inter-ethnic relationship and provides avenue for foreign exchange. Any nation that turns her back or looks down on the indigenous music and dances of her people is jeopardizing her economy. In other words, it applies that destruction of culture means retardation and threat to the nation's growth.

Education: Education is regarded as the key to nation building. It ranked second out of the eight Millennium Development (MDG) Goals which aim is to "achieve universal primary education" with the specific target that ensuring that "by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling".(p.12)

As it stands today in Nigeria, education is not receiving the expected attention, most especially in the areas of performing and creative arts which music is among. For the proper implementation of the Education Policy no aspect of its objectives should be neglected. Music is the life wire of the nation's social life and therefore should be well accommodated in the nation's education policy. Emenyonu (1994: 104-105) unequivocally states that: "Education indeed is the biggest industry in Nigeria today, but it is also the most

underfunded and the most under nourished industry....everyone knows what is good for education....but those who matter and who have the capacity to bring about the rehabilitative process, either lack the will or zeal or the commitment to do so”.

It is no more news that every Government in power forecasts “free education for all” programme, but the news is that of ridiculous implementation of the programme. Using music as an example, teaching aids such a musical instrument (both local and western), keyboard, computer, music software, electronic gadgets for recording and production are all lacking in schools most especially in primary and secondary schools. So, for the system to yield fruit there must be adequate supply of adequate facilities and involvement of experts in various technical areas who would undertake the training of the learners, and offer industrial attachment training. It looks so absurd if, for lack of funding or inadequate facilities, the schools, more especially the tertiary institutions go on producing graduates who cannot meet up with the developmental challenges. For instance, a graduate who majored in music without any idea of instrument either western or traditional musical instrument is as good as a graduate who cannot practically offer anything to the society in the sciences as well as in the sciences. Therefore, re-emphasizing that education is the biggest industry a country can be boastful of demands that constructive planning and adequate implementation of policies should be strongly and gallantly adhered to, if its usefulness in nation building is to be maximized.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Neither in the sphere of economics, nor in the sphere of politics, Nigerian intellectuals never denied culture as a very important heritage of Africa. According to Ologe (1987), the need to integrate cultural activities and values in all sphere of life has been very loudly pronounced in the post-independence development of Nigeria. General ideas on Nigerian development were linked to the authentic cultural values. However, the clash between modernization (westernization) on one side and the traditional cultural values on the other side could not have been avoided. The traditional cultures have been more or less left to the local initiatives. In the context of rather radical development changes, they have generated different types of pop-cultures: pop-music based on the strong authentic tradition; pop-literature (market literature) produced for barely literate audience and expressing the general popular concern; performing arts and group inheriting the status of traditional performances.

Cultural Music and New Technologist have very much influenced such developments by enabling fast communication and creation of interval (music, literature, etc.) Markets. The most important issue of cultural development is certainly the issue of creation of either national Nigerian, or affirmation of ethnic cultural identity. This is also an important political issue, as the Nigerian federation tried to put together the achievements of the modern democratic West European State and the local cultural traditions.

Development of education, establishment of growth of cultural institutions and cultural industries all reflect the constant processes of change in Nigerian

life and Nigerian culture. It is impossible to quantify these processes, but it is evident even now that the cultural growth is reflected in the new type of Nigerian culture and identity.

On the political sphere, many politicians / political parties have found it expedient to use traditional music as the medium for carrying their slogan and through the medium of traditional music, communicate to entire nation. The lyric carries the particular message of the common Nigeria, and as well, the politicians by which the electorate would know what their candidate would offer before casting their vote. Murray (1963) described this generation as a generation of the most ignorant of their local tradition and history. Therefore, indigenous music has said to be the only avenue to reach everyone both in rural and urban areas.

CONCLUSION

National development requires effort from various angles. Talking about National development in Nigeria, the Federal government needs to be aware that it is not only through developing economies that development could come to Nigeria, and

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that Nigeria could be fast grown if there is critical intervention in traditional cultural identity (Music). Nigerian Children are leaders of tomorrow and presently the nation is focusing on being one of the leading economies in the whole world by the year 2020, This means if achieved, Nigeria has really developed, but fortunately the children that will grow and uphold, maintain this proposed vision are left unattended to.

Recommendations:

1. Federal Government should aim towards improvement on cultural heritage of Nigeria as part of Nigeria's Vision 20: 2020
2. Cultural week should be part of academic calendar in our various institutions of learning.
3. Performing Arts and Visual Arts should be merged in our tertiary institution in other to improve knowledge of students in both units.
4. Nigerian language should not be discouraged in teaching indigenous music especially in our primary and secondary level of education.

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