CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS AND INNOVATIONS IN INFRASTRUCTURAL PROVISIONS FOR FUNCTIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

By

Dr. Emma O. Aniwene
Department of Music,
Federal College of Education,
Eha-Amufu, Enugu State

Abstract

A wide gap exists between the education our children receive to be able to meet the challenges of the society and for them to contribute meaningfully to national development. The reason hinges on dearth of infrastructural provisions for functional music education. The National Policy on Education has outlined the efforts aimed at achieving functional education. The objectives of the nations education programme for music provided structure for development of citizens in music profession. These objectives are three: intention – what the nation wishes to achieve; direction – where the products would serve the nation; and result – whether objectives have been met. This paper identifies the challenges that constrain the manifestation of functional music education as it affects infrastructural provisions, the prospects and innovations.

For greater success in meeting the challenges, prospects in Nigerian educational system at all levels; to make our education functional to serve the needs of the society and the people better, relevant challenges and prospects must be identified and resolved.

Contemporary Nigerian educational practices especially in music education, are based largely on the colonial experiences. As would be observed, our schools and the existing curricular for music education are moving away from the realities of the society which they serve. Products of the schools find it increasingly difficult not only to adjust to, but to meet up with the economic and social problems of the society. The music education they receive does not appear to equip them with skills beyond those required for passing examinations. As Udofot (2008) rightly observed, the curricular do not prepare the students to relate their subjects to the problems of the immediate community in which they live.

In other words, a wide gap exists between the qualitative education our children need and the standard of education which they currently receive to be able to meet the challenges of the society and for them to make meaning contributions to national development. The reasons are not far-fetched. They hinge on dearth of infrastructural provisions for functional music education.

This paper discusses the present state of infrastructural provisions in the secondary and the teacher educational institutions, the challenges, and prospects as well as opportunities which abound for functional music education to be achieved.

Efforts to Achieve Functional Education

Some of the efforts aimed at achieving functional education in Nigeria are outlined in the National Policy on Education (2004). In that document, government is emphatic about relating the educational goals and objectives of the country to the needs of the individuals and the Nigerian society. Consequently, the quality of instruction emphasized in the documents is oriented towards inculcating these values:

(a) respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
(b) faith in man’s ability to make rational decision;
(c) moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations;
(d) sharing responsibility for the common good of society;
(e) promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and
(f) acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance. (p. 8)

In the context of this paper, emphasis would be laid on (f) which is the crux of our discuss.

In the same vein, the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) music programme drawn by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), has the objectives of the music programme stated as follows:

(i) to offer courses in African and Western European music;
(ii) to produce well qualified NCE teachers capable of teaching music at the primary and junior secondary levels;
(iii) to produce teachers (professionals) for the private sector: churches, mosques, armed forces, media houses, advertising companies;
(iv) to make NCE teachers acquire skills in music (NCCE, 2002:55).

From the above expression, objectives of the nation’s education programme and for music in particular, provided structure for the development of citizens in music profession.

There are three basic kinds of objectives, namely:

(i) intention
(ii) direction and
(iii) result.

The intention aims at what the nation wishes to achieve which is production of competent and skillful music teachers. Directionality demands where those produced would serve whereas the result looks at whether the trained NCE teachers were actually serving the purpose for which they were trained.

**Challenges, Prospects and Innovations in Infrastructural…**

The music programme and its implementation should provide an enabling environment as well as facilities which encourage innovation.

We shall endeavour to identify some of the obvious challenges that constrain the manifestation of functional music educational result. These challenges are presented as they relate to the custodians of the system and infrastructural provisions. The prospect and innovations for functional music education were also discussed.

**Challenges Relating to Custodians of the System**

Custodians of Nigerian education system since independence are those constituting the challenge of the functionality of our education system.

These Nigerians who were products of the colonial system took over the system and introduced neo-colonialist style. They influenced the school curriculum and the overall programme with their new ideas. These are the school, university and colleges of education lecturers, education officers, Inspectors of education, textbook authors, etc. According to Udofot (2008), it is their beliefs and aspirations that dominate the content and ideation of the Nigerian school curriculum. They make, interpret and equally implement the policy harp-hazardly.

As for music education the custodians are the Federal and State ministries of education, the National Commission for Colleges of Education and the National Universities Commission. Most times, the grassroots implementers of the curriculum are left out during the processes of the policy making, only to throw their whims on the teachers in the field. Several government policy implementers run counter to the actual implementation. Inadequate budgetary provision lower than UNESCO recommended 26% are made, thus the inability to provide the necessary infrastructure necessary for functional education at all
levels in the country. This could be responsible for the non-implementation of the Universal free and compulsory Basic Education (UBE) system. It could also be responsible for not establishing enough departments of music in Universities and Colleges of Education to produce enough manpower for music in our country.

**Challenges Relating to Infrastructural Provision**

The effectiveness of music education programme is directly related to the quality of the environment within which the programme operates. While it might be admitted that certain objectives of the music programme in the secondary and tertiary institutions may be achieved with less than adequate facilities, more often than not, the results are less than desirable. For a positive result to be achieved educational institutions should be provided with adequate, necessary and flexible facilities designed for teaching music.

_Academic Excellence_ of mention that the needs of music departments are different from those of other departments in any institution of learning. Because many expensive instruments and other items of special equipment and structure are used, productions of same are required. The presence of these materials create stimulating learning and school environments, which are pre-requisites for inculcating and encouraging the spirit of inquiry, wanting to know more, and problem solving traits of music. Hence Miller (1971), corroborated that a rich learning environment is vital for good instruction and highly important in fostering human capabilities.

To understand the exigency of facilities for tertiary education in the Nigerian educational system, the National Policy on Education (2004), in section 8 paragraph 65, reflecting on materials and facilities as vital accoutrements, stated thus:

> At the NCE and degree levels, teacher education programmes will be expanded to cater for the requirements of vocational, technical and commercial education. Government is aware that in order to implement this recommendation, adequate physical facilities and qualified staff will be provided.

Flamboyant as the policy sounds, visa-vis the churning out of music graduates from some of the tertiary institutions, the implementation from the opinion of this writer, appears supine and under-performing in terms of provisions of infrastructural facilities for the expected skill demonstrations. Similarly, the failure of many past music education policies (Aninwene, 2008) was that necessary structures were not put in place for the proper execution of the policies. Most schools/institutions do not take music education as a serious school subject. They teach only music theory, thereby ignoring the essential part of music education which is the practical aspect necessary for practical musicianship. Qualitative manpower in music could not be produced without adequate structure/facilities. It is only when secondary schools and tertiary institutions with departments of music provide the necessary resources that they can become centres for the study of music in a wider sense.

**Infrastructure for Music**

Infrastructure according to Okwuoliseh (1997) are the subordinate part and installations that form the basis for an enterprise. By implication, infrastructure represents the basic necessary structures and facilities such as buildings, the physical requirements and installations necessary for the enhancement of music education provided by the government for institutions (or other bodies) for qualitative music education. A large array of requirement abounds for music especially for practical demonstration and for the production of music and its pedagogy to achieve enhanced performance. No immediate returns are expected in investment made in facilities for music education but the society stands to benefit more.
Infrastructure for music education are not limited to buildings and musical instruments alone, but other relevant gadgets, fittings and concomitants – buildings, including classrooms with special boards, music auditorium, music recording studio, instrument practice cubicles, etc., which facilitate music study. Put together, it is known as Music Complex. Others include film projectors and slides, computer sets, power point projectors and programmes; audio-visual materials, radio cassette tapes/player recorders; video recorder (digital type); CD, VCD and DVD players and discs; headphones, microfiche readers, over-head projectors. Facilities also include fully stocked music library equipped with music books: theory books, literatures, piano and song books, tutors for musical instruments, international and local journals/periodicals; music magazines, charts and posters of orchestras, instruments (Western and African) and composers/African musicians. The African instruments required as part of the infrastructural facilities are Idiophones: udu, ekwe, Ikoro, Ogene of varied sizes, Osha/Ichaka, Ubo-aka, horn resonated/slab xylophones. Membranophones are: Igba, talking drums (dun-dun), bongo drums, single and double headed leather drums. Chordophones include une, goje, ubo-akwara, molo etc. Aerophones include: opu, oja, kakaki, horns (animal and gourd types) elephant tusks, Tiv reed oboes, pipes and flutes. Specialized instruments equally necessary include organs (pedal), electro – acoustical instruments such as equalizers, synthesizers, sound mixers, amplifiers and loud speakers. (Donington (1982).

The above resources open wider choices of methods to music teachers and inspire students for satisfying and productive operations to be achieved. Provision of the above resources is the challenge to be met by government.

Prospects

Principal among Nigeria’s numerous challenges is how to move its citizenry from the rank of dreamers to that of achievers, transforming the socio-political contraption called Nigeria from being a mere geographical expression into real nation with focus. Going by Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (2004), education is adopted as an instrument for achieving the numerous challenges facing her. The philosophy of education and its goals have been geared towards achieving self-realization, human dignity and the dignity of labour. It further aims at the entire citizenry achieving social, economic, scientific and technological progress. Hence it focused on:

(a) The development of the individuals into sound and effective citizens;
(b) The full integration of the individuals into their community.

The focus generally is on the production of competent citizens who would be good music makers, performers, composers, conductors and educators.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, in recognition of the role and importance of music, laid credence to it by including it in her educational programmes from primary, secondary, to the tertiary levels, as contained in the National Policy on Education. This is because of the musical and extra-musical benefits in the areas of social, cognitive, affective, psychomotor and also creative developments derivable from it. Government also use music as instrument for unification, enlightenment, direction and re-direction of the society. It has used music to educate the masses on its programmes through jingles and fanfares. Such programmes include Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), HIV and AIDS programmes. Others include social and political programmes such as voter registration, conduct of election; political parties election campaigns, the Re-branding Nigerian programme, and so on. All this confirms the enormous prospects in functional education.

Prospects in Human Development

Provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure will certainly enhance the production of competent manpower. Where people (products of music education) exhibit narrow perspective,
inadequate knowledge and experience in their field, the issue of national development becomes a failure. The prospect of producing professionals who would utilize their abilities and capabilities abound. The tertiary institutions have been able to produce manpower employees as service men in the army, police, prison band corps – though the number is negligible.

**Prospect in Economic Development**

The various recording studios which are spread all over the nation is one aspect of the prospects. These studios have provided employment opportunities to alleviate poverty in the country. Youths who produce CD and DVD plates have created job opportunity for their fellows who hawk about these musical productions.

**Prospects in Projecting Nigeria’s Culture**

Appropriate music programmes have occurred outside the Nation’s sea shores. Nigerians have on several occasions been invited to perform both in and outside the country, thereby projecting Nigeria’s culture. Several international carnivals have attracted Nigerian troupes hence promoting our rich cultural heritage.

**Prospects in the Political Scene**

On the political scene, musicians have composed party songs, slogans, highlighting party symbols and manifestos in the local languages. They have equally contributed to electioneering campaigns of various political parties and their aspirants on handsome rewards. Musicians (both professionally trained and otherwise) have exhibited their creative prowess in this regard, through the afforded opportunities.

For success to be achieved, the Nigerian government needs to introduce radical innovations in the implementation of educational policies across the school system from primary, secondary, to tertiary levels. Improvisation of materials should be adopted in the primary, secondary and colleges of education. Annual cycle of musical competitions and festivals should be made a policy. Innovations in performances at national festivals should be made in order to inculcate our cultural needs into the school system. Local manufacture of equipment and tools for practical music should be encouraged, using local industries and local resource persons from the localities of the schools. School – Industry linkage is necessary. Such linkage is a form of co-operation between the school and industry in providing students of music with opportunities for experiences in actual on-the-job situation. (Anyakoha, 2004). Popular music studies should be emphasized.

**Conclusion**

It is the position of this paper that all is not well with music education in Nigeria, especially in infrastructural provisions. Schools and Colleges should be well equipped to meet the numerous challenges which confront music graduates. Music programmes should be made interesting and attractive to the entire society. To realize the objectives of the National Policy on Education, music should be evaluated termly from primary to secondary schools to give it equal status with other school subjects such as English and Mathematics.

Music should be made a government business like in China, Japan, India, United States, Britain and Italy. In Italy, music education is an act of parliament. (Ekwueme, 2002). Therefore, institutions offering music should be well equipped by government and other agencies, to place it in parallel with the challenges of the time.

**References**


---

*Academic Excellence*


