

FUNDING MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

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Abstract

Funding education at all levels of academic endeavour is an issue that demands serious attention, needs to be looked into and properly addressed. Generally, the level of funding of education has been poor. Within the academic milieu., the worst hit in funding is the primary schools which eventually is the bedrock of education. Within this circle again, the least that receives government attention in funding is music. The reason is that music is conceived as an academic frill, which involves merely singing and dancing and nothing more. But music education is more than what people ignorantly think it to be. Its role in the moral, spiritual, political, economic, socio-cultural life of man is so enormous that it calls for government attention and subsequent funding. In fact, music education has a lot of career prospects which demand government full involvement in its funding.

Introduction

Funding of music education especially in the primary school level in Nigeria is nothing to write home about and therefore, needs to be properly addressed as a problem. Before discussing the need for its funding by the government, it is pertinent and imperative to ask the question, "what is music education"? what is it all about? The answer(s) to this or these question(s) will be an eye-opener to the ignorant minded people who see music as mere singing and dancing, that music has a lot to offer to man in development, economically, socially, politically and otherwise.

Music education has been described by Anuforom (1984) and Nwaneri (2000), as the education that trains individuals in the acquisition of musical knowledge and physical skills as well as the acquisition of specific vocational training that could enable one develop healthy attitude towards honest labour. This means that through music education one can acquire skills that could help one become an independent fellow job-wise. In the National Policy on Education (2004), music education has as one of its cardinal objectives, "the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. If this is the case then, government should fund it, Onyeji (2001), describes music education as a systematic instruction given to an individual or group on the meaning, usefulness of music and on the acquisition of relevant skills and technical know-how on music composition, performance, interpretation, appreciation, teaching and criticism. Such skills and knowledge acquired will make an individual relevant in the society and as well contribute meaningfully and positively towards the development of the nation in its entirety. Again, if music education can train individuals not only to acquire skills but also good attitudes and interest that could help to develop the individual and the entire society for good, the government has no option than to give it proper funding **The Need for Music Education in Nigerian Primary Schools and Government Involvement**

There are many reasons why music education should be taken serious in our primary schools, and which calls for government's involvement in its funding.

Academically, music education plays significant role in educational enhancement and advancement. Research has shown that the study and practice of music is beneficial to the central nervous system, including the brain, thus, enhancing learning. Scarantino (1987), and Hester and Scowen (1999), uphold that "a person who remains mentally active through music study reaps benefits in increased mental acuity, even till date". It is also believed that listening to, enjoying, and creating; music is primarily a right brain function, and that learning is a process of the left brain. Music links the two together, and when there is more linking, there is more learning. Again, Scarantino (1987:134) opines that: A child who studies music and perform moderately well can do better in high school and college years than if he only performed academic studies. Through music lessons, he/she learns to be goal oriented and work in a structured format forwards achievement Music also helps in the teaching and learning of other school subjects such as Mathematics, English Language, Poetry, Geography, Drama, and the like. In Mathematics, it helps in number counting, for example, One, two, three, four, five, Catching fishes all alive. Through singing, new words are learnt and these help in the improvement of spoken English especially among children. This fact is supported by Ude (1989:12), who remarks that:

Through the use of musical activities, children's concept of such terms like jump, shake, run, creep, sad and many other words are expanded, thus becoming a part of their language development.

Socially, music education plays important role. Music is a social art. Therefore, its being taught in

our Primary schools will create room for healthy social interaction among pupils. Such group musical activities like rhythmical activities "there is fire on the mountain, frog jump, as well as singing together in the class creates a sense of oneness, brotherhood, belonging, collective responsibility and spirit of followership. Thus, Uzoma (1997:61), opines that:

Music provides the best way of learning for individuals to become good members of the society and provides opportunity for self and freedom of expression through singing, dancing and participating in collective activities. Music education also helps to develop good moral habits in children especially, most religious music. According to Ude (1989:5), "music education helps to mould, form and shape character", Abeles (1984) affirms that the aim of music education is to inculcate rhythm, harmony and temperance of the soul and to develop good moral habit. Thus, if children develop good moral habits through music education, they will invariably contribute in making the society free from crimes and corruption.

Religiously, music education is very important because it develops individuals spiritually. Through this, they can commune with their creator and live a God-fearing life that can make the society move forward.

Teaching music in our primary schools is important because of its role in the physical development of children. Music stimulates the body to move and thus helps in strengthening the muscles and also aids in achieving cardiovascular endurance. According to Scarantino (1987:108), "music does more than stimulate the body to move. It inspires total mind-body connection that makes exercise an emotionally uplifting experience as well as physical emerging one". Playing, singing and dancing exercises one's body and helps in physical development of children.

The need for music education in our primary schools cannot be over-stressed because of its political role. Music is a good weapon for any successful political campaign. This fact is buttressed by Bebey (1978:142), who opines that, "No electoral campaign would be complete without active support of music".

The need for music education in our primary schools cannot be discarded when we consider its place in the cultural development. Iyimoga (1981), Omibiyi (1986) and Sowande (1976), all agreed that music education trains a child to develop interest, love, pride and appreciation in and of one's culture. Music is inextricably tied to culture and culture is the way of life of the people. No cultural activity can dispense with music. Hence, Okafor (1986:6), asserts that, "No study of culture is completed without a close and corresponding study of the music of the people.

Economically, music education is no less important. The study of music from the primary school level can help one to acquire skills that could make one become self-employed. One can also engage in the production of music which is taxable and when exported also yields revenue to the country to gaining of foreign exchange.

If music education is of such great importance as enumerated above, the government should therefore, engage in its funding from the primary school level which is the foundation of all academic endeavours. **Career Prospects in Music Education**

Music education has a lot of career prospects which necessitates government involvement in its funding.

Such prospects as identified by Adeleke (2000); Duntoye (2001), Nwaneri (2002), Ekwueme (2002); Olaniyan (2002), include the following:

1. Becoming a composer of music whether popular, religious or traditional.
2. Becoming a music educator thus teaching in Pre-primary, primary, secondary schools or lecturing in universities, Polytechnics, colleges of education and other allied institutions.
3. Becoming an instrument technologist thus, engaging in the construction, designing, fabrication, repairs and maintenance of musical instruments.
4. Becoming a concert performer having developed dexterity in the art of singing or playing of such instruments like Piano, Organ, trumpet, Saxophone, Guitar and .the like. One could also be a conductor of choral/orchestra group.
5. Owning a music studio, private school of music, choral group, dance group and the like.
6. Gaining employment as a music librarian thus, being in charge of music materials in the library, textbooks, tapes, students' projects and the like.
7. Working in the media houses as music presenters, analysts, columnists, broadcasters and the like.
8. Working with the Ministry of Education and Arts and culture.

9. Working in the music/film industry as arranger, composer of sound tracks, theme music and the like. Apart from the aforementioned opportunities inherent in music education, there are several other areas which for the sake of paper requirement cannot be mentioned.

Problems of Music Education

Despite the benefits derived from music education, its study right from the primary school has been hampered by the following problems:

1. Lack of land or funding by the government.
2. Lack of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities such as musical equipment, textbooks and the like.
3. Dearth and lack of qualified, experienced and competent music teachers.

4. Lack of encouragement from school heads and administrators as regards music education.
5. Ignorance/wrong attitude of parents and the society towards music education.
6. Lack of music programme through which music awareness could be created.
7. Lack of motivation on the part of music teachers, and the government on the part of teachers.
8. Absence of printing/publishing efforts and facilities for instructional materials such as textbooks, music scores, and audio-visual recordings.
9. Non-availability of recording rooms/music studio, library, storage facilities.

Bad methods/techniques of teaching employed by some music teachers. These and many other reasons have created problems for the teaching and learning of music in our primary schools.

Government's Role in Funding Music Education in Nigeria

Having seen the need for music education in our primary schools, its careers prospects and problems, the government has got much reason to fund it this it can do through the following ways: 1. Providing enough fund for the purchase of musical instruments and other equipment for music teaching and learning. This will encourage the study of music and make it more interesting and enjoyable.

2. Carrying out music awareness programme both in print and electronic media.
3. Giving scholarships for those who are interested in music study.
4. Providing music studios/library.
5. Sending music teachers for in-service training as well as sponsoring them for higher degrees.
6. Ensuring the availability of printing machines/materials for music textbooks, scores and the like which are costly for individuals to purchase.
7. Providing free textbooks and affordable instruments for pupils.

Summary and Recommendations

From all that have been said so far, we have been made aware of what music education is, the need for its been taught in our primary schools, its career prospects, problems and what role the government should play in its funding.

Based on the significance of music education to mankind in all spheres of life and the subsequent problems hampering its being studied in our primary schools and beyond, the writer recommends that:

1. Government should give serious attention to its study and give it adequate funding. This will serve as a motivating factor to both teachers and pupils to take its teaching and learning serious, it will also encourage pupils to pursue it to a higher level since it has a lot of career prospects.
2. Heads of schools should complement government efforts by sourcing for fund to encourage the study of music in their various institution of learning.
3. Banks and other allied institutions should assist the government in funding and encouraging music education since the equipments/instruments are too dear for her to bear alone.
4. Non-governmental organizations and other voluntary agencies should as well assist in these direction so as to make; the pursuit of music education a worthwhile venture.

Conclusion

In the light of the discussions on music education generally, its career prospects and problems, as well as the recommendations by the writer, it is believed that if proper attention is given to music education by the government and other bodies concerned based on its derivable benefits greater parts of Nigeria's problem especially as regards unemployment could be salvage to a reasonable extent.

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