

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA AND THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN PEACEBUILDING

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Abstract

Every human society is an enterprise of world-building. Man who is at the centre of this exercise is a product of society and society which is a dialectic phenomenon is a product of man. Man as a cultural being brings diversity into society. Thus, in society, there is diversity through language, religious affiliations, knowledge, art, morals, laws, customs et cetera. However, diversity in society tends towards peace or war depending on the management of elements in the society. This work explores the negative and positive aspects of diversity in Nigeria and the implications of music for peace-building. Some of the negative dimensions are the unequal and differential treatment of ethnic groups, the prioritization of tribal identity over professional efficiency, fatal consequences on the political process, ethnocentrism and ethnic tensions; while some of the positive sides are cultural identity, an increase in creativity, source of economic power, natural and mineral resources. Music which is one of the means of reinforcing unity in a diverse nation creates awareness of other cultures and makes different cultures or societies connect and understand one another. Thus, it is a tool for unity and development in society. It adds vibrancy to communities and strengthens the sense of belonging and connection with others by transcending cultural barriers. Thus, music has the undisputed capacity for peace-building and the power to culturally, morally and emotionally influence society.

Keywords: Diversity, Peace and War, Music and Peace-building

Introduction

Diversity is an integral part of society's ongoing evolution and development. It should not be understood solely as an inherently negative and destructive occurrence but rather as a potentially positive and productive force for growth if harnessed constructively. However, diversity in society has always presented positive and negative sides. The case of Nigeria is hardly an exception. The human factor that brought about the amalgamation of the country into a multi-ethnic constitution has always posed positive and negative implications. Right from the time of her historic unification in 1914, Nigeria has witnessed many crises and challenges culminating in tribal conflicts and war. However, despite the cultural diversity of Nigeria, Nigeria can be united and experience peace.

Peace-building in Nigeria can be achieved through various means but the role of music is the crux of this work. Music can communicate meanings that would eliminate the harmful stereotypes we have formed against one another and also divisiveness among Nigerians for political reasons. Music also helps to enhance proper disposition for healthy dialogue that integrates instead of magnifying differences. The moment a nation can resolve its ethnic tension, everything about its

growth and development becomes easier. The contents and objectives of songs at different levels should be to instil a sense of collectiveness that transcends tribe and ensure that we reap the benefits of being an ethnically diverse nation. National unity is portrayed in the national anthem and calls for unity all the time which is the most important factor that holds the country together. This work takes the following headings for systematic presentation: The Concepts of Peace and War, Music, Peace-building, Human Diversity in Society, Diversity in Nigeria, Negative Effects of Diversity in Nigeria, Positive Effects of Diversity in Nigeria, Music and Peace-building and Conclusion.

Peace and War

Peace is a multidimensional concept. Akpuru- Aja (2007) notes that "Peace is a relative condition of security-friendly climate that allows individuals and group relations to progressive order and stability" (p.1). Peace does not mean the absence of conflict or war and the absence of war does not automatically mean peace. It reflects a security-friendly system that frees individuals and groups of people from fears and dangers of losing such inalienable human rights as life, liberty and property. Peace is the human desired condition and order of existence that allows the ruler and the ruled to fulfil life obligations with minimum fear or danger on life, liberty and property. In principle and strategy, war is an antithesis of civility, order, stability, peace and security. The main difference between war and peace according to Akpuru-Aja (2007) is that while the former is destructive and disintegrative, the latter is constructive, cooperative, integrative and collaborative. The vital point to note is that peace is no fixation, but a process. Thus, peace may even exist in a conflict or war situation to the extent that the major actors are more committed to constructive and harmonious settlement of issues rather than destruction, which breaks down relations. Thus, relations value or system maintenance in conflict situations may still create an atmosphere that guarantees relative normal activities and the absence of fear of violent death or flagrant abuse of fundamental rights.

Music

Musical sounds or tones are produced by vibrations set in motion by the human voice and/or other sound-producing instruments, for instance, singing, plucking of violin, beating a drum, blowing of flute or whistle in a definite pattern (Obicheta, 1993). These aspects of music are pleasing to the ear and enjoyable because they are organized. So music may be defined as a succession of organized sounds which is pleasing to the ear. It is also characterized by its definite, regular and equal sound. It is pertinent to note that there is an organized and unorganized sound. Organized sound is music while the unorganized sound is noise. Noise is a disorganized sound that is not pleasing to the ear. It is characterized by its indefinite, irregular and unequal sound. Music is a universal language of the soul. It is a universal language because it has no language barrier. Everybody enjoys and appreciates good sound.

Peace-building

Peace-building is an activity that aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflict. It revolves around developing constructive personal, group and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national and racial boundaries. The process includes violence prevention; conflict management, resolution or transformation; and post-conflict reconciliation or trauma healing before, during and after any given case of violence. (Schirch, 2008). As such, peace-building is a multi-disciplinary cross-sector technique or method that becomes strategic when it works over the long run and at all levels of society to establish and sustain relationships among people locally and globally and thus engender sustainable peace.

Strategic peace-building activities address the root or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution, and stabilize society politically and socioeconomically. The methods included in peace-building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace-building. Successful peace-building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace, reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms, and address underlying structural and societal issues. Improving human security is the central task of peacebuilding. In this sense, peace-building includes a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national and international levels to address the root causes of violence and ensure civilians have freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom from humiliation before, during and after violent conflict.

Furthermore, peace-building in strategic terms is designed to restore greater confidence and trust among the survivors across disputing states, or parties, particularly the countless number of refugees (internally displaced citizens, who left their homes and enterprises without a choice). Usually, survivors are terror haunted, with minds running amok due to the losses, sight and heartbreaking horrors of the conflict (Akporu-Aja, 2007). The fears need to be allayed that they would not be a cause for the resumption of conflict situations. It presents multidimensional humanitarian intervention and assistance; an international legal framework for fair treatment of refugees; peace education against violence psychology, secular education and vocational skill to provide learning and create focal points for the future. In summary, peacebuilding is wholly conflict prevention, conflict management and transformation.

Human Diversity in Society

People have many differences making them diverse as a whole. No two people are exactly alike and this uniqueness is what makes us individuals. Although the differences are intrinsic; extrinsic differences exist that further mark our diverse natures. Some of these differences are in racial, ethnic, socio-economic, geographic and academic/professional backgrounds. More so, people with different opinions, social experiences, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientations, heritage and life experiences. Thus, diversity in human society entails differences in culture. Culture is that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1871). In general, human diversity means the differences inherent among people which could be internal, external, organizational and world-view.

Diversity in Nigeria

In 1914, Lord Frederick Lugard under British colonial masters unified the northern and the southern protectorates. Nigeria, thus, became a multi-ethnic, religious and constitutional state. It was a result of the problems associated with the governing scattered and vast territories with separate administrative entities that gave rise to amalgamating these vast territories into one nation, Nigeria. Thus, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a diverse West African country. People have things in common but are different in different ways. This diversity creates a nation that is constituted of people with differences in cultural, religious, linguistic and territorial features. Nigeria as a nation has many cultural differences which include: Language and Religion. The former is the most remarkable difference which distinguishes one culture from the other in Nigeria. We have over 250 indigenous languages in the country and over 1150 dialects and ethnic groups. More so, apart from the two major religions; Christianity and Islam, there are various traditional religious beliefs in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa who are predominant in the north, the Igbo who are predominant in the southeast and the Yoruba who are predominant in the southwest.

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with multi-ethnic groups and religious affiliations. It is a conglomeration of multi-ethnic groups. However, we must recognize and value all the diverse differences.

Negative Effects of Diversity in Nigeria

Nigeria is an expression reflecting an amalgam of different tribes struggling to coexist in harmony. What is often viewed as a rich cultural heritage has often been a source of conflict and a deterrent to development. It has become a battlefield where ethnic and religious riots are constantly staged. Some of the negative effects of diversity in Nigeria include:

Unequal and Differential Treatment of Ethnic Groups

It is a common phenomenon that “lots of crises in Africa and Nigeria are as a result of certain historical and cultural differences among people who are otherwise bounded within the same territory but are denied equal access to common resources.” (Ekei, 2006, p.169). The political system in Nigeria has been skewed to favour a particular group, pushing marginalized groups as Irobi (2005) noted, to use their ethnicity to mobilize for equality. Irobi commenting further also stated that this strategy of governance disturbed ethnic groups from each other, and prejudice and hatred became rife in all the provinces as different ethnic groups started looking at each other suspiciously in all spheres of contact. Unequal and differential treatment of ethnic groups was responsible for the intense competition in Nigerian society; it created a disparity in educational achievement and widened the political and economic gap between Northerners and Southerners in Nigeria.

The Prioritization of Tribal Identity over Professional Efficiency

The prioritization of tribal identity over professional efficiency often results in the poor execution or non-execution of projects that could have potentially transformed the lives of many Nigerians. Thus, many lack the proper motivation to do their very best when in positions of power unless their actions are directly benefiting them or their ethnic group. Nwaejike and Okeke (2009) note that since independence, the situation in Nigeria has been fraught with ethnic politics whereby the elite from different ethnic groups scheme to attract as many federal resources to their region as possible neglecting issues that could have united the country together.

Fatal Consequences on the Political Process

There is serious tribal associated prejudice in Nigeria. The inter-ethnic rivalry has also had fatal consequences on the political process. The country seems to have a unique presidential rotation system. At a bureaucratic level, we have the federal character principle, which gives room for the minority communities to complain of marginalization. This alludes to the fact that key positions seem to be allocated based on tribal affiliation rather than merit and capability.

Ethnocentrism and Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic diversity in Nigeria creates a nation that is constituted of people with differences in cultural, religious, linguistic and territorial features. These factors tend to generate natural tensions arising from basic human factors. The assumption is founded on the fact that "ethnocentrism is an ideology which sees one cultural group, traditions, customs, and values as superior to others." (Nwigbo, 2002, p. 227). Most times, the cause of the rivalry revolves around the issue of who gets what or who controls what and why? All these borders on the phenomenon and the tension of diverse people living in the same territory but are denied equal access to common resources. This denial of common national resources arises from what Warnock (1973) observes:

Most human beings have some natural tendency (human factor) to be more concerned about the satisfaction of their wants, than those of others. Even if they do care to some extent about others, is quite likely to be only about some others- family, friends, class, tribe, country, or race. There is also complete or comparative indifference to such a thing as active malevolence. A man will sometimes be not only unconcerned about but actively malevolent towards others whom he may see as somehow in competition with himself. (p. 21).

If human beings as reported by Warnock have some natural tendency to be more concerned about their own wants than those of others then the implication is that in a country like Nigeria with at least two hundred and fifty ethnic languages, there is going to be diverse wants that will be made and it seems that greater ethnic diversity often increases the probability of ethnic tensions and conflict.

Positive Effects of Diversity in Nigeria

Naturally, a multi-ethnic nation, like Nigeria would share more values and endowments of manpower and natural resources than an equally endowed unitary state. This is premised on the fact that two good heads are said to be better than one. The merit is also anchored on the principle that multitude is power expressed in Igbo as *igwe-bu-ike*. Diversity of people promotes economic, political, social, cultural and linguistic powers. In effect, Nigeria possesses multidimensional values, endowments and heritages. It is pertinent to note that diversity in society plays some functional roles. It is an essential matter in the formation of federal societies. Some of the functional roles of diversity are:

Cultural Identity

According to Ibe (2020), "The end of colonialism in many parts of the world and consequent global migration patterns have meant that most states today are made up of different cultures; in fact, very few countries are monoculture" (p. 87). Nigeria, being a creation of this colonialism has been battling with the balance of autonomous cultural identity and secular modern state organization. The presence of such groups in modern societies highlights the importance of cultural identity; that is the inherited beliefs and practices that give a person a sense of identity.

It Increases Creativity

Diversity prevents the stagnation and decay of the social system by stimulating innovation and creativity. Some have remarked that diversity may lead to new social norms and reforms that could in turn enhance the welfare of a larger segment of society. It, therefore, encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem-solving.

Source of Economic Power

With regard to cultural diversity in Nigeria, Ogbusu (2006) "infers that cultural diversity is a gift to be celebrated; we need to name, own, reverence, honour, value, celebrate and ritualize our diversity" (p. 64). It is not only that Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa; it is also the most multi-cultural diversified country in Africa. She has about two hundred and fifty ethnic/ cultural groups and about five hundred language groups. For economists, this information means a lot. It reflects the power of diverse and varied domestic products flooding markets on daily basis. This factor of the diversity of marketable products and services adds to the Nigerian immense population to boost the Nigerian economic potential.

This is in line with the provision of Cultural policy in the Nigerian Constitution that confers the

rights to the people to develop and promote their cultures and to apply their cultures as an instrument of promoting national identity and unity. These two factors among other things will attract foreign investors. In other words, population and diversity are sources of economic power and economic strength in Nigerian building.

Natural and Mineral Resources

The multicultural and ethnic diversity in Nigeria has paved way for the harnessing of varied quantities of mineral and natural products. Apart from oil, petroleum, and gas explorations, Nigeria can boast of other mineral resources to her credit. These include coal, gold, granites, diamond, iron and skin, gravels, etc. These natural products have added great impetus to Nigeria's domestic earnings and have enhanced tremendously her aspiration for nation-building.

Music and Peace-building

Music provides a unique approach to peacebuilding, which has the potential to help communities address the many stages of the conflict more constructively and creatively. It is pertinent to note that music does not itself end wars or eliminate structural inequalities but it engages in a thought process (Adelman, 2001). Music has a huge potential when used in conflict transformation, to prevent or resolve by non-violent means. It can assist in the processes of healing and rehabilitation. The world of music can be a place of comfort and consolidation. It can contribute to the cause of peace-building by serving a vital role in offering relevant alternative modes of dialogue and communication, which can also supplement and encourage more traditional ways of exchanging ideas with young people participating in the music-making as well as with people of all cultures in Nigeria.

Another important aspect of music for peace-building is communication. Communication in art is the conveying of feelings or emotions, which essentially involves a symbolic transformation of an experienced world. It is an externalization of emotional experiences of human beings and thereby presents their picture of life, their values, goals or aspiration, rules, beliefs or customs of a particular culture of a society or community. Music is another form of fine arts. In the field of communication, music is considered one of the most universal of all arts because it works as a daily medicine constantly aiding far better communication with others. Music is one of the greatest forms of communication in the world. Even when we do not understand the language, we get the innate pleasure of sounds and their concatenation. Music as a tool of communication can change our ways of feeling, thinking and actions. It helps also to coordinate feelings and enables our expression and emotional development. With this power, music contributes to the continuity and stability of cultures and the integrity of human society. Such can be achieved in Nigeria if and only if musicians and composers of different cultures and at different levels will realize the power to communicate peace through music. It is also traditionally regarded as a means of communicating with God and is a medium of establishing contact between humans and the Divine. Thus, sacred music could be a form of prayer for peace in Nigeria. According to Kingsley (1859):

There is something very wonderful about music. Words are wonderful enough, but music is even more wonderful. It speaks not to our thoughts as words do; it speaks through our hearts and spirits, to the very core and roots of our souls. Music soothes us, stirs us up, puts noble feelings in us, it can make us cringe; and it can melt us to tears and yet we have no idea how. It is a language by itself, just as perfect in its ways as speech, as words, just as divine, just as blessed (p. 161).

Music, therefore, conveys and responds to what is deep inside the human soul. It conveys

emotions and innermost feelings, which are universal and are experienced by all in one way or the other. It also helps humans from different cultures or societies to connect and understand one another. It affects our feelings deeply and it is a great source of joy and shapes the attitudes and moods of the listeners.

More so, music has power over us as we listen to the melody and lyrics and at the same time gives power in creating and performing it. Boyce-Tillman (1996) specifies three ways of experiencing music: "Listening, performing and composing". She continues, "Music is a multi-faceted art. It can unite us with ourselves, with others, with the natural world and with spiritual powers" (p.243). It also provides a creative and non-violent avenue for inspiring social consciousness and affecting change. According to Urbain (2008), historically, music has always been the accompaniment of social change. Music can allow people who might otherwise respond to oppression with violence and aggression to have a voice and to expose their issues to a greater audience. Thus, music has a way of breaking boundaries and pushing for social change. Both black and white activists during the Civil Rights Movement used music to express their anger and frustration with oppression and segregation and to advocate for equality, freedom and respect. It is pertinent to note that ethnicity in Nigeria is good and through music, our cultural identity should be emphasized while disregarding every element of ethnocentrism which is prejudice against other tribal groups. Thus, different tribes in Nigeria should be honoured through music and every ethnic group should be seen as unique.

Furthermore, music expresses widely shared values or experiences and emotions that help to define a group's identity and solidarity. It enhances group identity and playing musical instruments in a group helps the brain coordinate our body movements with others. Thus, music increases the sense of community and builds social stability. Music has considerable effects on cognition, emotion and behaviour. It regulates emotion and helps with self-expression and social bonding. It can deeply affect our mental states and raise our mood. When we need it, music gives us energy and motivation. When we are worried, it can soothe us; when we are weary, it can encourage us; and when we are feeling deflated, it can re-inspire us. Indeed such psychological power is essential in Nigeria to heal and restore peace.

It is pertinent to remark that the power of music does not belong exclusively to peace initiatives. Music could also influence violence and divisions. Some music can inspire group pride and antagonism against other groups. Schirch (2008) refers to this as "negative identity" formation, where one only knows oneself by who one is not and can lead groups into a continued cycle of aggression and violence. The ability of music to lend itself to this sort of destructive identity formation indicates the need for greater attention to the effects of music on politics and public opinion. O'Connell (2010) argues that the place of music and warfare needs greater scrutiny, specifically in instances where music is "employed to mobilize support and to incite violence". In both its destructive and transformative forms, music's power is indeed a critical force that must be more closely examined by peace-builders. Though it is sometimes used to divide rather than to connect people, music is in the end an expressive outlet that can be employed for peace-building.

Conclusion

In a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria, the aspiration for national integration should be a constant hallmark of nation-building. It involves a basic aspiration for unity that is built on the philosophy of mutual co-existence, cooperation, accommodation and tolerance. Since Nigeria is made up of people from diverse cultures, languages, attitudes, and expectations, then a sense of understanding and tolerance should be the watchword in their collective aspiration for peace. The unity and proper integration of multi-ethnic Nigeria is the first step toward peace. There is immense power and potential in a nation with many diversities and a large population. So, while

Nigerian ethnic constitutions may be deprived of a common culture and a common language, her numerical strength and diversity of values are significant. These indices sustain tremendous business and economic markets. Therefore large population is always an attraction to foreign and local investors, especially where there is greater integration, security and harmony among her citizens.

Furthermore, all hands must be on deck for peace to be achieved in a diverse Nigerian nation. This entails all the agents towards conflict transformation. The agents of conflict transformation refer to the various means through which the root causes of violence, disputes, riots et cetera, can be addressed to restore human relationships. Music is one of the means of building peace in a diverse nation. Music conveys and responds to what is deep inside the human soul. It conveys emotions and innermost feelings, which are universal and are experienced by all in one way or the other. It also helps humans from different cultures or societies to connect and understand one another. It is a tool for unity and development in society. It adds vibrancy to communities, engages the brain, strengthens the sense of belonging and connection with others and possibly boosts the physical and emotional health of older adult participants. It can transcend cultural barriers and reach people or groups who have been forgotten or been undervalued to develop unity. Music can heal, break down barriers, reconcile, educate, assist the needy, galvanize support for good causes even promote the protection of human rights. Thus, it has the undisputed capacity to make the world a better place and the power to culturally, morally and emotionally influence our society.

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