

Feminine Gender Identity in Nigerian Music Education: Trends, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract : In the African traditional societies, women have always played the role of a teacher, albeit informally. This is evident in the upbringing of their babies. As mothers, they also serve as the first teachers to teach their wards lessons through day-to-day activities. Furthermore, women always play the role of a musician during naming ceremonies, in the singing of lullabies, during initiation rites of adolescent boys and girls into adulthood, and in preparing their children especially daughters (and sons) for marriage. They also perform this role during religious and cultural activities, chieftaincy title/coronation ceremonies, singing of dirges during funeral ceremonies, and so forth. This traditional role of the African/Nigerian women puts them at a vantage point to contribute maximally to the teaching and learning of music at every level of education. The need for more women in the field of music education in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Today, gender equality is a major discourse in most countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive. Statistical data in the field of education and music education reveal the high ratio of male teachers/lecturers over their female counterparts in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The percentage is put at 80% Male and a distant 20% Female! This paper, therefore, examines feminine gender in Nigerian music education by tracing the involvement of women in musical practice from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial periods. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source included interviews conducted with 19 music lecturers from 8 purposively selected tertiary institutions from 4 geo-political zones of Nigeria. In addition, observation method was employed in the selected institutions. The results show, inter alia, that though there is a remarkable improvement in the rate of admission of female students into the music programme of Nigerian tertiary institutions, there is still an imbalance in the job placement in these institutions especially in the Colleges of Education which is the main focus of this research. Religious and socio-cultural factors are highly traceable to this development. This paper recommends the need for more female music teachers to be employed in the Nigerian tertiary institutions in line with the provisions stated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Keywords : gender, education, music, women

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