

## **The Role of Women in Music Education in Tertiary Institution of South West Nigeria: Gender Barriers and Opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **Abstract**

Contribution of women to the sustenance of cultural values in traditional African society through folksongs and folktales still remain culturally significant and relevant to the growth and development of music education programme in Nigerian system of Education. In spite of seemingly challenges facing the education of women generally in contemporary Africa, and specifically Nigeria, the need for more women in music in Tertiary Institutions in South West Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, this study examines some of the challenges confronting the education of women in Nigeria and prospects available to women in music in Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This study is relevant to Education-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) four, five and eight which focus on Quality Education, Gender Equality and Decent work and Economic Growth. The findings of this study revealed that in spite of challenges confronting the education of women in Nigeria, the contribution of women in music-to-music scholarship remains relevant and needed for the advancement of music education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that more women should be encouraged by the government at various levels through sustainable policy reforms to enhance their access to quality education and gender equality which will enhance their access to decent work and economic growth.

**Keywords:** Education, Women, Music, Tertiary Institutions, South West Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

In traditional African society, preservation, promotion and transmission of cultural heritage of the society from one generation to another was significant and the use of folk songs, story-telling (with music coming in intermittently), festivals, religious events, rituals, e.t.c, served as avenues for mastering the norms and values of the society. The processes involved include indoctrination ( a means where good virtues and values inherent in the cultural practices of the society are handed down to the children), imitation (a means where children learn the skills and norms of the society from the elders), training (a means where children receive informal training through apprenticeship in order to acquire skills, attitudes and values that will make them fit to live in the society) and initiation (a means where cultural rites and practices are enacted and children are introduced to certain modes of behaviour that are considered acceptable by the group they belong to in the community, which is usually heralded by fanfare and ceremony).

Music not only serves as a means of preserving the norms, tradition and values of the society, it also plays significant roles in the transmission of cultural heritage of the society from one generation to another.

Oluwadamilare (2023) observes that women have played the role of educator at one time or the other while teaching their children traditional social values through folktales, folksongs, proverbs, poetry, praise songs, praise names, religious and secular songs. This assertion corroborates the roles of women as the custodians and transmitters of African cultural values.

## **Traditional System of Education in Africa**

Traditional system of education has always been in place before the advent of western system of education in Africa and in Nigeria in particular. The absence of western education in pre-colonial Africa does not mean that education did not exist. Education existed in Africa long before the colonialism only that it might have been different from that which was introduced by the missionaries. For as long as man has existed, all communities have evolved their own forms of education based on the religious, social, political, economic and cultural values of that community. People did not have to go through formal schooling in order to be educated, because there were hardly any schools. However, indigenous community-based education was always present. Members of the community or village were charged with the responsibility of educating children in that community, regardless of whether it was their children or not (Kigozi 2008).

Fafunwa (1991) defined traditional system of education as the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage to foster continuously the well-being of mankind. Traditional African education system was an indispensable factor for the smooth integration of the growing children into society. The purpose of education was functionalism. It was for an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. African education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual moral values. Children learnt by doing, that is to say, children and adolescents were engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration. They were involved in practical farming, fishing, weaving, cooking, carving, knitting, and so on. Recreational subjects included wrestling, dancing, drumming, acrobatic display and racing, while intellectual training

included the study of local history, legends, the environment (local geography, plants and animals), poetry, reasoning, riddles, proverbs, story-telling and story-relays.

Among other things, Fafunwa (1991) states further that the seven cardinal goals of Traditional African Education are to develop the child's latent physical skills; develop character; inculcate respect for elders and those in positions of authority; develop intellectual skills and acquire specific vocational training; develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour; develop a sense of belonging and to encourage active participation in family and community affairs; and understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

Members of the society were given traditional form of education at one time or the other, building on the goals on which the traditional education was established.

### **Education in Nigeria**

The concept of Education in Nigeria is as old as the Nigerians themselves, just like every other nation on the face of the earth. Every society in every nation has various ways of educating its members on the acceptable norms of the society in which they belong to at one time or the other, for according to Fafunwa (1982), every society, whether simple or complex, has its own system for training and educating its youth, and education for the good life has been one of the most persistent concerns of men throughout history. However, the goal of education and the method of approach may differ from place to place, nation to nation, and people to people.

According to Fafunwa (1991), education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior which are of

positive value to the society in which he lives; that is to say, it is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. All educational systems whether traditional or Western-oriented, seek to achieve these goals irrespective of the curriculum, methods and organization designed for the purpose.

The traditional system of education in Nigeria is all-encompassing, having at its root the preservation and promotion of cultural values in the society from one generation to another, while the Western system of Education in Nigeria made it possible for the young and old to learn how to read and write, and have the opportunity of interacting and transacting business with people from different parts of the world. According to the Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria, “a nation’s policy on education is government way of realizing that part of the national goals which can be achieved using education as a tool. No policy on education, however, can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and goals of education”. Section 1 of the Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria according to the National Policy on Education (2024), clearly spelt out the philosophy of Education in Nigeria which says that:

- (i) education is an instrument for national development; to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education;
- (ii) education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society;
- (iii) every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability; and

(iv) there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education.

Section 1, No.5 of the same National Policy on Education states further that, Nigeria's philosophy on education therefore is based on:

- (i) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
- (ii) the full integration of the individual into the community; and
- (iii) the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

### **Women Education in Nigeria**

The popular say credited to James Kwegyir-Aggrey, a Ghanaian Educationist who lived between 1875-1927, that *"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)"*, speaks volume on the benefits that are inherent in the education of women in any nation at any point in time, for according to *Women of Africa* (2012):

*An educated woman will not only provide an invaluable resource within an organization, she will also be equipped to expand entrepreneurial activities, be employed or be an employer in the formal sector, and harness the multiplier effect within her family and community.*

In a bid to ensure that women are given equal access in education like their male counterparts, several organizations in different parts of the world have been set up to provide the necessary support needed for effective and efficient women education in such countries or nations. At the international level, forum/policies like Education for All (EFA), Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), e.t.c, have been set up to look into the plight of women as far as their education is concerned. In Nigeria like any other country in the world or Africa, Government at the State and Federal level have set up Ministry of Women Affairs in order to encourage women education in the country. Specifically, through the Federal Ministry of Education in 1986, the Federal Government set up a full-fledged section on Women Education charged with the following responsibilities:

- (i) provision of more educational opportunities for girls from primary to tertiary levels;
- (ii) creating awareness for all citizens to the fact that equal opportunities exist irrespective of gender, age, locality, creed or special status, and should therefore be made available to all;
- (iii) re-orientating the attitude of all females, irrespective of age, towards education;
- (iv) provision of functional education for girls and women through skills such as sewing, cooking, baking, typing, knitting, crocheting, tatting, tying, dying and batiking;
- (v) awakening the consciousness of all women to the need for the development of a positive self-image; and
- (vi) promoting the education of girls and women in the fields of science, technology and mathematics.

These objectives set by the Federal Government on girls and women education is a laudable development but most often than not, objectives like these usually remain at the level of planning without culminating into effective implementation.

## **Women in Nigerian Education**

In spite of the various factors hampering Women Education in Africa and in Nigeria in particular, there are women (though not as many as their male counterparts) who have distinguished themselves as icons in the field of education within the Nigerian Education system from the Nursery school level to Tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

From the array of definitions of *an educator*, the following are found useful and relevant to this study. An educator is defined as a person who provides instruction or education; a teacher who teaches people, someone who is skilled in teaching; a teacher; an educationist, an administrator of a school or an educational institution or an administrator in education, a person or thing that educates, a person involved in planning or directing education, a person who informs or inspires, a specialist in the theory and practice of education, a trainer, a lecturer, a tutor, an instructor, a mentor, a professional, etc. Therefore, women educators consists of females who are involved in teaching-learning process of pupils and students at all levels of education, in administrative positions, school programmes, supervision and school administration/management, curriculum planning, curriculum implementations and evaluation, within the educational system of any country and in this case, Nigeria.

Women educators are teachers, lecturers, trainers, counsellors, instructors, school supervisors, school administrators, Education officers within the State and Federal Ministries of Education and Women Affairs, Curriculum planners, etc. Within the academics, there are women educators who occupy various positions of authority as female Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans and Vice Deans (Academic & Administration) in Nigerian Universities; female Provosts and Deputy Provosts of Colleges of Education; female Rectors and Deputy

Rectors of Polytechnics; female School Principals and Vice Principals of Secondary schools; female School Headmistresses and Assistant School Headmistresses of Nursery and Primary schools; Proprietresses of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools; founders of Private Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, etc. In tertiary institutions of Higher learning, there are also women educators who are Professors, Associate Professors (Readers), Doctors (Ph.D holders), Senior Lecturers, Principal Lecturers, Instructors, etc.

### **Women in Music in Nigerian Formal Music Education**

Generally, women in Nigerian formal Music Education are categorised into two distinct areas: as *Music Education Generalists* (MEG) :music practitioners/ Western trained musicians/Academic musicians) and *Music Education Specialists* (MES) as observed by Omibiyi (1979), Okafor (1989a), Kigozi (2008), Olaniyan(2002), Eurika (2010) and Adedeji (2013).

Music education generalists are involved in the teaching and learning of music from Nursery to University levels. They are involved in the teaching of musicology, music theory, performance, composition, music technology and other specialized areas. Consequently, music educators here include anyone who knows or have studied music and passes the knowledge into others.

Adedeji (2013) opined that Music Education can be seen from two different perspectives: the general sense and as a specialized area or field in Music studies. He stressed further that in the general sense:

*Music education encompasses the teaching and learning of music from Nursery to University levels. It also includes the teaching of musicology, music theory, performance, composition, music technology and other specialized areas. Consequently, music educators here include anyone who knows or have studied music and passes the knowledge into others.*

Adedeji (2013) also observed that in the specialized sense, Music education deals with:

*The technicalities of music pedagogy: it zeroes in on the science of teaching and learning, methodologies, problems and psychology, among other things. Music education in this sense is restrictive, having its place among other fields of music studies such as Musicology, Music Technology, Performance, Composition, etc. It is limited to specialists in Music Education who have studied the nitty-gritty of music pedagogy.*

From the two definitions, there are music educators either male or female music personnel who are music lecturers, music teachers and music technologists who are involved in the teaching and learning of music from Nursery to University levels and those who are also involved in the teaching of musicology, music theory, performance, composition, music technology and other specialized areas. There are also music educators who are specialists in Music Education who are involved in the technicalities of music pedagogy, the science of teaching and learning, methodologies, problems and psychology, etc.

Okafor 1989a) opines that music educators have fallen into several classes: (a) the traditional master musician who trains his own people mainly by apprenticeship, (b) the trained musician in the Western educational system who knows all the rudiments and the rules and who has certain objectives he wishes to attain, and (c) the untrained talented musician.

Kigozi (2008) defines Music educators as people who contribute towards the dispensation, transmission and development of music education in formal, informal and non-formal circumstances. Music educators transform learners with music education needs into learners with enhanced musicianship; job creators, not job seekers. Music educators improve the teaching and learning process by taking all curriculum commonplaces into consideration. As Music Education researchers, they engage in investigation, including University Professors, undergraduate and postgraduate students. Organisations that are involved with funding music

education activities, including conferences, research, education, resources teacher training, play a part in music education research.

Eurika, (2010) on the other hand observes that:

*Music educators are those who are involved in the teaching of music in tertiary Institutions, typically, musicologists or music education researchers while music teachers are the teachers who are teaching music in Primary Schools. Music educators are the planners of the music curriculum, the music teachers are the implementers of the music curriculum and that government usually select music educators as curriculum planners and curriculum reviewers.*

The Nigerian formal Music Education programme cuts across all the levels of Education in Nigeria. The levels of education are the Nigerian Nursery/Primary Schools, the Nigerian Secondary Schools (Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools) and the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions (Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities).

At the Nigerian Nursery/Primary Schools, there are women teaching music. Women in Music at this level of education are Music Teachers who are either NCE Music Graduates or Bachelor of Education (Primary Education Studies) B.Ed Degree Holders with Music as one of the teaching subjects under the Cultural and Creative Arts who studied under the National Teachers Institute or University. As Women Music Teachers they are responsible for the teaching of Music under the Universal Basic Education programme.

At the Nigerian Secondary Schools which comprises of Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools, there are women teaching music. Women in Music at these levels of education are NCE and B.A/B.A. Ed music graduates. As music teachers they are involved in the teaching of music at the Junior Secondary Schools (JSS I-III) and the Senior Secondary

Schools (SSS I-III). At the Junior Secondary Schools, women music teachers who are NCE Music graduates are responsible for the teaching of music from Junior Secondary School I – III while music graduates with Bachelor of Arts in Music (B.A in Music) or Bachelor of Arts in Education with music as a teaching subject (B.A.Ed in Music) from the University are responsible for the teaching of Music from Senior Secondary School I - III.

At the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions which comprises of the Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities, there are also women teaching music. At the Nigerian Polytechnic, Women in Music at this level of education are Ph. D holders, Masters Holders, Bachelor of Arts in Music (B.A in Music), with music as an area of specialisation from the University and Higher National Diploma (HND) music graduates from the Polytechnic, who specialises in music technology.

At the NCE level, women in music at this level of education are Ph.D holders, Masters Holders in music/ Bachelor of Arts in Music (B.A in Music), Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts/Performing Arts (B.A in Theatre Arts/Performing Arts with music as an area of specialisation) or Bachelor of Arts in Education (B.A.Ed with music as an area of specialisation) from the University and Higher National Diploma (HND) music graduates from the Polytechnic, who specialises in music technology. The Ph.D holders, Masters Holders and B.A/ B.A.Ed music graduates are involved in the teaching of music-related courses except the music technology aspect of the NCE music programme which is being handled by the HND music graduates from the Polytechnic.

At the University level, women in music at this level of education are Professors, Ph.D holders, Masters Holders in music/ Bachelor of Arts in Music (B.A in Music), Bachelor of Arts

in Theatre Arts/Performing Arts (B.A in Theatre Arts/Performing Arts with music as an area of specialisation) or Bachelor of Arts in Education (B.A.Ed with music as an area of specialisation) from the University and Higher National Diploma (HND) music graduates from the Polytechnic, who specialises in music technology.

### **Women in Music in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria**

According to the National Policy on Education, the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions comprise of Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Monotechnics. There are Women in Music who are designated as Music Educators, Music-Teacher Educators, Women Music-Instructors, Women Music-Tutors and Women Instrument-Technologists, in the Tertiary Institutions. Women in Music in each of the institutions are discussed below for clarification.

Women Music Educators in Nigerian Universities are classified as Generalists or Specialists. As generalists they are involved in music teaching-learning process with focus on the preparation of NCE, B. Ed/B.A. Ed music graduates for the Secondary schools, and Colleges of Education. As Specialists, they are Researchers in Music/Music Education with focus on in Early Childhood, Music Education, Music Teacher Education, Music Education Technology, Music Education Curriculum, Music Pedagogy, to mention but a few.

Women Music-Teacher Educators in Nigerian Colleges of Education are classified as either Generalists or Specialists. As generalists, Women Music-Teacher Educators are trainers of music teachers (NCE music graduates) for Universal Basic Education and the Junior Secondary Schools.

As Specialists, they are Researchers in Music/Music Education with focus on Early Childhood Music Education, Music Teacher Education, Music Education Technology, Music Education Curriculum, Music Pedagogy, to mention but a few. This study intends to examine their performance in terms of their contributions to Nigerian Music Teacher Education over the years.

As Women Music personnel, they are in various departments where music is taught as a Double Major Programme or Single Major Programme. For example, Women in Music Teacher Education include all the female music personnel who are involved in the music teaching-learning process in Nigerian Colleges of Education. They are Female Music-Teacher Educators who work as music lecturers in the Department of Music in the School of Arts and Social Sciences; there are Women music personnel in the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts, School of Arts and Social Sciences; there are Women music personnel in the Department of Theatre Arts; there are also Women music personnel in the Department of Primary Education Studies/ Early Music Education within the School of Education.

Not only that, Higher National Diploma (HND) Music graduates (who are females) from the Polytechnic who are working in Nigerian Colleges of Education are also included under the category of “ Women Music-Teacher Educators” since they are also “educators” in their own capacity but they are designated as Music Instructors/Tutors and Music Technologists. As used in this thesis, Female Music Instructors and Female Music Technologists are also recognised as female music personnel to be included under the umbrella of Women Music Educators in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Since all these Women come under the umbrella of Women in

Nigerian Music Education, especially at the Colleges of Education, their contribution to Nigerian Music Education over the years cannot be overemphasised.

Women in Music in Nigerian Polytechnic are designated as Women Music Instructors/Tutors or Women Music Technologists. As female music personnel at the Polytechnic, they are involved in the preparation of Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) Music graduates. When employed as HND music graduates at the Colleges of Education as Women Music Instructors/Tutors, they usually teach the Music Technology aspect in the Music Education Curriculum of the Nigerian Certificate in Education. They usually give music instruction to Student Music- Teachers in training on their chosen musical instruments. As Women Music Technologists, they are involved in the construction of musical instruments which is also an aspect of Music Technology in the Music Education Curriculum. They are also responsible for the repair of musical instruments and equipment from time to time.

All these Women in Nigerian Formal music education from the Nursery school level to Tertiary level are directly involved in the teaching and learning of music education in one way or the other.

### **Challenges Confronting Women Education in Nigeria**

There are various cultural and socioeconomic issues that are still preventing women from having adequate access to education. For example, Denga (1993) observes that one of the prominent cultural views that prevent women from having adequate access to education is the cultural view that it is better for the woman to stay at home and learn to tend to her family instead of attending school.

Fadeyi (2008) also stresses that most African societies operate patriarchal structure which values men than women (for in most communities, women are treated as properties meant to be bought by their male counterparts through the payment of “the bride-price” and no matter how small the amount is, it is a significant determinant of who owns who); in most African societies, there is a growing discriminatory employment practice that are based on sex and which favours the male ( often in women’s quest for employment, maternity leave, child bearing and child caring needs are cited in discriminating against the women and this has serious adverse effects on their access and opportunities to learning and education).

He stresses further that many institutions in Africa today, still make decision on welfare practices and education based on needs of the young male; women encounter unequal opportunities in accessing funds or scholarships when young males and females need to seek support especially to finance education in distant learning situations, which is becoming popular in under-developed and developing nations of Africa; women experience exclusions from participating in education in most cases because the work (or academic activities in this case) is considered by men to be too physically/mentally strenuous or demanding (of time and concentration).

Most of the factors highlighted in this study as factors hampering women Education still prevail in Nigerian society. Some people still consider the education of women as a waste of time since according to them “they will end up in the kitchen as a cooks”, then, why sending them to school? Not only that, Oniye (2000) as cited in Aja-Okorie (2013) observes that at present, the forces which combine to hamper women education, family stability and sustainable development in Nigeria include denial of equitable access to and participation in functional

education, early marriage, confinement to solitary living, subjugation by culture to accept choices forced on women, discrimination and harassment at work, political disenfranchisement from elective and political appointment and exposure to cruel mourning rites upon the death of their husband.

Aja-Okorie (2013) also corroborates that (though) the current wave of globalisation has greatly improved the lives of women worldwide, particularly the lives of women in the developing world, nevertheless, women remain disadvantaged in many areas of life, including education, employment, health, and civil rights.

### **Girls Education in Nigeria**

Education of girl-child and by extension women plays crucial role in the development of any nation. Goldman Sachs (2008) also corroborates that educating girls and women leads to higher wages; a greater likelihood of working outside the home; lower fertility; reduced maternal and child mortality; and better health and education. The impact is felt not only in women's lifetimes, but also in the health, education and productivity of future generations.

However, there are factors that are hampering girls' education in Africa and in Nigeria in particular. Indabawa (2004), observes that the factors that are limiting Girls' involvement in education in Nigeria among other things, include early marriage, Girls hawking practices, poverty level of families, poor parental support for girls' education, society's poor attitude to girl child education, irrelevance of the curriculum, poor females' participation in studying the sciences, Females' poor self-concept, poor link between education and employment.

Onyigbenu (nd) also avers that the girl-child and indeed women the world over, especially in Africa and Nigeria has had their destiny sealed from birth by tradition and culture on account

of their biological sex. They have been called the weaker sex in order to justify societal discrimination and oppression against them. They must remain silent hewers of wood and drawers of water, bearers of children, and toilers of arduous labour from sun-rise to sun-down. They can be seen but to be heard in both the private and the public spaces of decision making. The girl-child by the natural status ascribed to her by male defined norms of societal conduct and behavior remains a property to be owned and commoditized. Consequently, her rights are circumscribed by tradition, custom, and the chauvinism of male patriarchy.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It has been observed in this study that the contribution of women to the sustenance of cultural values in traditional African society through folksongs and folktales still remain culturally significant and relevant to the growth and development of music education programme in Nigerian system of Education. In spite of seemingly challenges facing the education of women generally in contemporary Africa, and specifically Nigeria, women in music in tertiary institutions in Nigeria have contributed to music scholarship in diverse ways as Music Educators, Music-Teacher Educators, Women Music-Instructors, Women Music-Tutors and Women Instrument-Technologists. It is therefore recommended that more women should be encouraged by the government at various levels through sustainable policy reforms to enhance their access to quality education and gender equality which will enhance their access to decent work and economic growth.

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