

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

INDIGENOUS MUSIC AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN IGBO CULTURE

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Abstract

In Nigeria and Igbo culture, in particular, music-making is not just performed for mere entertainment. The value placed on music is beyond its beauty and enjoyment. Music is a life-long activity that serves as a medium for cultural transmission. It is an essential part of Igbo culture. It plays a very prominent role in the shaping and moulding of human character to a desirable one which is the pivot of development in any Igbo community. This study examines the role of indigenous music in human development in Igbo culture. Textual analyses of selected indigenous Igbo songs were also done. Findings in this study reveal that music is an essential tool in character moulding which results in the breeding of individuals with adorable mindsets, capable of effecting positive change in Igbo communities. It also reveals that the present generation shows little or no interest in the performance of indigenous music. This study, therefore, recommends that indigenous music should be integrated into primary and post-primary schools' curricula. It also recommends that awareness be created about the relevance of indigenous music in the life of the people by showcasing it through various media outlets. The Source of information was based on literature review and interview.

Keywords: Igbo community, indigenous music, human development, character moulding, cultural transmission.

Introduction

The incessant crises in Nigeria imply that there is degradation in the development of the human mind in the country and even beyond. This is evident in the mayhem that is prevalent in Nigeria and other parts of the world. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate and proffer ways of imparting the desirable behavioural patterns on the citizens of every culture. This when achieved will bring about a positive change of attitude on the people.

The focal point of this paper centres on how the messages embedded in indigenous Igbo music can affect and transform a greater number of people towards positive thinking. With this achievement, the Igbo will experience a great turnaround from the state of chaos to a more peaceful and enjoyable environment. Igbo people and Nigeria, in general, do not perform music just for entertainment or esthetic purposes. The values attributed to music are far more than mere entertainment mediums. The outcomes of the impact of music on the life of the people are innumerable. Igbo culture is such that every child imbibes musical knowledge from infancy even from the womb. "A pregnant mother who participates in a limited number of musical activities, is believed to be introducing the baby in the womb to rhythmical movements"(Agu 1990:50). Upholding this view Onyeji and Onyeji (2014) discussing the parallels in the approaches of Carl

Orff and Batswana traditional musicians to music education, wrote:

Rhythmic education starts from the womb, mothers participate in musical activities and household chores that integrate rhythmical motions. It is believed that the unborn child develops an acute sense of rhythm later in life through such activities (p.8).

From the above views, it is obvious that children acquire their basic music knowledge from the womb through their mothers and it is very necessary to uphold and develop this knowledge in every Igbo child.

Sustainable Human Development

The development could be viewed as the gradual growth which takes place in humans or things, this shows that development is not automatic, it is a process. Tadaro and Smith (2009) in Forchu (2012:208) assert that “development is an infinite process which entails the quantitative and qualitative transformation of lives of individuals and society, through improvements in material infrastructure as well as social and cultural structures”. The qualitative transformation of lives entails that one acquires those desirable attributes that will make him relevant in his society. Human development has to do with the mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing of man. It is much more than political or economic which was referred to by <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/.../> humans as “only a means of enlarging people's choices”. It goes further to say that:

Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities - the range of things that people can do or be in life... The most basic capabilities for human development are: to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable (eg; to be educated), to have access to the resources and social services needed for a decent standard of living, and to be able to participate in the life of the community (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/.../> human...).

It is therefore a necessity that much effort is made in ensuring proper development of the human mind which if not achieved, the resources available to man in his environment will not be properly harnessed.

Sustainability is very important in every development so that its effect will be long term if not an everlasting one. “Sustainable development is a behaviour that can sustain indefinitely into the future” (Modeme, 2015:68). Wikipedia free dictionary as cited by Obiefuna and Uzoigwe (2012:134) and Onuora-Oguno and Nwamara (2014:115) both opine that “sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own need.” With this in view, every society must provide feasible means of ensuring that its citizens acquire those traits which will meet their values and aspirations. Sustainable human development is necessary for the advancement of all kinds of development in any society. It is important to note that the values of any society are best inculcated to its people from childhood so that they will grow along with it.

The Role of Music in the Life of an Igbo Child

In Igbo land, musical activities are not limited to adults and youths; children engage in the musical activities that implant the expected behavioural traits in them. It has been earlier stated in this paper that children learn rhythmic movements while still in the womb. As he grows up he participates in playing songs and music games with his siblings and peers. Thus, every Igbo child receives his first music lesson from his family. Onyiuke(2006) in Esimone (2014) opines that:

From the childhood stage, the child learns to develop his moral attribute in

other to live harmoniously with his fellow men. In the family and school, the child learns songs that teach morals like songs that emphasize respect for elders, dignity or labour, kindness to all, hard work, cleanliness and many others (p.71).

The musical attributes of any adult started from the time of his birth that is the reason why it is necessary to expose every child to the musical activities of his community. These musical activities contain vital information that educates the child on the value system of his people. “Children grow up and play together improving their number skills by running errands, playing musical and rhythmic games, listening to and participating in the recitation of the rhyme”(Emeka 1994: 125). Children are part of the musical culture of society. Agu (2011) states that:

Music plays an important role in the life of an Igbo child. It is rather an essential part of every facet of his daily life. Music occupies his entire day's activity from morning till night and through all the developmental stages of his life, from birth to death, the musical tradition surrounding his birth begins as soon as he is born (p.2).

Music is part and parcel of the developmental process of every child in the Igbo community, he begins to listen to and enjoy music from the very moment of his birth. He is introduced to rhythm by his mother, siblings or baby-seater who through petting and rocking him to the beats of cradle songs lulls him to sleep. As the child advances in age, he learns to sing, clap and play complex rhythms by imitating the adults. This is in line with Warren's view in Agu (2011:2) that “children absorb their basic knowledge by imitating elders”. Reaffirming this, Okafor (2005) posits that: When a child is old enough to walk, he begins to participate in musical games led by older children. Games are designed for the various Igbo communities and engage both sexes in all age groupings from childhood to youth. The child would unconsciously absorb much of their basic knowledge by imitating his elders in these games. Children play all sorts of games – musical, rhythm, acrobatic, mental-alertness, physical exercises which aim at developing them as members of their communities (p.56).

Although every culture in Igbo provided musical activities that are geared towards breeding children with desirable characters that will grow up to become relevant in society; there are a good number of Igbo children who are ignorant of the various genres of indigenous music of their people. They neither listen to nor take part in them because of the environment where they were born and trained. Most of them who reside in urban cities could not speak or understand their native language let alone sing their folksongs. It is believed that the level of awareness of the cultural values of the society of those born and trained in the city is not measured with those of them that grew up in the village. In some Igbo communities, those children who reside in the city that rarely visit their home towns are regarded as 'okuko oyibo' (English fowl) while the ones that grew up in the village are called 'okuko Igbo' (local fowl). To them, okuko Igbo is more knowledgeable about traditional issues than okuko oyibo.

Indigenous Igbo Music and Sustainable Human Development

Indigenous music is the traditional music of a people. It is an integral part of every culture in Nigerian it has a place in other aspects of culture. “There is an integral relationship between musical performances and the other aspect of the people's culture” (Idamoyibo, 2010:67). In other words, music cannot be separated from culture, it is sometimes referred to as the carrier of a peoples' culture. Agu (1990) in Agu (2000) wrote: “traditional music is the indigenous music of the people which forms an integral part of their way of life” (p.81). “Because traditional music is

a direct association with traditional religion and political system and preserved by culture, it generates social experiences which go deep and serves as a link which binds each ethnic society together; giving each individual that sense of belonging” (Agu 2000:81). Indigenous music serves as a unifying factor between performing groups and therefore encourages peace and harmony. Agu (1990) discussing the primacy of music in Igbo traditional religion states that:

In African societies, all aspects of life, ranging from birth to death, are believed to be integrated with music-making. Among the Igbo, it is said that music serves not only as a medium for entertainment and social relationship but as an intricate part of the development of the mind, body and soul. It is assumed that the laws of the land are learnt through songs. The history of the tribe is learned through songs. And the accepted behavioural patterns in society are all assimilated through music and dance (p.50).

Studies have shown that every necessary attribute of any culture is embedded in their indigenous music. Therefore, music is an important aid in calculating the right behavioural attitude of the citizens of any society. Ekong and Ekpu (2015:5) submit that "music has a vital role in the all-round development of a person whether young or old". That is to say that there is no age barrier to what music is capable of doing in the life of man.

Human development in this context centres on the development of the human mind and body. The hub of every outward development in every sphere of the human environment is the human mind. Okafor (2005) in Okpala (2015) states that:

Ahmed Sekoutouri, the president of Guinea (one of the poorest countries) said during his reign that he laid more stress on the development of human beings because, according to him, the bauxite, the manganese and that other mineral will be under the ground in his country. But, if he didn't develop human beings, those things will be badly used (p.200).

Okpala (2015), discussing the role of traditional music, writes:

It ploughs the mind of the people that make up the society leaving them as law-abiding citizens. Through folk music, the conventional rules of behaviour are maintained. This is achieved when the right conduct is encouraged through praise and appreciation, and ill behaviour is discouraged through caution and ridicule. Breeding people with the right mindset go a long way to encourage development both in the rural areas and the entire nation (p.203).

Indigenous music has the potential of addressing every issue that has to do with the man in every Igbo community. Ihekweazu (1985) in Fakeye and Ogunbona (2014) states that “music enables people in the communities to understand their past and contribute to the shaping of the present and future” (p.84). With the ongoing, it is apt to say that indigenous music is an indispensable tool in the development of the human mind.

Indigenous music also plays a part in the development of the human body in terms of physical fitness and healthy life. Participation in indigenous dance music promotes good physical fitness. Dancing is a good medium of exercising one's body which stimulates good blood circulation and strengthens the bones and joints. It also enhances physical body growth; music is used as a

therapy to maintain good health. Aluede (2012) likened music to an Edae which he explained as “an Esan term for an amulet or portion, which is either worn on the neck, west, hand or hung on a tree or rooftop to elongate the life span of its user. He said that: “music though not charm, talisman or amulet has been observed to share the attributes of Edae in calming someone, diverting ones thought from a glooming to gay one and strengthening the weak mind to heal the body... Music is often said to be a diversionary tool because it makes the mind rise above the challenge that would have weighed the body down (p.77). This submission by Aluede entails that music has the capability of elongating human life. It calms the troubled/depressed mind; it awakens pleasant memories in the young and old. “Listening to and participating in music and musical activities are effective strategies to beat stress and other health risks” (Ekong and Ekpu 2015).

Relevance of Developed Human Mind to Community Development

Community development is a system where community members come together to take collective action and generate a solution to their common problems. The economic, social, political, religious, environmental cultural etc, are tackled through this action. The researcher emphasized community development because the development of any nation is achieved if it commences from the grassroots. Community development is enhanced by the people, in other words, “development is centred on people” (Yirenki, 2010: 55). Ingle (1972) in Yirenki (2010) posits that “development is of the mind, it is a mental attitude and the mind remains the seat of it” (p. 62). It is only in a community where the citizens possess desirable characteristics that sustainable development could be achieved. Ingle goes on to state that:

In the formulation of the project, our thinking must be right and take into serious account the resources at hand and our capabilities which when diligently and wisely applied to the resources will give us the expected satisfaction of the development manifestation at the time. (p: 63).

It is obvious that the human mind is the pivot of all kinds of development in any community. Therefore those traditional media like music, through which the norm and values of the people are transferred from generation to generation, should be seriously upheld.

However, it is very appalling that this indispensable part of Igbo culture is being treated with contempt by most people in the present age. People no longer value our indigenous music let alone participating in it. Some churches barred the use of the local musical instrument in their services with the notion that it is fetish. Ekong and Ekpu (2015) rightly observed that "traditional music performance is not regular features in the society and even in the radio and TV channels". Besides certain church doctrines, contemporary times condemn this type of music associating it with something demonic or devilish (p. 15).

Textual Analysis of Selected Indigenous Igbo Songs

Nwadi Mkpa

O luru uno enu, O kuru gbamgbam.

Iheadina-ajukwanu bu O mutakwara nwa o?

O gbaraugbo-ala o, ma o bu ogba tum tum.

Ihe adina-ajukwanu bu O mutakwaranwa o?

Onye muru nwa biko lezie nwa gi anya.

Maka ihe adina-ajukwanu bu O zukwarayaofuma?

O kwanu Chukwuna-enyenwa, one O nyeregi I jide.

Ihe adina-ajukwanubu O mukwarachaachaa

Translation

The importance of a child

He built a duplex, he roofed his house
But the question is, does he have a child?
He has a car or a motorcycle
But the question is, does he have a child?
He who has a child should train him well
The question will always be; is he is well trained?
It is God that gives children, is contented with the much he gave you.
The question is, whether he has any child at all?

The song above is performed by women during the funeral ceremony of any man or woman that has children. It emphasizes the supremacy of an Igbo child over any material wealth, No matter the amount of material wealth one acquires without children that will enjoy them, his life is incomplete. It also portrays that even when the children are there; it is the responsibility of the parents to give them adequate training that will make them relevant in the community. Finally, the song advises that one should make do with the number of children given to him by God.

Onye Nkwughari

Call

Adanna
Adanna
Adanna batauno
Na nnegina-akpogi
Adanna batauno
Na nna gina-akpogi
Adanna
Okuko nti ike
Na- eso ozu ana n'ili
Chetakwa na echi di
O kwa agbacha egwu
O naa n'ukwu

Response

Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari
Onye nkwughari

Translation

The Wayward

Call

Adanna
Adanna
Adanna come into the house
For your mother is calling you
Adanna come into the house
For your father is calling you
Adanna
The deaf fowl
Follows the corpse to the grave
Be reminded that there is tomorrow

Response

The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl
The wayward girl

After every dance
The waist bears the pain

The wayward girl
The wayward girl

The song, *onye nkwughari*, is performed by girls during their meetings and traditional wedding ceremony if need be. It is used to ridicule girls who flirt around with boys/men in the community. The name Adanna could be substituted to the name of any defaulter. Consequently, every girl in the community tries to abstain from a wayward lifestyle knowing fully well that no matter how clever she may be, her deeds will definitely be exposed one day. It is believed that whoever is ridiculed in this way will never repeat such an act. The performance of this song encourages self-discipline in the girls.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the discussions above, it is obvious that indigenous music in Igbo culture is a viable tool in the development of the human mind and body. "From the mind, development impulses are generated"(Ingle 1997) in Yirenki (2010: 63). This is to say that for any feasible community or national development to take place, it must first be conceived by a human.

This study reveals that the sustainable development of human beings starts from childhood. An Igbo child assimilates the values of his culture through musical activities. "Music transforms the mental and motor skill of a child" (Ajewole, 2011: 172). The knowledge acquired through music leads the Igbo child throughout his lifetime. "Apparently, musical activities in childhood and adolescence are a very good investment with respect to old age" (Gembris in Ekong and Ekpunobi 2015:16). It also reveals that most Igbo people especially the younger generation are fast losing interest in the practice of our indigenous music. They prefer western music to indigenous music. Most churches have condemned the use of the traditional local instrument for worship.

This study recommends that awareness be created about the relevance of indigenous music in the life of people by showcasing it in various media outlets. Indigenous music groups should be encouraged by scholars by researching their music activities. Music personnel especially the composers should modify some of the indigenous songs by substituting the original texts of the songs with texts of religious themes. This will enable the worshippers to have a feel of Africaness in their church services. Concurring to this, Idamoyibo (2010) states that "the music of the church earlier did not reflect the Nigerian environment and culture and so were not suitable. This made some thoughtful Nigerians demand and modify some of their cultural music songs for use in Christian worship" (p. 68). He goes on to say that "ijala chanting and singing in the church is one of the results of these efforts and modification." It is also necessary that indigenous music should be included as instructional materials in Nigerian primary and secondary schools' curriculum of education. "Selected traditional music materials for classroom use must be structured according to the cognitive level of recipient" (Loko, 2014: 80).

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