



MUSIC, GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL BALANCE

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on “Music, Gender and Sustainable Global Balance”. The role of Music in our society and in the global world cannot be overemphasized due to its importance in the impartation of knowledge in learners without gender disparities. Besides, it helps the learners to acquire skills as a vocation for effective functioning and sustainability in society. Musical training and learning of music as a profession accommodates both genders right from the elementary or basic school and secondary through the tertiary levels of education. In our societies today in the global world, both the male and female genders are recognized as music artistes, teachers, composers, conductors, therapists, studio engineers etc. The article highlights the critical role music plays in shaping cultural attitudes and promoting social change. It further explains how music can be used as a powerful tool for challenging societal norms, promoting gender equality and fostering sustainable development. Through a critical analysis of existing literature and case studies, the article illustrates how music education could be used to empower the women and the girl child and also, promote a more equitable and sustainable world. However, certain problems which hamper proper musical training and creativity are highlighted, which include inadequate funding, lack of qualified personnel, and curriculum problems, amongst others. The paper also recommends as follow; engagement of qualified personnel, adequate funding by the government, NGO, PTA Committee, etc., provision of necessary facilities such as a well-equipped music laboratory, a conducive environment for learning, encouragement of both genders in music education, etc. This article aims to contribute to the global discourse on sustainable development, highlighting the potentials of music in achieving a more just and equitable world

Key Words: Music, Gender, Society, Environment, Sustainability, Global balance



Introduction

Music which is generally recognized as a universal language has the power to transcend borders, cultures and identities, playing an important role in shaping and promoting societal values, norms and global understanding. The World, all over, is generally referred to as a global village, and music, on the other hand, is recognized as an art, the language of the soul and the outlet of expressions of our feelings through tunes and multiple of tones (Nnamani, 2009; Falusi, 2021) that is, it is a common language without racial discrimination, which is well understood and practicable by all, by global languages and tribes. As the world strives for sustainable development and gender equality, music emerges as a potent tool for change. Among all the professions or vocations, “Music” is the most loved and sought for by older men and women, young adult and children in the society (Okafor, 2005) The role of music in our societies and in the global world is beyond mere exaggeration as it performs various functions for both the male and female genders among the Muslims, Christians and Traditional worshippers. The topic of this article explores the intersection of music, gender and sustainable global balance, highlighting how music can effect positive changes to obnoxious practices and established societal norms, empowering marginalized voices and fostering a more equitable world.

In concept, gender is the state of being male or female while gender inequality is a state of being unequal that is a state of disparity between the male and female gender. Inequality simply means a state of injustice. Gender inequality is a global phenomenon sequel to quite a number of factors which range from cultural, social and religious factors (Ajere, 2013). From this assertion, culturally, women or female genders are seen as home builders in the society and their major job is to take care of the home front which includes their husbands and children. In this regard, the society places them in the position where less tasking or menial jobs are reserved for them while better employment is reserved for the male category. Socially, the political class sees them as second class citizens who should be excluded from lucrative political offices. And in the religious circle, female genders are expected to be silence while discussing important matters. From all indications, the perception of some sections of the society before now tends to look down on the potentialities of women. By examining the complex relationships between music, gender and sustainable development, we can harness the transformative potential of music in promoting global unity, equality and peace.

Contextual Clarifications

Genders

The term gender describes masculinity and femininity, which shape the way men and women are perceived in society, the roles they are given, and the work they perform. Igube (2004) and Hornby (2010) define gender as the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women or for boys and girls. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and expectation associated with the concept of being a male or a female or gender non-conforming identities. It also refers to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being a woman and a man. Mangyvat (2006) Corroborates that gender is a specially constructed phenomenon that is brought about as the society ascribes different roles, duties, behaviours and mannerisms to the two sexes. From this assertion in characteristics, gender encompasses the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of individuals which can vary across cultures and time. It is different from biological sex, though the two are inseparable. Gender includes norms, behaviours, and relationships associated with being identified as a woman, man, girl, or boy. Furthermore, Singhs (2010) argues that gender refers to a socio-cultural construct that connotes the different roles and responsibilities of men and women in a particular society. Judging from the above opinions by different scholars both genders have indispensable roles to perform for societal growth and advancement

Moreover, Onyekwelu (2000) sees gender as the dichotomy of roles culturally imposed on the sexes. Gin (2011) observes that in the contemporary context, men and women's classification is a world where patriarchal values predominate; it is a world where there are general sets of beliefs that females' gender is inferior to the male gender. In this regard, the power of relationship attached to their ideology and belief accords the male gender more respect, power and concession over the female gender (women) in society. In corroboration, Anele (2008) is of the view that the social-cultural practices of the African societies play a role in the vantage of male domineering influence over their womenfolk. However, recent event in the society has proven that the male genders are not superior to their female genders. If given equal opportunity, the female gender seems to be more considerate and of better performance on important issues that affects the progress of the society due to their feminine nature as the mothers of the society



Music Roles in Sustaining Global Balance

Music is seen as vocal or instrumental sounds or both combined in such a way for aesthetic (beauty) production of form, harmony, and expression of emotions. It is also recognized as the written or printed signs representing vocal or instrumental sounds. Hornby (2010) defines music as an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and colour. Music can significantly contribute to sustainable global balance in several ways. These include cultural exchange and understanding, social control and awareness, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, Education and personal development. These highlights are further expatiated as follow;

Cultural Exchange and Understanding

The roles of music in human societies all over the world cannot be quantified. Odutola (2009). Sees music as an important element of every culture and an imperative medium through which human philosophies, emotions and agendas are conveyed. Since the earliest times, man has often expressed his or her feelings through music. According to Falusi (2021). Music is generally referred to as a humanly organized sound. And it is used to influence individual and group behaviours in different ways. In this regard, man tends to admire, appreciate and listen to music because of its effect on man's existential feelings as music often generates powerful emotions in man. Besides it promotes cultural understanding as music transcends linguistics that is, the language of the people and cultural barriers and as such promotes global unity and cooperation. In this regard, cross cultural understanding enhances and encourages the performance of music in all languages. And also promotes unity among people of different cultures. In the local community music serves as a unifying factor especially in settling quarrels among warring communities, Also, at the global stage, music festival brings people of various cultures together for unity and cooperation. Music also preserves the cultural heritage of the people by preserving the culture in the traditional setting and also promoting the cultural diversity of the people. as the older generation pass the social norms which are incorporated in their folk songs to their younger generation. Thus, the cultural heritage of the people are preserved.

Social Control and Awareness

Since the beginning of human civilization, music has been used as a device in the control of social behaviours where it has operated as much as to promote solidarity among the male and

female genders which include Adult men and women, Youth and children. Berghahn (1994) argues that music is acknowledged as a social control agent that regulates the lifestyles of people in the society and thus encourages the promotion of moral values. In social control, satirical songs are employed in curbing the social vices which negate the societal norms and cultures. These social vices include stealing, wicked acts, insubordination, witchcraft, immorality, bedwetting, etc. Satirical songs are meant to correct societal evils such as crime, corruption, bribery, robbery with violence, etc. Generally, it is termed songs for social control, which is a mechanism by which a society preserves its norms and value system (cultural heritage) from degradation and extinction. According to Okafor (2005);

Every community has things it lives by, cherished traditional norms and revered institutions and usually ensures that any member who violates them is severely punished. More than that, it establishes a preventive mechanism to warn of the consequences of forbidden words and deeds. This mechanism constitutes the societal social control (n.p.).

From the above assertion by Okafor, satirical songs are meant to inculcate good morals and correct societal evils. A typical example of Satirical (poem) song that teaches moral value include;

Song against stealing;

(1)English

Yoruba Interpretation

1. What is stealing to me

Kini ngo folese laye ti mowa

What is stealing to me

Kini ngo folese laye ti mowa

Instead of stealing I'd rather be a slave

Kaka kin jale ma kuku deru

What is stealing to me

Kini ngo folese laye ti mowa

2. He who steals will be prosecuted

Eni ba jale aa dele ejo

He who steals will be prosecuted

Eni ba jale aa dele ejo

The Judge will judge and jail him

Adajo a wa fewon si lese

He who steals will be prosecuted

Eni ba jale aa dele ejo

(Ayeyemi & Falusi. 2017)

This is one of the popular poems which are thought on morals especially at elementary or basic schools' education for both the male and female genders of basic school age. The above song's expression shows that stealing is evil and shameful. And it is not in any way good for a well cultured person. The first stanza begins with the expression "what is stealing to me and that it is better to be a servant rather than stealing. The second stanza of the poem expresses that theft lands someone in jail. The song is one of the Yoruba folk songs that discourage the act of stealing.

Furthermore Merriam (1964) explicates the purpose of music in man's life as emotional, expressionistic, aesthetic, enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical responses, enforcement of conformity to social norms, validation of social institutions and religious rituals, contribution to the continuity and stability of culture and contribution to societal integration. From the above assertion, the functions of music in human existence is clearly evident as it performs such roles as emotional, which refers to the way man thinks and feel about a concept and conviction. It is also expressionistic in the sense that our thoughts, ideas and feelings can be demonstrated or expressed through songs or instrumental performance.

Universally, music performs various functions. Falusi (2022) argues that; in Nigerian (African) societies, music performs roles which cut across both sacred and secular music. These general functions include ceremonies, festivals, sports, worship, folklore, therapy, pleasure and recreation, advertisement, satire etc.

The continent, Africa, is a society that places a high value on music, and as such, music occupies a pivotal place in the lives of both Genders in various events of the life cycle. Music is used extensively in social, religious, secular, and cultural functions etc. According to Okafor, (2005);

Next to the local language, traditional music is the most widely used medium of expression for all manner of occasions and at all times and periods of life.

Communities manipulate it to give voice and sound to their collective thoughts, actions, and even spirituality (p.88)

From Okafor's assertion on traditional music, it is quite obvious that music plays various dimensional roles in African societies. Music creates awareness by orientation agencies through songs and jingles on the radio television and other platforms in addressing global issues like

climate change, poverty, inequality among male and female genders, it also inspire actions by providing a platform through music festivals for marginalized communities to express themselves and advocate for their rights.

Cultural Identification and Preservation

Music is an important aspect of culture that various tribes especially the Yoruba values so much in their daily activities and life cycle events Its effective use in the traditional setting serves as a medium for cultural identification and preservation. When the music of a particular society is performed, it reveals the culture of the society to the viewers for easy identification. Also, regular performance of the music of a place helps to preserve the cultural practices of that society. Thus, traditional music helps to preserve, project, perpetuate and transmit our music heritage and culture (Odunuga & Nnamani, 2005). Furthermore, Save the Music Foundation (2025) sees music education as a powerful tool that has great influence in shaping cultural manifestation and societal practices around the world for generations. It has the power to alter ones mood, change perceptions and inspire change either positively or negatively. In this regard the cultural practices that promote good morals must be encouraged in the education of the female and male gender in schools.

General Education: Music provides general education to learners. Its values in the education of a child and adult in the society cannot be quantified as it promotes citizenship, character development, team spirit, historical development and health benefits. Music plays a vital role in general education, enhancing cognitive abilities, fostering creativities, and promoting social-emotional development. It could be integrated into various subjects in schools especially at lower elementary, upper basic schools and senior secondary. It makes learning more engaging and enjoyable while also developing skills applicable to other academic areas. It also contributes to the general development of children (Sanjabadam, 2024), Music is one of the educational disciplines which is taught as school subjects. In primary and upper basic school, it is integrated with other arts such as fine art, dance, and drama or theatre in cultural and creative art (CCA) curriculum. In senior secondary schools and tertiary institutions it is offered as a subject on its own. It is not recognized as a core subject at junior secondary school certificate examination (JSSCE) due to its integrated nature with other related art subjects as applicable to CCA curriculum.

Music aids teaching in schools or facilitate instruction to pupils e.g. Nursery rhymes. It also helps pupils to memorize names of things like the continents of the world, rivers, letters of the alphabets, ABC..... 12 calendar months etc. Music education thus promotes global awareness, understanding and cooperation.

Economic Empowerment: Empowerment through music simply means the use of music in the enhancement of individual and collective well-being especially in contexts of social or personal challenges. It encompasses various approaches from music education equipping the learners with the knowledge of technical know- how in self-expression and confidence in musical practices and creativity to music therapy which addresses mental health and physical well-being. It also encourages community music initiatives that promote social inclusion and positive change. In African societies, music provide basis for skill acquisition and empowerment. It has a dual obligation to the society. The first obligation is to develop the talent of those who are musically gifted for their own benefits and of the society which they serve (Odunuga & Nnamani, 2005). Judging from the above assertion, we could observe that effective use of music in an African society is beneficial to both the performer (artiste) and the audience (i.e. the local community). Music has such a powerful and positive impact on pupil in elementary, student in secondary and tertiary levels as it brings out the best in each of the pupils and students' category and allowing them to shine. Examples of empowerment through music include giving voice to the voiceless, promoting mental health and well-being, socio-economic empowerment, social justice and activism etc. Music provides economic opportunities through income generation and job creation contributing to the growth of the economy and alleviating poverty among the people. Music also provides opportunity for Tourism and cultural exchange through music festivals and other global events that attract tourists that promotes cultural exchange and economic benefits to the citizens and the nation at large.

Problems that Impede Effective Functions of Music for Sustainable Global Balance

These problems include the following;

Gender Disparity: Gender disparity refers to unequal treatment or individual perceptions based on their gender, which leads to unfair treatment or systematic disadvantages for certain groups, especially the female gender. This disparity thus manifests in various aspects of life, which include health, education, economic opportunities, political representation and music, etc. The

society, especially in Nigeria (Africa), is replete with several cultural practices which tend to give preference for male superiority over the female gender. In this regard, Enemu (1999); Otumala and Ayuba (2018) rightly observed that Nigerian communities approve such practices as preference for male child, payment of bride price, female genital mutilation, negative attitude to women toward childlessness, giving away girls in marriage early and without their consent. Musically, gender disparity limits musical initiatives of the female gender, especially in taking leading roles in musical creativity and performance in schools, churches and in public functions. However, if they are allowed to take leading roles during performances they will be at their best for the benefit of the society. For instance, the best voice in singing is usually the soprano part, which is not in all cases and as such, using the female vocalist as song leader in social function will be more beneficial to the progress of such choral group except in situation where the singers or the choir members in such choral group are only male genders.

Poor Socio-Economic Background: Many, especially female genders are denied access to education especially in the field of music due to its financial implication that is, the resources that are involved in the purchase of music materials for effective learning, practices and creativities. Because, such genders are from poor home and their parents could not afford the sponsorship of their education. Thus, leading to unequal access to music education, resources and platforms particularly in marginalized communities

Inadequate funding: There is general lack and paucity of funds to enhance effective implementation of music programme through serious and a result oriented performance in schools, colleges, polytechnics, universities and other organizations that could cater for the education of both genders. Effective implementation of music in schools requires adequate funding in order to bring out the best in the learner through the efficiency of the teacher.

Lack of qualified Personnel: Many institutions today do not have qualified personnel or resource persons with current or up to date requisite experience in general musicianship. In this regard, many graduates who had finished a training course in music program either in conventional or privately owned institutions today cannot even sight sing and are deficient in the practical application aspect of the curriculum except in theory.

Problem of teaching aids: Lack of well-equipped library, instruction materials and musical instruments are part of the factors that impede the progress of performance in music for

sustainable global balance. Music are not learnt in abstract because, the gaining of knowledge and acquisition of skills in music education requires the use of real objects such as musical instruments e.g. piano, flute, trumpet and other instruments as instructional materials. Correspondingly, findings show a gross insufficiency and dearth of musical instruments and music in schools (Ogunrinade et al, 2019). Where these materials are not available as this practice is the regular occurrence in many elementary and secondary schools especially public institutions, the progress of performance will be hampered.

Lack of Policy Support: This involves insufficient policies and funding for music initiatives toward the promotion of sustainable global balance and equality. The apathetical behaviours of the heads of educational institutions and government which include Federal, state and local council toward music education is a major setback. Because, their failure in this regard had not given the implementation of music education in most of our schools and institutions necessary backings, encouragement and the required incentives for the training of students in music education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper had considered how the intersection between music and gender could enhance sustainable global balance. From findings the opinions of various researchers on similar subjects had been expressed, showing the disparity between male and female genders, in which the general opinions proved that society, especially in Africa, had not given the female gender fair treatment as expected. Further findings shows that proper music education can significantly contribute to sustainable global balance in several ways. These include cultural exchange and understanding, social control and awareness, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, education and personal development. Also, the problems that impede the effective functioning of music as an instrument to correct this imbalance for a sustainable global balance have been highlighted which include gender disparity, poor socio-economic status of the parents, inadequate funding amongst others. In this regard, the paper recommends as follow;

The parents and societies are expected to treat children equally in such a way that they are given equal opportunity to explore in their chosen careers, especially in musical learning, practices and creativity. Both genders should be encouraged to reach the heights of their musical careers, as there is no superiority in the musical performance of each gender. It is generally observed that

students' behavioural attitude in learning begins from the preliminary stages of learning. In this regard, the classroom teacher should monitor the behavior of their students in order to ensure that both genders have equal access to the musical training that will engender their acquisition of necessary skills for their functionality in the musical world and in the society in which they are domiciled. The music teacher or the resource person should ensure that male genders (boys) and female genders (girls) are given equal opportunity to acquire the same musical exposure and experiences during the theory learning in the classroom and practical demonstration in the laboratory.

- The Government, on the other hand should assist children from homes whose parents have poor social-economic status by funding their education through the award of scholarship to indigent children, Government should engage qualified personnel for the implementation of music programmes in schools, which include the basic schools, secondary, and tertiary levels. Besides, a conducive environment for learning for both genders (boys and girls) should be created by the Government with the support of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), Parents and teachers' associations' committee etc. by ensuring adequate funding, provision of necessary facilities such as well-furnished classroom, Instructional materials, well-equipped music laboratory for music practical, skills acquisition and for empowerment.

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