

Music as Agency for Promoting and Entrenching Societal Values

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Abstract

In African and Nigerian ethnic settings, music plays a veritable role in inculcating and entrenching moral values. The paper elucidates the roles music plays in promoting and entrenching values among members of society in Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria. The study employs both primary and secondary sources of information. Data from books and Journals were used, including selected song texts. The study reveals that music plays a pertinent role in correcting erring behaviours, and music also plays a transformational role in entrenching good character among society members. The study suggests that music to mould and transform people's characters should be collected, transcribed, and documented for posterity and future reference.

Keywords: Music, Values, Moral Behavior, Entrenching and society

Introduction

According to Glennon (1980:2), music is defined as an "expression in sound or expression of thoughts and feeling in an aesthetic way". Boyden (1971), in Udeze (2009:61), asserts that music is a means of "communication which can communicate effectively depending on the listener capacity, background and training to receive what the composer has to communicate". He further explained, "Music transcends language in that it can communicate emotions well directly". Similarly, Eze (2009:36) postulates that music provides much-needed relaxation that reduces stress in the citizenry and checks social behaviours. In African societies and Nigerian traditional society in particular, music plays a significant role in promoting the socio-cultural lives of the people. Music, since the evolution of man, has always been an explicable medium for interaction, relaxation, communication, expression and entertainment to man. Man uses music to communicate information, feelings, thoughts and emotions to one another in his social environment.

Through the power of music, the rich cultural identity of the society is imbibed into the citizenry. The citizen's character, behaviour, attitude to life, ethos and norms of the society are transformed and modified. Music creates an avenue for correcting erring and deviant members of society among the Nigerian people. A society is a group of people living together in a socially organised environment according to the norms, beliefs, traditions and customs of the people. Society depends on music to flourish, while music helps correct societal norms and values, moulding moral attitudes and behaviours among the people. Hence, the relevance of music in promoting values, attitudes, and moral behaviours in Nigerian society cannot be overemphasised. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine the roles music plays in promoting values, attitudes and moral behaviours in Nigerian societies.

Conceptualisations

For a clearer understanding and appreciation of this study, the following basic key concepts will be discussed: What is Value? What is Attitude? What is moral behaviour? What role does music play in promoting values, attitudes, and moral behaviours in the lives of people in Nigeria?

Concept of Value

Value means something precious, reliable, valuable, useful, honoured, adored, acceptable, relevant and useful to a person. On the other hand, it means something precious to an individual which cannot be made away with. Value is that valuable substance in one's hand that is rated with high esteem and can help elevate his or her emotions, thoughts, and feelings at the sight of it. It is that precious ornament that one possesses that is well appreciated and preserved by him or her. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1980), value is defined as the "quality of being useful or desirable". From this assertion, value means valuable gifts, items or objects considered useful, appealing and intoxicating to a person.

Concept of Attitude

Adesoji (2002) defines attitude as "Cognitive, emotional and action tendency to particular behaviour intent. Likewise, Smith (1998), cited in Afolabi (2010:54), opines that attitude is a relatively enduring predisposition to respond consistently towards a person, object, situation or idea. According to Longman Study Dictionary (1983:43), attitude is defined as "What one thinks and feels about something". From the preceding, attitude is seen or considered as an appropriate medium in which an individual approaches or responds positively or negatively to issues around him/her. The issues of life can be treated positively or negatively, depending on the individual(s) involved or affected. The ability of the individual to settle the issue around him/her amicably makes him/her a responsible and reputable citizenry. A good citizen is a person who immensely and adequately contributes meaningfully and cheerfully to the growth and development of society. He/she seeks the good of those around him and the wellbeing of the society at large.

Concept of Moral Behavior

Moral means the capacity to live right. It is living a trustworthy, honest, fulfilled and justified life. Moral also means living out rightly and living a life worthy of emulation. It likewise means living a trustworthy life and abolishing evil and ill behaviour associated with a person or individual. Behaviour Conversely, behaviour is people's or a person's lifestyle. It means how a person or an individual lives in a way that seems suitable or comfortable to them. Moral behaviour means good or right attitude, knowledge, and virtue imparted into an individual, whether young or old, which helps to transform his or her orientation on his or her belief, norms, ethos and philosophy of life. Buttressing this fact, Ajamgbe (2009:96) confirms that for an individual to contribute meaningfully, he or she must be in his or her rightful mood. He states further that music helps an individual be in his or her right mood, which helps him or her contribute meaningfully to the nation's development. In the same vein, Udeze (2009:62), while discussing the relevance of music in Nation Development, affirms that ...when human beings are developed, they think right and act right to issues concerning them and their nations.

Music roles in Entrenching Societal Values

Ideally, in Nigerian society from pre-colonial times till date, music has always played an integral role in promoting individuals' values, attitudes, moral behaviour and virtues. Music is used as a means to enlighten the people, entertain guests during social gatherings, unite friends during festival celebrations, awaken pleasant memories, reduce boredom during communal labour, teach virtue, heal the sick, appease the gods of the land, ease tension in people, to ease delivering in child's labour, console the broken heart, to soothe the mind, encourage peace, love, tolerance, Happiness, Joy and Harmony among community members. Music plays a basic role in all aspects of African life, from cradle to grave. It is used to usher a child into the world, lure babies to sleep, stop a child from crying, excite, enlighten, educate, inform, release tension, bridge gaps in storytelling events, and

unite children and adults when they unite for recreational moments, entertain the audience during wrestling performance, to appease the deity during traditional worship, host visitors during a social gathering, for entertainment during the festival celebration. Aluede (2002:64) said that music making might be organised as incidental or background music for other events such as games, wrestling matches, processions and other feasts...lure the African child to sleep (lullaby), to stop him from crying, to attract customers to vendor, to ease tension and motivate labourers during manual labour, to entertain individual guests, to unite children when they gather with their age groups to sing, dance or tell stories with musical interludes during such times as moonlight nights.

In Nigerian society, music has played an insurmountable role as it serves as an important means of livelihood for the people. Music is a facilitator and a vessel for instilling and propagating society's values to the younger generations. Music is seen as a mirror which revolves around society to watch, root out, criticise, amend, and admonish erring members of society to desist from their unlawful acts. It likewise serves as a means of encouragement, endurance, and perseverance and a medium for inculcating good moral discipline in people. In Nigerian traditional society, music is composed to suit different life activities. Music is performed to transmit knowledge, teach values and attitudes, and modify character. There is also satirical music composed to expose and mock bad behaviours in society. In explaining the importance of music in society, Omojola (1994:117), cited by Ogunrinade (2007:31), states that:

As an integral part of life, music is used in day-to-day activities such as disseminating information, societal interest and arousing emotion, and for occasional events like initiation, rituals and coronation ceremonies. In its various forms, traditional music is rich in historical and philosophical issues, validating communally binding social values, warning erring members of society, praising people to whom honour is due, reminiscing on the achievement of past leaders as well and reinforcing the legitimacy of present ones.

Likewise, Ohanele (2009:75) says that music can teach or correct bad habits in a child or adult. She further said that dance/music is used to criticise human social/ill in society and for entertainment. In corroboration with this, Ibekwe (2002) said that music can correct social disorder by criticising the constituted authority or political power. Ossai (2003), cited in Onwuegbuzie (2012:22) while discussing the Ikenga festival of the Umutu community, said that "Both young and old keep a record of every case of stealing, fornication and adultery committed by the people. She said further that a period of nine days is spent singing traditional songs, mostly in the evenings, and it is during this period that the names of those caught stealing and committing adultery are used in singing public songs. Speaking further, she said the aim behind the action is to ridicule the people concerned so that they will desist from their immoral behaviour in the future. Also, Ajamgbe (2009), in discussing the importance of music in the traditional Nigerian setting, said that music plays an important role in eradicating or controlling abnormal behaviour in individuals. Merriam (1964:21), cited in Abugu (2014:311), said that song texts reflect a cultural group's values and are also part of the devices used in relieving psychological tension and correcting erring members of society. Nketia (1974:195), cited in Olusegun, S.T and Rachael O.T (2014:226), observed that satirical songs have been specially suited for insulting, exhortation and warning the people in African societies. According to Nketia (1974), he stated that songs may be addressed to individuals who deserve to be criticised, ridiculed or praised. Those who are ridiculed may be mentioned by name (p. 226).

From the above submission, music is seen as an instructional tool for solving and correcting societal problems, applauding reputable members, promoting justice and stability and punishing

evildoers. In Africa, particularly in Nigerian traditional society, music is used to educate people on the right attitude or other of living. Music is a powerful medium for integrating people during social functions such as Marriage, funeral rites, Chieftaincy titles, coronations, naming ceremonies and child dedication. In collaboration with this view, Arugha (2019:283) confirms that Traditional music reflects the culture of the various ethnicities in Nigeria. He states further that There are sub-categories of traditional music that are associated with specific aspects of the life cycle, such as childbirth, circumcision, puberty, Marriage, occupations, recreation, entitlement, installation Worship, festivities, Coronation, healing and wellness, and funeral. Music is imperative for judging and distinguishing right and wrong behaviour in society. It is a medium for admonishing individuals to eradicate bad behaviour. In summation, music is an indicator of effective communication, an avenue for checking bad behavioural conduct, and a vital tool for enhancing social control. In Nigeria, music is composed to promote values, attitudes and moral behaviours. The music used to transmit values, attitudes, and moral behaviour is analysed accordingly.

Song 1

Nwanwa asokamo yegeh yegeh
Nwanwa asokamo yegeh yegeh
Chukwu sikwormmu ezinwa
Kemari ke nwasuusor yegeh yegeh
Osomamo ee
Osomamo ee

Translation

Child, I love a child yegeh yegeh
Child, I love a child yegeh yegeh
Thank God, I have a good child
For me to know the Joy in child bearing yegeh yegeh
I am happy
I am happy

This is a song text sung among the Ika people of Delta State that teaches a good attitude to the citizenry. The song emphasises the importance of having a good and reliable child. The song describes a good child as one with an excellent character. A good child is extremely full of good reputation, honesty, truthfulness, and a bundle of integrity. He/she brings honour, happiness and joy to his/her family and society. He/ she is one with an inexplicable quality worthy of emulation. A good child is a responsible member of a family who, by virtue of his/her good conduct, makes his/her family and society proud. Through this song, the parents of this great child sing to appreciate their maker for giving them an exceptional child full of unique qualities. This song teaches the need for children to live a reliable and responsible life to make their family and society proud. In discussing the relevance of good character in Yoruba society, Michael (2019: 159) affirms that the Yoruba society believes that good character is the foundation of any child who wants to succeed.

Song 2

This song, sung among the people of Ndokwa Local Government Area of Delta State, teaches the need for value.

Ani Ndokwa Mbama Ndokwa
Ani Ndokwa Nasusor
Ebene bene dinne biawo x2
Ka nyidozie Ndokwa.

Solo: Eyiewere Obodo Qsqr

Ukwani nmama Qmani meniyo

Ukwani jonjor Qjoni Meleyo
Ebeye bene dinne Biawo x2
Ka nyidozie Ndokwa.

Translation

Ndokwa land is good, Ndokwa
Ndokwa land is good, Ndokwa
Where ever you are, home and abroad, come x2
Let us make Ndokwa land a better place to abide

Solo

We have no other land
If Ukwani is good, it will be good for every one of us
If Ukwani is bad, it will be bad for us all
Where ever you are, home and abroad, come x2
Let us make Ndokwa land a better place to abide.

The above is a folk song composed by the people of Ndokwa land admonishing the sons and daughters of the Ndokwa community to massively unite to make the Ndokwa community/society a conducive environment for inhabitation. The song is also meant to educate the indigenes of Ndokwa society about the benefits attributed to building their society and the consequences of failing to build a reliable society.

Songs 3

Another song that teaches attitude among the Uhrobo's in Delta state.

Odirievwoakpona
Nene odirievwo ye
Oni vwieemo
EmoIrhirinakpona
Diohwovwo ode roye re saye
Obonesevwoobone se
David Odirioyaakpona

Translation

This world needs patience; be patient
Mother of the many children
The children are known by their names
They all look unto me
David, be patient; this world requires patience.

The extract above emphasises the value of patience in dealing with life affairs. It advocates treating issues of life with the utmost simplicity in all circumstances. Above all, life requires patience.

From the analysis of the above songs, music in traditional Nigerian society is used as an instrument for facilitating, motivating, Engineering, Empowering, admonishing and mobilising citizens to work hard. Hard work amongst societal members fosters growth and development in society. Music agitates the attitude to hard work. A society where music is not practised, performed or disheartened is considered obsolete and outdated. The power of music in Nigerian society cannot be trivialised. According to (Nketia, 1979, p. 67) in Arugha (2019:283), he states music is very important in African traditional society where Musicians provide service to their community and are regarded as a person whose role in society is vital for the expression of consciousness and well-being for a community that has no musical life is described as ‘dead’.

Conclusion

The paper highlights the importance of music as an important aspect of African cultural acts, particularly referencing Nigeria. It is a pivotal means of entertainment and enlightenment for the people. It also highlights that music is a means by which the rich cultural heritage of the people, such as norms, ethos, beliefs, values, attitudes, customs and traditions of the people, is imbibed into the younger generations. Through music, good moral conduct is inculcated into the people. In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, music serves as the bedrock for promoting virtues and correcting social vices.

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