Folk Songs as Tools for Socialisation: A Case Study of the Anglican Youth Fellowship, Ahoada Diocese, Rivers State

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Abstract

The learning and practice of music in Nigerian context is not limited to acquiring musical skills and knowledge alone but extends to the understanding of the totalities of the society in which a person belongs. These totalities include history, culture, moral values, etc. In Ekpeye ethnic nationality, the youths are usually allowed to socialise based on their age, religion and sex, even when it has to do with musical activities. These activities begin with close observation which later prepares them for active participation. In a typical traditional African society, folk music is used to teach the youths and to pass basic information about their society. This tradition however, is slowly becoming less active due to civilisation and urbanisation. The Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) also makes use of vocal and African instrumental music in educating her members. The main thrust of this work is on the uniqueness of their songs and their effectiveness; some of these are scored for the benefit of documentation. The data used for this study were gathered through intense observation, active participation, and textual analyses of the songs. This study concludes by advocating for cultural relevance in all music education with proper documentation and recording for the preservation of our rich cultural heritage; it recommends that beyond documentation, traditional music should be given much attention among other musical genre.

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Keywords: Folk song, Tool, Socialisation, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Ahoada Diocese

Introduction

Socialisation within the context of this study is the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, belief, language, values, social skills that conform to the norms and roles needed for integration into a group or society. Turner (1994) defines it as "the process of learning how to associate or live in a manner that is generally acceptable to one's own society or community" (p. 63). The process of socialisation allows for the individual to internalise the norms and values of the society. It includes both teaching and learning which of course are the channels for the achievement of socio-cultural preservation and sustainability.

Children are like empty vessels that are gradually filled with the necessary social content. The early stages of these children are very important, in that what triggers their behaviour in their youthful stage is the learning experiences gathered from some agents of socialisation when they are growing up. These agents include the home, school, peer group, church, social media, etc. The content of their education should be in line with cultural/societal values to enable them associate actively and properly in their respective societies, considering that values vary from one culture to another. This is why Esimone and Ojukwu (2014, p. 40) assert that education has been portrayed by many sociologists and educationists to be an experience which bothers on people's culture, and which through learning prepares an individual for adult life in his particular society.

This is true as what is obtainable in one culture may not be obtainable in another; however, most of their intentions channel towards giving their children an all-round education. Akumah (2013, p. 258) outlines some of the goals of traditional education to include:

i. the development of the child's latent/skills mentally and physically;
ii. the inculcation of the right moral values/character;
iii. the development of intellectual skills;
iv. the acquisition of specific vocational training and healthy/honest attitude;
v. the understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the community at large.

According to him, only when the above goals have been achieved that one can truly say that education is successful and effective.

Traditional Music

The universality of music cannot be over emphasised considering its presence in almost all cultures of the world. No wonder Okafor in Agu (2006) defines music as "a cultural expression, determined, molded, interpreted and dressed or coloured by culture and the

cultural environment of a people" (p. 1). The musical practice, outlook, idea, and organisation of every society is determined by its culture and society. Because of this, Okafor (2005) asserts that:

> It is essentially human activity denoting or expressing human emotions and the relationship of the emotions to the environment, in its truest sense, it cannot exist without man; since each culture has its own collective or individual experiences, ideas, outlook and environment, the organisation of sounds into music does vary from culture to culture (p. 383).

The implication of the above is that what is said to be organised sound in one culture may not be regarded as such in another culture. In other words, what is music in one culture may not be regarded as music in another culture. Same goes for the musical tradition, instrumentation and performance practice.

Traditional Music as a Tool for Socialisation

Having established that music education within the Nigerian context goes beyond acquiring musical knowledge/skills but extends to the understanding of the totality of the culture and society in which a person belongs including its history, Agu (2015) postulates that the Traditional Knowledge System of music education and practice accord every Nigerian the opportunity to explore and experience the moral, socio-cultural and entertainment values of music and musical practices at all times.

However, music, which is an integral part of virtually every culture of the world plays very important role in cultural transmission. Okunade (2011) asserts that:

> Learning first takes place under the roof of a child's parents. The child learns about his immediate environment while watching through the activities that go on within his immediate society. He appreciates the cultural values of the society as he grows and interacts with people of the community. Folk songs are one of the tools used in achieving the aforementioned (p. 31).

The musical experience of virtually every Nigerian begins right from birth, as cradle songs are being sung to the baby to make him/her sleep, stop crying, stimulate laughter, etc. Cradle songs also help in the development of the baby's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Plato in Bonds (2003), commented that a successful blend of education involving music and gymnastic is vital to the development of a righteous human being;

that playing the right kind of music could produce a well-round individual, while the wrong type would cause violence, instability.

Considering that music is a medium for cultural expression and preservation, it is important to ensure that the right kind of music are allowed to prevail with consideration to our cultural values to ensure good ethical behaviour and to avoid violence and instability in our society.

Theoretical Framework

The theory behind this research work is the social learning and psychoanalytic theories of socialisation and moral development. This learning theory is derived from John Locke Woke on behaviorism of Watson, which asserts that human beings are blank page on which the society writes an individual's experience. Based on this theory, Anene (2001) states that:

> The family, the social class, the institution and the culture into which one is born determine, to a great extent, the life of an individual. Moral behaviour is socially learned. It is initiated through direct teaching, modeling and imitation; it is maintained by positive reinforcement. The person eventually internalises these behaviours and they become part of him or her. This view holds parents most accountable for early moral teaching through child-rearing practices (p. 120).

For the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud, what is moral is that which is socially sanctioned and that which the individual internalises through identification with his or her parents. According to the psychoanalytic view, human beings are driven by irrational impulses which must be controlled through social prohibitions. In their view, the agents of social control must intervene at a very tender age to introduce necessary restraint and conforming behaviours. The mechanism by which values are acquired is identification with parental view and internalisation of cultural norm. An individual is a creature of his biological descent and of his physical and human environment. He can, to an extent, create, manipulate and introduce changes in his environment due to his potential and creative abilities. But an individual is greatly influenced by the environment in which he/she finds him/herself (Anene, 2001, pp. 120-121).

The impact of music in the education of a child is widely noticed in virtually every culture in Nigeria and in Africa. That is why the various educational definitions cited in this work all centres on culture as the fundamental factor which enable an individual to

meaningfully participate and associate in the society they find themselves. Using a western folk song like 'Row row, row your boat, gently down the stream, which are not culturally rooted in the Ekpeye culture to train an Ekpeye child will make that child become culturally strange and threatened. The use of African traditional music in children education helps in the achievement of Akumah's goal on traditional education as mentioned above.

The Anglican Youth Fellowship

The Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) is the oldest young people organisation in the Anglican Church, which was founded in May, 1947 by Archbishop Vining in Lagos. The (AYF) is originally known as Anglican Young People's Association (AYPA) within the period but its name was changed in 1968 to allow members who are not Anglicans to participate in the fellowship. The motto of the AYF is: "Towards the Perfect Man" (Ephesians 4:13A). This unique organisation became part of the Anglican Diocese of Ahoada when it was created in 2004.

Aims and Objectives of the AYF

The aims and objectives of the AYF include:

i) to provide opportunity for young people to meet Christ in fellowship;
ii) to help members develop an understanding of their role in the church and the society;
iii) to develop programs to meet the need of the church and the nation;
iv) to provide learning experiences in leadership skills.

The above objectives gave way for the following activities:

Worship: This includes devotional exercises, bible studies, quizzes sing-spiration, debates, etc.

Work: This has to do with outreach programs done by the group for the Church and the society.

Education: This includes speakers, films, skill training, playwriting, drama, dance, first aid training.

Recreation: This includes games, art and craft, cook outs, nature walks and shows. (www.anglicandioceseamichi.org).

In line with the above, the researchers have meticulously observed that the vision behind the formation of the AYF was not in vain as most of the youths under the tutelage of the AYF are found to be well behaved individuals in the society. The achievement of these

objectives was possible due to the inclusion of music in their education considering that humans are naturally attracted to music and music related activities.

This explains why Onwuekwe (2006) says that:

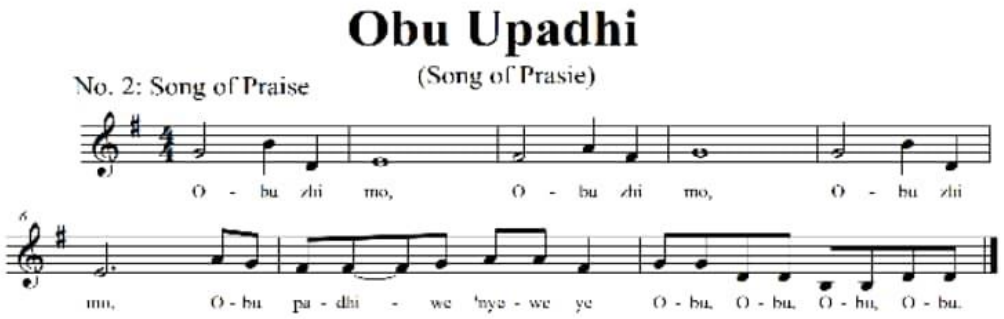
> Music can do many things and have many desirable results. It can stimulate or soothe the mind, help towards a wider education, or at least, a wider mental perspective. It can gently plough the mind so that it will be more receptive to the seeds of learning; it can find response in disciplined physical action. Music can comfort the lonely and the sick, awake pleasant memories in the old, delight the young and lull a child to sleep (p. 2).

The musical content in most of the AYF activities are structured to motivate and educate them on the issues concerning hope, love, praise, kindness, thanksgiving, trust/protection, love, etc, as can be found in some of the folk songs displayed in this work.



Emene mu kwa ni kwa,	Those of you who are crying,
e-kwa ne de ni me,	stop crying for me,
whani ho eme shi lu-wa,	cry for those who are in the world,
ma kaele keshi ida me,	I have gone to meet my father.

The lesson in this song is on hope; that even if someone very precious to you dies, you should not lose hope as children of God because God does not forsake His people.



Obu shim o, (3 times)	There is a special song, (3 times)
Obu padhi we nye we ye,	a song that praises the lord
Obu.	a special song.

This song emphasises the essence and power of praise considering that praise moves God and makes Him do great things.



Unuwe Samerian,	The Samarian woman,
nem mini mo wo wuo	give me water to drink.
Unuwe Samerian,	The Samarian woman,
Unuwe Samerian nem mini mo wo,	Samarian woman give me water
Nem mini mo wo-o, nem mini mo wo-o,	give me water, to drink
Unuwe Samerian nemmini mo wo.	Samarian woman give me water.

Kindness is a unique virtue in Ekpeye kingdom; this song teaches us to be kind to everyone we come across whether we know them or not.



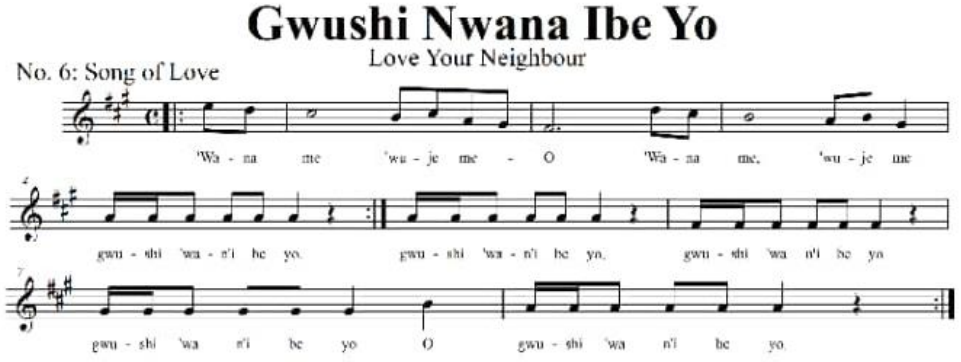
Ja ma kpowe nani ishi lele	Come let's bow our head to Him
Meka, chineke meka,	thank you, Lord thank you,
Eka yo keike, ugbolo yo bueke..	your hands are big, your works are great,
Meka.	Thank you

This song teaches us to always be grateful to the Almighty God for His good works; and that regular thanksgiving to God attracts more blessings from Him.



Lime yo, Nye whe me,	In you my father,
Lime yo, adi me shishi obu me,	in you, I put all my trust,
Lime yo, nyee whe me,	in you, my father,
Ewhe de mu iwene me .	do not put me to shame.

Considering the nature of the society, with crime at its peak, one requires the protection of the Almighty God to stay safe. This song teaches of God's unending protection for those who put their trust in Him.



'Wana me, 'wuje me o	Oh my brethren and my friends,
'Wana me, 'Nwuje me,	my brethren and my friends,
Gwushi 'wanaibe yo.	Love your neighbor as yourselves.

This song is a constant reminder of one of the ten commandments which advocates that we love our neighbours as ourselves for this is the greatest of all the commandments.

Conclusion

It is a known fact that culture is the totality of a people's way of life; this includes their belief system, language, values, symbols, norms, etc, that are passed from one generation to another through formal or informal forms of traditional education or agents of socialisation. This transformation is indeed successful due to the integration of musical elements in culture. In view of the above, most African traditional societies see music education as an education that is beyond acquiring musical knowledge, skills and entertainment but that it encompasses all that have to do with the individual's society or community; which includes history, culture, moral instructions, etc. In Ekpeye ethnic nationality and of course the AYF, traditional music plays a vital role in the socialisation of the people considering that it contains good morals required for a better society.

Recommendation

The study recommends that beyond documentation, traditional music should be given much attention among other musical genre.

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