

Evolution of Music Education in Higher Institutions after Independence in Rivers State

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Abstract

This paper examines the chronological and developmental growth of Music Education in Rivers State and its impact on the music intellectuals. The various stages of evolution of music education as a formal way of musical training began with reference to the advent of the missionaries, colonial masters, into independence and after independence of 1960, looking at the birth of the University of Nigeria Nsukka and the birth of other music department also gave birth to a department of music in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. The study applied a descriptive historical method which also is based on primary and secondary sources. Finally, this paper acknowledged the emergence of Ignatius Ajuru University, University of Port Harcourt Music Department and its contributions towards the development of art Music in this twenty first century in Rivers State.

Introduction

Before Nigeria independence of 1960, music and music education in Rivers State higher education existed in trado-Musical style. In fact, traditional musical practice idolized the practice, uses of music as a training experience for the African child as well as transmission of values and norms of the people of Rivers State. Long before the emergency of the missionaries and colonial masters in

Rivers State, there existed the indigenous educational system. This paper examines the historical formation of music education in Rivers State, from the passage of traditional musical setting to where we are today, accounting from the advent of the missionaries/colonial masters to the independent and after independent era with reference to higher institutions in Rivers State. The activity of each trade-musical adventures was highlighted based on their various curriculums, objectives and aims. In other words, the chronological structure of music education developmental periods accounted as the Western penetration of the Africans, secondly the bridge time which ushered the restoration period, and lastly the new dawn of a new genre of music education in Rivers State.

The Early Music Education Era

Long before the advent of the missionaries and colonial administration in Africa and Nigeria in particular, there existed a musical structure of informal/formal music education. Ifemesia (1987) recorded that:

In the traditional African dispensation, for example, music education has been flourishing by direct and indirect instructional situations which mainly depend on practical teaching and learning by doing, observation and participation, as by oral transmission, listening and production (p.3)

Evidence of music education then was based on the relationship between music and the people's day to day life activities via, childbirth, festivals, religion and cultural values. Such informal and formal system became the pivot (education) on which norms and values of the people are transmitted orally. Okafor (2013) as quoted in Igwe, (2008) observes that: "Traditionally, music is a supreme motivation in the African context, whether in war, in communal development projects or just for summoning peoples to emergency meeting, appropriate music has been regarded as indispensable in infusing patriotism, challenge, dynamic and animation" .(189)

That is the reason why Nwogu, I. Onyesoh, N. Amaele, S. Nwodim, o. & Nweke, V.O (2003) explain that: "Etche indigenous education rest on some ethical foundation. The foundations are belief, feeling and practice. The account for what the philosophy of the Etche indigenous education stands for" (p.104).

Although, the missionaries through their religious process of acculturation

introduced schools as an avenue of winning souls and intensions of their economic and religious benefits. Ade'mo'lu; A. (2001) records that: "the history of art music in Nigeria dated back to the first half of nineteenth century, when Christian missionaries set their feet on Nigeria soil. The Anglican came in 1842, the Methodist 1845 and Baptist in 1850" (p.78).

Therefore, it will be belaboring the obvious that in the history of Nigeria, this is the first time music was part of a school subject based on the educational ventures of the Europeans. Idolor, (1994) notes that: "The Christian missions from their visit in the year 1472, 1555 and especially in 1841, did encourage Art music in their worship module" (p.136).

It has been observed that formal structure of music education began with the advent of the Europeans and the British colonial administration. This view agrees with Nduka (1963) Idolor (1994) as recorded in Uwakwe (2006) that "The function of the missionaries and colonial government school was: To train more promising boys for the village schools as teachers and clerk for the local native court as interpreters" (p.6).

This system of education was highly resisted by the people in that it did not consider the philosophy of indigenous education of Rivers people. In line with this Nwagu et al (2003) also records that:

The philosophy of perennialism teaches the succeeding generation to uphold without change or modification the values handed down to them. This account so much for why the Etche people resisted the early missionary attempt to establish their presence in the land(p. 106).

The functionality, philosophy of the above structure by the colonial/European administration in its true nature did not mean well for an academic development of the people; rather its aim's was the use of school as a bridge between them and the people as interpreters. The philosophy of such education was not in consonant with indigenous educational philosophy of the people leading to loopholes of under development of the people. Furthermore Nwogu, et al (2003) records that: "Philosophy of functionalism emphasizes that education must be something useful to the learner. It must be used for something and not as mere exercise" (p.106). To the people, any content of education as introduced by the missionary should be guarded towards helping them to be self-realization and self- fulfillment. In line with this Nwogu, et al (2003) further states that: "The content of indigenous Etche education should include: Knowledge of the environment, health care, character development, human relation, family, history,

geography, zoology and botany, proverbs, music, religious"... (p.107).

Music Education in the 1960s

This period represents the period of Nigeria independence and after independence, and with the positive outcome of the Europeans/missionaries music education structure ushered in a new dawn of music education. Eu'ba' (1969) affirms that:

The beginning of musicological studies in Africa has been due, Principally to the efforts of Europeans and Americans, and the few Africans who have contributed to these studies, almost all have received training in European and American institution (p.3).

Eu'ba' (1969) accounts obviously recognized the missionaries and the Europeans in one hand, and at the same the Africans who received such training. In fact this period was a motivated time in Nigeria and Rivers State history when music education officially started period to her independence in 1960. Ade'mo'lu' (2001) also supported Eu'ba' in his saying that: "This academic recognition would have been impossible without the ingenuity of some of the Nigerian Art musicians notably, T.K.E. Philips, Fe_la'_sowa'nde', Adam Fiberesima, Ayo' Bankole', Akin Eu'ba', E,'kwu'e'me and others" (p.77- 52).

It will be worth noting that during this time, a department of music was established in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960 and most subsequently in other Universities and Colleges of Education. Idolor (2001) recorded that:

With the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on the philosophy of "restoring the dignity of man's (precisely the African); music was seen as an important study of the Africans life and a department of music was founded in 1960, which took off with four pioneering students (Meki mzewi, Felix Nwuba, Sam Ojukwu and Micheal Okoye) in 1961.

Within this noble time, there was a radical change, the inherited musical education of the Europeans, British and missionaries came under restructuring with the sole aim of proffer African philosophy, goals and objectives; that will suit the needs, relevance of Africans and national building. This historical event attracted Gusau (2008) as recoded in innocent, (2003) words concerning the result and purpose of 1969 constitution of a National Curriculum Conference as : "To lunch Nigeria on the part of scientific and technological development (p.22)". This antecedent accounted for the first time the Nigerian educational

sector adapted a policy. Although by this time music education in Rivers State was antecedent of European and missionary musical structure.

Music Education in the Period after Independent

With the founding of the University of Nigeria, *Nsukka* in the year 1960, and subsequently after than a new era of music education started as recorded in Okafor (2009) that:

The modern concept of music was indeed brought into Nigeria with the founding of the University of Nigeria, *Nsukka* (UNN), in 1960. Its primary objective was twofold: (a) to develop musicianship in the students, (b) to produce teachers of music for the secondary level of education in Nigeria (p: 23).

This gesture usher in a new dawn of music education as most Universities and Colleges of education in Nigeria started offering undergraduate or higher degree programmes in music and music education. Among such institutions is the Rivers State College of Education now Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt in 1989, 1993 and 2018/2019. From the foregoing, it is obvious to say that music education in Rivers State is most recent with the establishment of a department of music in the than Rivers State College of Education in 1988. By this time music education was not properly given the right status in that, it was run as combined honors with other disciplines. According to Brochure and Statement of academic policies [2013] "The department started as a combination with fine and applied arts in the faculty of art in 1988" (p.1).

Within this period its programmes was the award of Nigeria certificate in education (NCE). It aims and objectives were in line with the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE) with the sole aim of producing teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Obviously, the relevance of music education during this period is mostly in consonant with the aim and objectives as been enshrined in the document of Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (NPE 1974,1981) as to:

- Inculcate the national consciousness and unity.
- The right type of values and attitudes
- The training of the mind and acquisition of appropriate skill (p.5).

With the upgrading of the department of music in 1991, the department started offering a degree course with its vision as recorded in departmental students handbook of (2013) as: "To be the department of music among tertiary institutions in the country and to produce graduates who will distinguish themselves anywhere in the world" (p.3).

With this noble gesture which attracted high and more students who were trained in music education in various areas like, theory and composition, and practices of the Arts, research on Ethnomusicology, and Methodology to impact musical knowledge on the younger generation.

The growth of music education in Rivers State did not end with the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education following this trend, a department of music was founded in the University of Port Harcourt in 2009/2010 with offering certificate and the B.A degree programmes in 2011/2012 respectively with the objectives of producing graduates who are well positioned to meet the demands of a dynamic society. Since its inception, the department also has contributed both in the intellectual and needed manpower in our educational industry in Rivers State.

This development actually was in line with the approved minimum academic standards for Bachelor of Arts in the National Universities Commission (1987) as:

To prepare and produce graduate of music who will be competent to musicianship both in an international sense and also in their own African tradition, with an understanding of the art and science of music and tools for appreciation, analysis and practice of world (western European) music and African music, and an ability to communicate these principles to others (p.80).

The music education enterprise of the higher institutions in Rivers State in a nutshell, have developed and produced reasonable graduate since its inception. It will be a gain says that most of its Alumni are academically relevant both in the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Primary and Post Primary Institutions as Lecturers and teachers.

Music education like any other discipline has its aims/objectives well spelled out in the Federal Republic of Nigeria “national policy on education” (2004) includes:

The training of the mind of the understanding of the world around by encouraging aesthetic, creative and musical abilities by making human and materials resources available for the teaching of creative arts and craft to develop and project Nigeria culture, art and language as well as the world’s cultural heritage (p. 12).

These new aims/objectives accounted for a new genre of music education, a new dimension of making the learner/teacher functional by preparing the child not only on

intellectual development, also enhancing the teacher/learner's ability in performance. This move attracts Uwakwe (2006) who indicates that music education is: "The ability to train the learner/child to acquire musical knowledge and skill and at the same time helps the trainer to improve in his/her musical skill. It does not end here; the learner's everyday life is also enhanced" (Pp.61-68).

It is a gain says that any educational policy, objectives or aims moving towards the above citation by F.G.N. (2004) and Uwakwue (2006) is purely a functional goal. For these goals to be more realistic there are a lot of educational activities that should be in place so as to attain self-fulfillment and self-realization.

The benefit of the above statement created avenue of Nigerian to study music as a discipline, and the products become the required needed manpower in the teaching of music education in various levels of educational institutions.

The need for music education in Nigeria became more realistic like other school subjects. Music curriculum then was given a direction as contain in the federal Republic of Nigeria "national policy on education" (2004) which states that: "Adequate provision be made for every child to benefit from musical opportunities including the handicapped persons" (p.32).

Undoubtedly, music now serves as a pivot or the educational spring board for actualization of self-fulfillment, realization, illiteracy and poverty eradication, thanks to federal Republic of Nigeria by highlighting what the learning experience is expected in the objectives of music education. Judging from this new development the readiness of music curriculum became necessary at all level of educational institutions. It is in this path that minimum standard commissions where established by F.G.N. to outline what is expected in each levels of education. The commission in various document details the direction of learning experiences. For example, the National Curriculum for junior secondary schools through the Federal Ministry of Education (1985:vol.6) states that: the music programme during the three years of Junior Secondary School covers theory and music reading instruments, rhythm, listening and history, creative music and singing. Although in line with the above, it is obvious that the learning context is a mixture of Western and Nigerian music. In the case of senior secondary schools curriculum as contained in the Federal Ministry of Education (1985: vol. 12] that music programme covers:

1. Theory of music
2. Form and analysis

3. History and literature of music
4. Performance.

The short fall in the above document is that the curriculum was structured under the body Creative Arts (dance, music, fine arts and drama). In other words it could also be said, that the contents learning was more of western than Africa.

Furthermore, in the case of universities and colleges of education, two separate bodies were established; The National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education [NCCE] in 1987 and 1988 respectively. The document of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1990) outlined the minimum standard for colleges of education as: theory of music, applied music, African music, History/Literature. Ensemble studies, aural/Ear training, music education, conducting, scoring/arranging, dance performance and research project.

The relevance of such input and output learning experiences is mostly geared towards providing the needed required manpower in the teaching and learning of music education in both primary, secondary schools levels and also promoting our rich cultural heritages.

Furthermore, the approved minimum academic standards for Bachelor of Arts in music education as enshrined in the national universities commission (F.R.N.) states its objectives as:

To prepare and produce graduate of music who will be competent to musicianship both in an international sense and also in their own African tradition, with an understanding of the art and science of music and tools for appreciation, analysis and practice of world (western European] music and African music, and an ability to communicate these principles to others (p.80).

Neither education nor music education can actually survive without a propeller policy of a well structure outline for direction, guide, and procedures towards functional goals. Dapper (2005) did not hesitate to affirm that: "Policy is referred to as a process to emphasize that all managers regardless of their particular aptitudes or skill engage in certain interacted activities order to achieve their desired goals" (p.1).

In short, credible policy here becomes key component for effective functional education which enhances the role of government, teachers, and learners by promoting educational contract between all parties and the society. Therefore policies are crucial to educational

functionality because it is only the pivot that ensures the attainment of a well functional education. If this account represent how the dynamism (changing stages) of music education in Nigeria (Rivers State) than the self-fulfillment and self-realization of the learning experience (society needs) is mostly sustained.

Igwe (2017) affirms that: furthermore, in order that these aims and objectives are to be achieved, government will take various measures to implement the policy accordingly; as educational activity will be centered on the learner for maximum self-development and fulfillment, (p.1). It is in recognition fo that, that every Nation needs a pivot point as to actualize it aims, philosophy through education. Education represents the societal input which when fully implemented results in positive outcome. In line with this Okoh (2003) quoting Okafor (1981) in Igwe (2017) that: “education is the process of acculturation by which the individual is assisted to attain maximum activation of his potentialities according to the right reason, and to achieve thereby his-self-fulfillment or self-realization” (p.157-167). Human development emphasize educational importance as a means of achieving human resources for various outlets of a nation interns of occupation or profession; there should be a present form of education.

In all ramifications; for the products of our educational institutions to be practical and theoretical (teachers and musicians) education is the sole key for national development.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

From the foregoing, it is obvious that music education in Nigeria, Rivers State has undergone numerous revolutions in terms of objective and policy, philosophy, curriculum and needs. It is time for actualizing the goals of music education by making sure that more effort should be in place by providing the enabling environment for the study of music. Also a review of music curriculum especially in our primary, secondary schools needs urgent attention. This is achievable by having its curriculum more Africanized, music should be made as compulsory subject as against mathematics and English language. Another urgent area is the non-availability of books, instructional materials, teaching staff, people with knowledge and practical ability should be commissioned as to feel the gap for insufficient staff. Grant should be given to scholars, more departments of music should be established within the state. This paper in its true nature is by no means conclusive without acknowledging both the federal and State government with the establishment of departments of music in both University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education what we have today is a new genre of music education rather than the prevailing era.

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