

THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIA THROUGH MUSIC: A CASE STUDY OF FELA ANIKULAPO KUTI'S AFROBEAT GENRE

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Abstract

This article examines the role of Fela Anikulapo Kuti's Afrobeat genre in the social transformation of Nigeria. Drawing on theories of music and culture, the article explores the way in which Kuti's music challenged socio-political norms, promoted cultural pride, and catalyzed social change in Nigeria. Through a close analysis of Kuti's musical style, lyrics, and performance, the article argues that Afrobeat served as a vehicle for social commentary and critique, and played a significant role in shaping Nigeria's cultural and political landscape. This article begins by outlining the socio-historical context of Nigeria during Kuti's career, highlighting the political and economic challenges facing the country at the time. It then explores the origins and development of the Afrobeat genre, tracing its evolution from highlife and jazz to its distinctive blend of African rhythms and western instrumentation. This article then returns to an analysis of Kuti's music and lyrics, focusing on the ways in which he used his music to critique social and political issues, including corruption, colonialism, and inequality. The use of Yoruba language and symbolism, as well as his performances as political career were highlights. Historical analysis method was used to document this research because it accommodates the use of materials, such as books, articles, internets, and other relevant materials. This article, therefore, examines the broader cultural impact of Kuti's music, including its influence on Nigerian Identity, music industry, and political activism. This article concludes by emphasizing the importance of Kuti's legacy in shaping contemporary Nigeria culture and political, and potential for music to catalyze social transformation.

Keynotes: Transformation, Nigeria, Social, Music, Afrobeat, Political.

Introduction

In many African societies, music has served not only as a source of entertainment but also as a tool for education, cultural preservation, and political expression. Music has shaped national identity, and social consciousness, especially during periods of political turmoil. Among the most influential figures in Nigerians musical and socio-political history is Fela Anikulapo Kuti- a musician, activist, and cultural icon. Through Afrobeat, he transformed the musical landscape and gave voice to the frustrations of the Nigerian people. Music has historically served as a powerful tool for social change in African. In Nigeria, it has been instrumental in addressing political, social, and cultural issues. The concept of social transformation refers to significant changes in the structure, functioning, and values of a society, often geared towards greater justice, equity, and human development (Macionis & Plummer, 2012). This paper explores how Nigerian music has catalyzed social transformation, focusing on its role in political activism, cultural identity, youth empowerment, global cultural recognition, and societal change. Music has always been more than entertainment in Nigeria. It is a mirror of society, a channel for protest, and a bridge connecting generations and ethnicities.

According to (Delsaux, 2015) "In Nigeria, people consume music for different purposes, some listens to it just because, they want to listen to it at the moment, while some because it arouses in them some specific emotions". As a product music is, its treatment has been relatively ignored but it has been observed why people consume music. Music serves as a tool for expressing social issues, raising awareness, and inspiring action for social change. It is as well act as a form of social control, aiding in the improvement of the Nigerian social system through enlightens and social mobilization. Veal (2000) says that "Artists makes use of music to address social ills, injustice, and other pressing issues, sparking conversations and encouraging positive change. For example: Fela's song like Zombie, coffin for head of State, and sorrow, Tears and Blood tackled issues such as military operation, police brutality, and political hypocrisy. This means that it serves or acts as social control and mobilization because, it expresses and discusses social issues Artist like Fela kuti used music to protest against the government and expose social injustice. Moreover, Fela's lyrical content was deliberately accessible, employing pidgin English to ensure that his message reached both

the literate and illiterate. Olaniyan (2004) says that “This linguistic strategy democratized political awareness and engage a wide audience in the national discourse”. Afrobeat, as pioneered by Fela, thus became a cultural weapon, not only confronting injustices but also nurturing a pan-African consciousness and advocating for African identity and self-reliance. This paper is thus written to explain how music particularly, through the life and works of Fela Kuti, has contributed to Nigeria’s social transformation, and can be used to promote positive social change, encouraging empathy, and cooperation, how it can be used as a powerful tool for conveying messages and rising awareness about important issues, and finally how it can inspire action and motivate people to take a stand against injustice on social problems.

Concept of Transformation

Transformation refers to the significant, lasting changes in the structure, values, norms, or behaviors of a society. It is very essential for addressing injustice, adopting to changing realities, and improving the quality of life. According to (Lesile 2005) “Transformation as a word has been in existence for a long but its use was frequent in the early 1990’s when it came to be associated with the massive plan to overhaul our nation’s education system”. It is a radical correction of social ills, a commensurable decrease in crime rates.

Types of transformation

Social Transformation: It refers to major changes in society’s structure, values, norms, institution, and relationship. Example include, shifts from colonialism to independence, from traditional to modern societies. Social transformation has had wide reaching effects- some positive, others challenging across political, economic, cultural, and technological dimensions. Social transformation refers to significant changes in the structures and functioning of a society. According to Macionis & Plummer (2012). “The concept of social transformation refers to significant changes in the structure, functioning, and values of a society, often geared towards greater justice, equity, and human development” It as well involves the reform of systems, values, and institution leading to an improved quality of life and increased social justice. In this paper, social transformation is used to describe change of the society’s systemic characteristics.

Economic Transformation: This simply means a shift in the structure of an economy, such as moving from agriculture-based to industrial or service-based system. It can lead to higher productivity, improves standards of living, and as well reduce poverty. It typically involves a shift from low productivity sectors (like subsistence agriculture) to higher productivity sectors (such as manufacturing, services, and technology)

Political Transformation: It refers to major changes in political system or governance structures. It is the fundamental and lasting changes in the institutions, practices, and values of a political system. It involves a shift from authoritarianism to democracy, from instability to stable governance, or from colonial rule to independence, which is resulting in a more participatory, accountable, and inclusive political environment.

Cultural Transformation: Cultural transformation refers to changes in cultural norms, practices, beliefs, and values, which can occur due to globalization, modernization, or internal reform. It is the profound and lasting change in the values, beliefs, practices, customs, and expressions of a group of people over time. It can affect how people think, behave, communicate, and relate to one another in society.

Music as a social tool

Music acts as a medium for education, resistance, mobilization, and cultural preservation. Music can critique social ills and inspire revolutionary change. Music is not merely an art form or source of entertainments, but also a dynamic tool for expressing ideas, challenging societal norms, and fostering change. Throughout history and across cultures, music has played a critical role in shaping social movements, influencing public opinion, and uniting communities. As a means of communication, music communicates messages that transcend language barriers. It articulates the emotions, struggles, and aspirations of people, especially those who may lack access to formal means of communication. Through lyrics, rhythm, and tone, Musicians can speak truth to power and raise awareness about pressing social issues such as inequality, injustice, and corruption.

Music serves as a form emotional therapy in post-conflict societies or communities facing trauma. It helps individuals process grief, loss, or displacement, and can as well foster healing and reconciliation.

Nigerian Music

Traditional Nigerian Music reflects the cultural diversity of over 250 ethnic groups. Music has historically played a role in our different cultures such as, rituals, Education, and resistance. With colonialism, new instrument emerged as well as influences, giving rise to highlife, juju, and eventually afrobeat. Nigerian's musical heritage is a diverse as its ethnic makeup. Traditional music such as the talking drums of the Yoruba, Igbo highlife, and Hausa praise singing, served religious, social and communicative functions. The past independence era saw a blending of these. tradition with western influences, leading to genres like afrobeat, pioneered by Fela Kuti, which carried strong political message. Nigerian music developed through oral traditions, rituals festivals, and communal gatherings. Each ethnic group in Nigeria-Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Edo, TV, and others, developed its own style, instruments, and rhythms. Traditional music of Africa is the music of the people which is composed traditional language. It is always folk music, practiced by the Africans in their perspective villages. In African music, some music is bound to special people or group. Music in Nigeria is a vital aspect of the country's cultural identity, social life, as well historical narrative.

Traditional music

In Nigeria, traditional music is rooted in the customs, rituals, and everyday life of the people. It is often used in ceremonies like weddings, funerals, and festivals. It is also used in storytelling and oral history, religious, and spiritual practices. Each ethnic group has unique instruments and style for example in Hausa, they make use of instrument like kakaki, kalangu (talking drum. In Yoruba culture, they make use of dundun, (talking drum), bata, and shekere.in Igbo land, they make use of Ogene, udu, ekwe, and ichaka.

Economic impact

one of the largest industries in Africa is Nigeria music industry. It creates employment in production, marketing, event planning, and digital distribution. It as well contributes to GDP through exports, concerts, and streaming platforms. Nigeria music also promotes tourism and national branding. Music in Nigeria is more than sound, it is a dynamic force that unites, educates, entertains, empowers, and transforms society. It actually mirrors the nation's struggles, aspirations, and achievements, which continued to shape Nigeria's identity on the world stage.

Music as a Vehicle of social transformation in Nigeria.

Fela's Music addressed government corruption which he used his song, "Authority Stealing", Police brutality by using his music titled "Zombie", Economic injustice, by using "shuffering and shmilling" and colonial mentality by using his son "Teacher don't teach me nonsense". Each song challenged oppressive system, educated the public, and becoming anthems for social change. Nigerian's post independent era was marked by military coups, civil war, and systemic corruption. During these periods, music emerged as an expressive force against operation and disillusionment. Traditional music, high life and later Afrobeat, became media through which artists expressed the pains and hopes of the populace. Music helped to cultivate national identity, unify ethnic groups, and provide an alternative platform for political discourse. Fela kuti remains a defining figure in Nigerian music and activism. His songs such as zombie and sorrow. Tears and blood, criticized military regimes, corruption, and social injustice. Through his afrobeat music, Fela created a powerful medium for political consciousness, inspiring artists like Seun, Kuti, Burna Boy, and Edris Abdu Kareem to continue using music as a platform for dissent.

Nigerian music has undergone a dramatic transformation with the emergence of Afrobeat, Hip-hop, R and B fusion, including that of those gospels. Artists like king sunny Ade, 2baba, Wizkid, etc. have become international icons. Music has long been used to voice dissent and spark activism in Nigeria. It serves as a radical medium of protest against corruption, dictatorship, and colonial residue.

Fela Anikulapo Kuti: The voice of the voiceless

Fela Kuti stands out as a musician who consciously used his art for activism. He was born in 1938, Fela studied music in London and later trained in Los Angeles, where he was influenced by the black power movement. Upon returning to Nigeria, he began to reshape the function of music in society. Fela's Afrobeat- a fusion of jazz, highlife, funk, and traditional African rhythms, was not only innovative musically, but deeply political. He was not only a musician but also a revolutionary thinker. He founded the Kalakuta republic, and as well declared it independent from Nigeria, and

Musical Elements:

Element	Description
Structure	Long instrumental intro, call and response vocals, repeated chants.
Instruments	Saxophone (played by Fela), drums electric guitar, bass, keyboard, congas
Rhythm	Polyrhythmic
Melody	Repetitive
Harmony	He made use of chord progression
Tempo	Medium to fast pace

Performance Style:

- Fela performs with raw energy, often acting out the behavior of soldiers on stage.
- He includes political theatrics, his band (Africa 70) and dancers often enhance the message visually.
- Audience interaction is key because he always directly speaks to the people.

Social and political Context:

It was released during military rule in Nigeria.

The song led to a violent military raid on Fela's kalakuta Republic (his home and commune).

It became a symbol of resistance against military brutality and dictatorship.

It reflects Fela's Afrocentric ideology and activism.

Language and Style:

He made use of pidgin English and Yoruba expressions.

His song is direct, ironic, and confrontational tone.

He as well relies on repetition, slogans, and chants for emphasis.

Personal or Social Impact:

"Zombie" remains one of Fela's most influential protest songs.

It is used in discussions about military dictatorship, civil rights, and freedom of expression.

It as well shows how music can challenge authority and inspire political awareness.

This particular song "zombie" is more than a song, it is as well a musical protest. Fela exposes the dangers of unthinking obedience in a militarized society through rhythm, metaphor, and performances.

2. Title of the song: "Water no get Enemy"

Artist: Fela Anikulapo Kuti

Year of Release: 1975

Genre: Afrobeat

Lyrical Content (Themes and Meaning):

- The song uses "water" as a metaphor for something essential, peaceful, and beyond enemy.
- The meaning of the phrase "Water no get Enemy" is that water is life, and no one can fight it or live without it.
- Lyrics emphasize unity, peace, and resilience.
- Its subtle political message, by criticizing those who oppose progress or truth, likening water to truth, justice, or collective power.

The Music

To ba fe lo we omi l'o ma 'lo

If you want to wash, na water you go use, hahahaha

To ba fa s'ebe omi l'o ma 'lo

If you want to cook, na water you go use, hahahaha

To ri ba n'ogbona o omi l'ero re

If your head dey hot, na water go cool am

To mo ba nidagba omi l'o ma 'lo

If your child dey grow, na water he go use, hahahaha

If water kill your child, na water you go use

Tomi ba p'omo e o omi na lo ma l'o

Ko s'ohun to'le se ko ma lo'mi o

Nothing without water

Ko s'ohun to'le se ko ma lo'mi o

Omi o l'otao
 Omi o l'otao
 I say water no get enemy
 If fight am unless you wan die
 Omi o l'otao
 I dey talk am black man power
 I dey talk for black man power I say
 I say water no get enemy
 If fight am unless you wan die
 I say water no get enemy
 Omi o l'otao

water, him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water him no get enemy
 water, him no get enemy
 water him no get enemy
 water him no get enemy
 water him no get enemy

Musical Elements:

Element

Description

Structure Extended intro, call and response, instrumental solos, repeating vocal phrases.
Instruments Saxophone, Trumpet, electric Piano, guitar, bass, drums, and conga.
Rhythm Polyrhythmic
Melody Smooth, repetitive pattern.
Harmony It is based on the repeated chord progressions
Tempo moderate

Language and Expression:

- He made use of pidgin English, making it accessible to a wide Nigerian audience.
- The tone is very gentle and wise, reflective and persuasive rather than aggressive.
- Repetition gives the song a meditative, flowing feel like water itself.

Performance Style:

- Fela delivers vocals with calm authority, almost like storytelling.
- The song in particular allows for instrumental solos, especially, saxophone and trumpet.
- Live performances often involve relaxed dancing and subtle stage movements.

Social and Political Context:

The music was released during a tense period of military rule in Nigeria.

Unlike more confrontational songs like *Zombie*, this song uses philosophy and metaphor.

The music urges listeners to see that peace and truth (like water) cannot be defeated.

- **“Sorrow, Tears, and Blood” (1977)** This highlighted state violence, inspired by the military’s brutal attack on *kalakuta*, highlighting the violent repression of dissent.
- **“shuffering and shmiling”** Critiqued religious hypocrisy and blind endurance of suffering.

The Rise of Afrobeat.

Afrobeat was developed in the late 1960s by Fela Anikulapo Kuti, by combining African rhythms with western genres to create a sound that was deeply political. It became a sonic weapon, critiquing dictatorship, corruption, and as well colonial legacy. Afrobeat is a genre that fuses traditional African rhythms with jazz, highlife, and funk, which was pioneered by Fela Anikulapo Kuti.

The following key features of afrobeat are – complex rhythms with heavy percussion like, congas, shekeres, and talking drums.

Extended instrumental sections are involved e.g. Saxophone, Trumpet, and electronic guitars.

It as well makes use of call and response vocal form, and finally, repetition and groove-based structure for danceability. Afrobeat originated and influenced by Yoruba music, high life, and American jazz/funk. It was developed by Fela Kuti and drummer, Tony Allen after Fela’s trip to the U.S. in 1969, where he encountered Black power and civil rights

movements. Eze, C (2010) notes that “Afrobeat served as a musical rebellion against colonial mentality, government corruption, and social injustice in Nigeria”.

Fela’s impact on political consciousness and Nigerian society.

Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the progenitor of afrobeat, revolutionized African music by merging jazz, funk, and Yoruba rhythms with overtly political lyrics. Fela’s influence extended beyond music. He established the kalakuta Republic, a commune that became both a creative hub and a symbol of resistance. It housed musicians, artists, and political dissidents, and it frequently came under attack by Nigerian military. Fela’s performance was theatrical and confrontational, often serving as protest rallies. He even attempted to enter politics with the formation of the movement of the people (MOP), a party focused on social justice and Pan-Africanism.

Fela’s fearless critique of government corruption and inequality helped awaken political consciousness among ordinary Nigerians. His music stirred political awareness among the masses, especially during military regimes. His fearless expression of dissent helped cultivate critical thinking and resistance among Nigerians. Despite his repeated arrests, beatings, and loss, he remained undeterred. His resilience encouraged citizens to challenge the status quo. Fela’s charisma attracted the youth, inspiring them to use creativity for activism, and his legacy continues through younger generations of musicians and activists. He gave the poor and marginalized a platform and empowered them with awareness of their right. He elevated consciousness among the masses, and as well inspired student movements and labor union. Fela created a cultural identity that resisted western domination, and became a symbol of defiance and social criticism.

The legacy of Fela Kuti in contemporary Nigeria

Fela’s legacy lives through artists like:

- Seun and Femi Kuti who are his sons that continued with afrobeat activism
- Burna boy who always blend afrobeat with pop to comment on politics.
- Falz, who uses satire and music for advocacy. His Music has inspired a global resurgence of politically conscious afrobeat.

Decades after his death in 1997, Fela’s impact continues to resonate. Contemporary musicians such as Seun Kuti, Femi Kuti, Burna Boy, and Falz have carried forward his activist spirit, addressing issues like police brutality, youth unemployment, and corruption. Music is now a platform for advocacy. In 2020, Nigerian youths were mobilized through the #EndSars protests against police brutality, often invoked Fela’s lyrics and spirit. His music remains relevant, playing a significant role in shaping the discourse around governance, civil right, and national identity in Nigeria. Songs and performances were used to mobilize and unify youth. Artists dropped protest songs and used influence to amplify voices and call for reform. Music was central to this movement. Songs like monsters, made by Burna Boy and Fem by Davido became protest anthems, symbolizing resistance and solidarity. Artists used social media also to amplify the movement globally, fundraise, and document state violence, showing the power of music to unify, educate, and spark action. (Adebanwi, 2021).

Themes in Fela’s Music- The Political criticism

Fela used some of his music to criticize bad government in Nigeria. Songs like Zombie was used to mock Nigerian military for blind obedience. Coffin for head of state was a direct accusation against military brutality and injustice. His lyrics exposed government corruption, military brutality, colonial legacies, and societal injustice in Nigeria and across Africa. Political criticism was a central theme in much of his work, making him both a musical icon and a political activist. He expressed political criticism through one of his music “Authority Stealing” by comparing politicians’ theft of public funds with ordinary stealing, claiming that government officials are the real thieves.

Anti-corruption

His music Authority stealing criticized corrupt leadership, drawing parallels between political theft and armed robbery, asserting both are equally criminal. Fela’s music is deeply rooted in social consciousness and resistance, and anti-corruption stands out as one of the dominant and recurring themes. Through his bold lyrics, Fela exposed and condemned the corruption of Nigerian politicians, civil servants and multinational corporations that exploited the country. His music became a powerful form of protest against the greed, mismanagement and abuse of public office that plagued post-independence of Nigeria.

Human Rights

Fela condemned police brutality and as well defended civil liberties in songs such as Sorrow, tears and Blood, and also, Beasts of no Nation. His music was a powerful weapon for human rights advocacy. He used his afrobeat sound to defend the oppressed, challenge authoritarianism, and fight for the dignity and freedom of ordinary Nigerians and Africans. Fela's songs are filled with themes of freedom of expression, resistance to police and military brutality, justice and equality. Through his music, he stood as a voice for the voiceless.

Cultural identity and social cohesion through music

Music plays a vital role in shaping, preserving, transmitting cultural identity, and fostering social cohesion within communities. In Nigeria, music serves as both a mirror of culture and a bonding force among people, bridging ethnic, linguistic, and regional divides. Nigerian music has fostered national pride and cross-cultural understanding. Artists like 2baba, Yemi Alade, and Tiwa Savage blend multiple languages and sounds, promoting unity despite Nigerian's ethnic diversity. Music festivals and collaborations across ethnic lines have strengthened national identity and cultural dialogue. Nigerian music is not only central to African identity but also a cultural exports collaboration between Nigerian artists and diaspora musicians. Music helps to reflect, reinforce, and promote this identity by

Preserving Traditional and Heritage:

Our traditional songs, instruments, and rhythms are passed down through generations, thereby keeping cultural practices alive. As an expressive cultural product, music carries within it the traditions, values, and collective memory of a people. In the context of preserving cultural identity and promoting social cohesion, traditional and indigenous music serves not merely as entertainment, but as a vital medium through which communities sustain their heritage and straighten social bonds.

Promoting indigenous Language:

Some music performed in local language, like, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa always maintains linguistic heritage and foster pride in one's ethnic background. Language is the lifeblood of culture, and music serves as vibrant vessel through which language and cultural identity. Fela Kuti used indigenous languages such as Yoruba and pidgin English to assert a distinct African identity. In the post-colonial era, many African leaders and artists were caught between western influence and traditional African values. By choosing to sing in local languages, Fela rejected colonial languages (like English and French) as tools of cultural domination and embraced languages that connected directly with the African masses.

Example: He used Yoruba proverbs and expressions, showing pride in African linguistic heritage in some of his songs like "Zombie", "Water No Get Enemy"

Celebrating Rituals and Ceremonies:

Music is central to festivals, marriages, funerals, initiation rites, and spiritual ceremonies, which reflect the values and beliefs of a culture. One often overlooked but vital theme in Fela's music is the celebration and acknowledgement of African rituals and traditional ceremonies. Through both lyrical content and performance style, Fela used his music to revive, reinterpret, and affirm African spiritual and cultural practices that had been suppressed or devalued by colonial influence and western religions. Fela openly celebrated African traditional religion, particularly the Yoruba Orisha system. In his song "Shakara", he often mocked the blind imitation of western culture and religion, using Africans to embrace their own rituals and spiritual identity. He once declared: "I believe in African gods, my name is my shrine". His famous performance venue was named "The Afrika Shrine", symbolizing sacred space where music and ritual meet.

Social Cohesion Through Music

Social cohesion is the degree of social integration and unity within a community. Music is one the most powerful tools for achieving social cohesion because, it is the process of building unity, mutual understanding, and a sense of belonging among individuals and communities. Music fosters this by

Bringing people Together:

Music is a communal activity through dance, singing, and drumming. When individuals participate in collective experiences, it strengthens group identity. In many societies, especially in Africa, music is not just a form of entertainment but a social glue that binds people across cultural, ethnic, religious, and political lines. Through shared

rhythms, messages, and participation, music helps to build community identity, reinforce values, and foster collective solidarity.

Encouraging collective Action and unity:

Some protest songs and national anthems can unify people around common goals, values, and struggles, e.g., Fela Kuti's Afrobeat mobilized Nigerians against injustice. Fela is also a revolutionary voice who used his music to inspire collective action and social unity. His song acted as tools for mobilizing the masses, fostering solidarity among the oppressed, and promoting national consciousness. At the heart of his musical activism was a call for togetherness, resistance, and empowerment which is the key element of social cohesion.

Challenges and limitation.

Despite its power, music in Nigeria faces obstacles, censorship, industry exploitation, privacy, and inadequate support for the creative economy which limits its transformative potentials. The industry faces numerous challenges and limitations that affect both the creators and consumers of music. Piracy and intellectual property theft was experienced, inadequate infrastructure and investment, and lack of formal music education and institutional support. Moreover, not all artists engage critically with societal issues, focusing instead on commercial success which can dilute the medium's impact on social change. These challenges limit the full potential of music to transform society economically and socially.

Censorship and political suppression

Artists who critique the government, as Fela Kuti did, was always embarrassed, experienced harassment, and was as well arrested. Regulatory bodies like the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) impose restrictions that limit freedom of expression. One of the most significant obstacles he faced was censorship and political suppression. These were deliberate efforts by the Nigerian state and its allies to silence, intimidate, and limit the influence of his music and message. His music was repeatedly banned on radio and T.V by Nigerian government. Music stations and journalists were also warned not to promote or to play Fela's music publicly.

Poor Infrastructure

There was lack of recording studios, performance venues, and as well electricity always affects music production and distribution. There was inconsistent internet and power supply which leads to poor access to music. Poor infrastructure is another challenge he encountered, which significantly affected the production, distribution, and performance of his music in Nigeria. This challenge was part of the broader socio-political environment he criticized, which is an environment riddled with underdevelopment, and corruption.

Characteristics of Music That Makes it a Tool for Transformation

Accessibility: One of the key reasons Fela's music becomes such a powerful tool for social and political transformation is its accessibility. Music is very accessible. It reaches people across literacy levels and social classes. Fela deliberately made his music understandable, relatable, and engaging for the common people, especially the oppressed and marginalized. This accessibility helped his music penetrate all levels of the society, making it a vehicle for awareness, resistance, and change. He equally made use of pidgin English which is a simplified and understood across ethnic and social boundaries.

Emotional Appeal: Music always stirs emotions and creates a strong sense of connection. Fela's music was not only intellectually powerful but also emotionally charged. One of the key characteristics that made his music a potent tool for transformation was its emotional appeal, the ability to move listeners on a deep personal level. Through passionate lyrics, expressive instrumentation, and evocative performances, Fela stirred feelings of anger, hope, pride, and resistance. This emotional engagement helped to awaken consciousness, build solidarity, and inspire social.

Memorability: The lyrics and melodies of music always stay in people's minds, thereby reinforcing the message. Memorability, in this context, refers to how easily people can remember, repeat, and internalize the music. Through catchy rhythms, repetitive phrases, powerful slogans, and engaging musical structures, Fela created songs that stuck in the minds of listeners, making them effective tools for raising consciousness, provoking thought, and inspiring action.

Conclusion

Fela Anikulapo Kuti's life and music stand as compelling evidence that music is a transformative force in society. Through Afrobeat, he challenged oppression, awakened minds, and redefined resistance. While challenges remain, Fela's legacy affirms that music, when wielded with purpose, can be a catalyst for enduring social change in Nigeria. His music transcended entertainment. It was a weapon of truth and resistance. Through afrobeat, he mobilized the masses, exposed corruption, and cultivated a cultural awareness. Music in Nigeria has been, and continues to be a potent force for social transformation. It has been a dynamic force that encapsulates history identity, struggle, and hope, from the revolutionary message of Fela Kuti to the protest anthems of the #endsars generation. Nigerian arts have used music to challenge power, unite pride on the global stage, as digital tools expand their reach, the potentials for music to drive social change in Nigeria remains both promising and powerful. From village drums to global streaming platforms, music remains a transformative tool-uniting communities, sparking resistance, and projecting African pride to the world. Music is a powerful tool for social change in Nigeria, serving as a means of expressing social issues, raising awareness, and inspiring action. It as well plays a crucial role in fostering social control, promoting cultural exchange, and empowering individuals to take a stand against injustice. As Nigeria continues to navigate socio-political change, music will undoubtedly remain at the force front of its cultural evolution. Fela's potential neurodivergence may have heightened his sensitivity to injustice and gifted him with a singular version. His music bridges the gap between the people and other challenges, turning rhythms and lyrics into a voice for the voiceless, a mirror of society, and a catalyst for meaningful change. Today, his legacy reminds us that music is not just a soundtrack, to change, but an engine of transformation.

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