

## CHALLENGES IN ART EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIAN INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES BEFORE AND AFTER THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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### Abstract

Art Education programmes in Nigerian institutions of Learning have experienced a number of changes since the inception of modern education in the late 18th century. It is on these bases that educational developmental changes started. The changes, therefore affected the characteristic features of the programmes. The changes came with different educational policies, innovative methods of teaching and learning, as well as curriculum innovation and implementations. Thakur and Ezenne in Mbahi 1999 affirm that “Educational programmes started with Islamic education from the North and Christian education from the South”. Prior to these periods, the system of education practised in Nigeria was the African type, which is known as traditional education. The formal education programme started with the introduction of Western Education in Nigeria from 1842 to 1948 of which the Formal art education curriculum was designed and developed, respectively, to favour the Western culture. The changes were necessitated when the issue of the modern education system was presented and discussed at different periods in Nigeria. During those periods, the major issue that was in the mind of the then educationists and policymakers, according to Imonikebe (2012), there was the need for changes in Nigerian art education.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Art Education programme, Nigerian institutions of Learning, Different educational policies, Innovative methods of teaching and learning.

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### Introduction

Art education programme, in the context of this paper, implies all the plans of action for handling the educational system; and the programme that was suggested for running the art teaching and learning activities in schools at basic levels of education. Art education programme, as Imonikebe (2012) indicated, is a set of

systematic plans of instruction that controls all the teaching and learning of art in school systems. The Educational Programme was designed under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in Nigeria; and, existed for a decade in all the states across the country.

The art education programme has been given administrative considerations as it is

contained in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the National Policy on Education in Nigeria. The art programme was introduced as a compulsory subject in all the schools at basic levels of education all over the country as presented in the National Policy on Education (N.P.E) in 2004. The Programme, especially, at the basic levels of education was designed and implemented in such a way that it could effectively help in closing the gap between the previous and the present art educational programmes. Art education programme, from time to time, is reviewed with a view to improving the quality of the art curriculum.

Three significant educational developments existed before Nigerian independence. The educational developments gave rise to several changes in art education programmes that progressed from 1914 to the present day. History of education in Nigeria as

presented by Fafunwa (2004) and Thakur and Ezenme, 2010, revealed the Lugard's Policy on education from 1914 to 1919; the Clifford's Policy and educational codes of Conduct of 1929; and how the world economic depression from 1930-1940 affected the developing educational policies in most parts of Nigeria.

Art education programmes during these periods, according to Fafunwa (2004) and Thakur, *et al* (2010) were organized under three (3) major aspects of formal education, thus: Government Policy and Administration; Curriculum and Instruction; and Teaching and Learning Activities. However, different art educationists ascribed suggestions and recommendations for assessable art educational programmes for the Nigerian institutions of learning. Oloidi (2003), Palmer (2004), Azeez (2007), Mamza (2008), Umar and Osamudiam (2009), Mbahi (1999) and Tijani (2011), are some

of the prominent art scholars who hold the view that the direction of art education in Nigeria should go through a sustainable educational process.

Formal art education programme, according to Onuchukwu (2001), started in Nigeria with the introduction of Western Education from 1923-1963. Art curriculum was designed and developed to favour the Western culture. The earlier art teachers during those periods were the expatriate teachers, Such art teachers were K.C. Murray, H.E. Duckworth, J.D. Clarke and D. Duerdan, who taught art from the backgrounds of their experiences and environments.

Art was taught in Western styles until 1927 when art was considered a subject to be taught in schools with the effort of the first Nigerian Artist: Aina Onabolu, who is popularly known as 'The Father of

Contemporary Art in Nigeria'. According to Azeez (2007),

Although a Nigerian, Onabolu's teaching in some schools focused on the use of Western techniques and materials. The purpose was to provide a point or to disabuse the minds of the then-Europeans who thought that no African could dabble into art of figure drawing and painting. He was equally supported with some foreign art teachers who were also trained in Western art styles.

As a result of their efforts, many Nigerians who were interested in art studies and practice were encouraged to further their studies. The first set of the Nigerian art pioneers who popularized art as an academic subject were Ben Enwunwu, J.B. Akolo, Udo Emma, Uche Okeke, and Bruce Onabrakpeya. Art subjects were taught in schools in accordance with a set academic programme and curricular activities. Different art education programmes were constituted as a result of the changing situation of Nigerian systems of education.

Prior to 1970s, and to the recent educational systems and developments that the time-honoured, there was a 7-4-1/2-3-4 educational scheme that was practised. Such systems of education were organized and implemented under the then Central Primary Schools (CPS) system of education. The 6-3-3-4 system of education was a scheme under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) that was introduced in 1977 with the aim of achieving the National Objectives by the year 2015. The system was organized and was provided in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1977, Section 3/15 and 16.

The 9-3-4 system of education under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was presented and replaced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in 2007. The scheme was initially launched in 1999 with the view of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year

2015. The educational systems designed under these schemes were geared towards the inculcation of skills that would enable the young learners in Nigeria to become self-reliant in their different societies. The schemes were introduced in line with the provision of the earlier and the current National Policy on Education in Nigeria.

This paper is significant because it provides information on the status of art education programmes at basic levels of education in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states. The paper provides a framework for future planning and implementation of the art education programme. The study which is pertinent to educational development, can serve as a training manual of the (U.B.E.) 9-Year Basic Education, UBE Commission, Abuja.

The three (3) basic levels of education that constitute the 9-Year Basic Education, according to Mbahi and Nkom (2016), are

Lower Basic Education (Primary 1-3), Middle Basic Education (Primary 4-6) and Upper Basic Education (J.S.S. 1-3). The age intervals of the 9-Year Basic Education ranged between the age of ten (10) and sixteen (16) years, that is, primary 1 to J.S.S. 3 school periods.

A lot has been written by different authorities and researchers on the different systems of education in Nigeria. Etuk (2012) presented a paper on “Sociological Analysis in Nigeria’s Universal Basic Education (UBE)”. Palmer (2004), also, authored a book titled “Art Education for Tertiary Institutions”. Mbahi and Nkom (2016) recently made a publication on “Cultural and Creative Arts in 9-Year Basic Education”. Furthermore, Mohammed’s (2014) thesis was on “The Implementation of Cultural and Creative Arts Programme and Performance of Students in Junior Secondary Schools in Borno and Yobe states”.

In the same vein, Umar & Osamudiamen (2009) presented a paper on “Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) Curriculum for 9-Year Basic Education: Challenges Ahead and the Way Forward”. Despite the contributions of such art educators, much has not been elaborated on the conditions of art education programmes at the basic level in any part of Nigeria, particularly in the area of this study. Art education programmes have been established in all the schools at basic levels of education in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states.

The dilemma of this paper emanated from the fact that appraisal processes by means of differential paper presentations have not been considered, most of the time, in assessing the expected structural changes in art education programmes in the Nigerian institutions of learning. Consequently, the art education programme has not achieved substantial development by consideration of the

statutory documentation and provisions from the National Policy on Education. I strongly feel that it is not appropriate to bring in your submission under the introduction. You have not given any detailed presentation of your issues; yet, you jumped into presenting your view. This section will be appropriate if it comes under your recommendation or conclusion.

For example, the current art education programme under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) structural feature appears the same as the art education programme under the former Universal Primary Education (UPE). Despite the contributions of some notable art educators and historians; much has not been elaborated on the state of art education programme using the evaluation process. So, the paper sorts to narrate the art education programme through its historical and developmental changes in

Nigeria from 1914 to the present time using the appraisal process.

### **Issues Arising from the Educational Development**

This paper is required because it is based on the policy statement made in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 2012 and on the status of the art education programme at basic levels in Nigeria. The paper is, as well, necessary because it is in line with some of the recommendations and suggestions made by some researchers and policymaker on what to be done in order to achieve the objectives of the developmental changes of art education programmes at all levels of education in Nigeria. It is also important for the development of the current art education programme in Nigerian institutions of learning.

The cultural and creative programme is a synthesis of Fine/Applied arts, and performing art. The cultural and creative

art programme was introduced in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN 2004). The objectives of this policy can be summarized as value reorientation, poverty eradication, job creation, and wealth generation.

According to Mohammed (2014), “....it became imperative to review and restructure the curriculum to ensure relevance to the dynamic human society and culture, and to respond to the global reforms so as to meet the demand of the present generation.” Another reason for the review was the need to achieve Universal Basic Education in training future generations of Nigerians in promoting the rich cultural heritage and creativity; and to properly equip young Nigerians with manipulative skills which

will make them self-reliant and job creation.

Over the years, the standard of art education has deteriorated. There are no sufficient art teachers, art rooms or even art materials for art practices. This has greatly contributed to children’s lack of interest in art. Up-till now art is not regarded as important as other school subjects like Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Science subjects. The paper, therefore, argues that:

1. Inappropriate use of art teaching methods in schools. Inadequacy of art teaching methods or lack of knowledge of teaching methods by primary school teachers has greatly hampered children’s creative abilities. Consequently, the children are not encouraged and motivated to enjoy the art lesson.

2. Time allocated to art lessons is too short and insufficient for proper teaching and learning to take place.

3. Materials are not enough for art teaching as such children cannot express their feelings properly through the use of local art materials.

In most schools, the content of art programmes was not made relevant to the needs, experiences and environment of the children. Oloidi (2003) puts it, thus:

Ideal curriculum should cater for the need of the individual child followed by the preparation for the world of work, the fostering of social development of the child and the stimulation of cultural awareness. It also mentioned that the curriculum should cater for the individual needs, the child's strength and weakness, likes and dis-likes, the individuals' interest and consideration for his possible future schooling. Therefore, preparation for life or future schooling is attached to the needs of the child.

The researcher agreed that, even now, the problems of art teaching do not differ from what it was before this time. Maru (2011) ascertained that educationists who agreed with art curriculum should possess artistic

ideas on how children learn and how the art-teaching process is made.

Nigerian Policy on Education supports Art Education (art and crafts) but in practice, it is always among the first component of the curriculum to be neglected during budgeting and implementation. Art Education in public schools being neglected by policymakers may be because research in art education has not convincingly demonstrated that it contributes to the academic performance of art students.

On curriculum issues, several scholars in art education have come up with related issues. Mbahi (2004) indicated that there was no approved syllabus for art in Nigeria prior to the 1973 seminar. Mbahi observed that despite the huge amount of financial resources expended on different curriculum workshops "the Nigerian Educational system has produced

individuals with little or no skills for National Development. Also, on National Policy on Education under the Chairmanship of Chief S. O. Adebayo around 1974, narrated the adoption of the British curriculum, which does not augur well for the Nigerian educational system. That was because its adoption was the mere transfer of curriculum that does not reflect progressive changes that took place within the societal context but rather of the British societal context in Nigeria. Fafunwa (2004) noted, "There has been a lack of continuity in curriculum development especially in art and crafts in Nigeria. Jean (2018) also emphasized that there should be a close relationship between the objectives of art teaching and the teachers' methodology and that what was responsible for the innumerable problems of art teaching in the contemporary time is the lack of clarity of

stated objectives the process and the methods of implementation.

Mbahi (2004) concluded that the major problem affecting curriculum implementation, among several issues today is that which they noted as a serious art education problem. Tyler's four ingredients of the curriculum are the objective, content, method and evaluations. It was believed that teachers must be exposed to what Akolo in Fafunwa (2004) has written. However, he noted that the content must be related to the culture of the child. Issues regarding the problem of curricular planning and implementation alongside educational funding and staffing, are still manifesting. There is a need for a close relationship between objectives which must be clear. The writer agreed that there is a lack of continuity in the curriculum development. There is, therefore, the need to review the existing art curriculum in schools.

Irivwieri (2009) described the attempts made in Nigeria by art educators, especially during conferences of art teachers to resolve art problems in schools.

Such conferences were held in 1970 and 1972 and recommendations were made to the Federal Government of Nigeria on how art education programmes can be effectively improved. Among others, the following recommendations were made:

1. that, adequate facilities and staff should be provided to facilitate the teaching of art at primary school levels;

2. that, art should be made compulsory in all schools at the primary and teacher training colleges;

3. That, the primary school teachers are taught techniques of improvisation to utilize basic teaching aids. Art teacher specialists are to be appointed by State and Federal Governments to supervise such art programmes as consultants in schools;

4. touring exhibition of artworks were also recommended to go around schools for comparative experience and aesthetic appreciation:

5. the subjects to be taught in art programmes in school are to include:

- i. drawing and painting;
- ii. pattern – making and design;
- iii. three-dimensional works such as wood carving and so on;
- iv. Light crafts – basketry, ma making and so on.

Irivwieri (2009) explained that art programmes in Nigeria originated in order to perpetuate such fundamental objectives of education as well as to inculcate into children basic skills such as “the skills for seeing, touching, hearing, feeling and the development of taste through their manipulation of colour and other art materials.” In addition to other creative media such as musical instruments and so on. Irivwieri (2009) went further to state that “if the recommendations of previous art education conferences were effected the situation of art education in school would have been improved”. Many

scholars have conducted various related studies concerning the nature of art education in primary and post-primary institutions.

Existing literature in educational psychology reveals that teachers and their teaching methods have a tremendous effect on the child's learning process. This challenging job, according to Eke (1992), has often met with failure due to what he describes as "inappropriate curriculum and lack of adequate tools" Many schools do not have the required number of teachers and there are no teaching aids to facilitate successful teaching and learning. Faced with such depressing problems, teachers often find themselves in a superficial relationship with their pupils. It is necessary for the art teacher to be acquainted with children so that the children will acquire creative art experience. This according to Eke (1992) is because the art teacher needs to know

the ways that a good programme would positively influence the overall development of the child. This is with the aim of achieving both immediate and long-term objectives. Eke (1992) supports the above expressed view that in any functional programme, the curriculum and objectives should centre on the needs and aspirations, or problems of the society in question. This is because; the school is established to cater for society as such the objectives of the school must be tailored towards meeting the need and aspirations of society.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The discussion summed it up that art education should be concerned primarily with the development of understanding, appreciation and abilities pertaining to art itself. In addition, it should take into account the personal and societal, social objectives of general education as far as these ends are capable of being realized

through the experience of art. The author further author that the nature of art education in secondary schools is to further the growth of individuals in an effective and rich environment. This is with the aim of encouraging them to create a society where such living is possible for all.

The expressed views and suggestions of the author is, art instruction should not be devoid of our heritage, past and present experiences which need to be embraced. Art should enhance the universal realm of value as well because “art should not be seen as a mere self-expression but also a discovery. Ideas and feelings could be merged with concrete materials through the means. Art instruction should not be focused only on developing skills for leisure activity alone but also on the general enrichment of experience. These experiences will enable the learner to develop aesthetic tastes that will affect his

or her daily living. The author emphasizes that; art should be a means of promoting artistic heritage in Nigeria. This can be achieved through inculcating artistic skills.

The various results showed that the teaching strategies employed were not only unrelated to the national aspiration but also ineffective. Iriwieri further mentioned that there is the need for constant review of the content and methodology of the existing art curriculum in schools so that art content will not only be directed to suit the challenging needs of Nigeria but will also suggest alternative methods and materials for the successful teaching of art education. However, despite these recommendations, the problems in schools persist.

Art education is not a process of making artists out of everybody. It is more of an exercise which trains the eyes to see in

greater detail, the ears to hear in even greater depth, the hands to cut and shape things exactly and in a confident manner and the mind to extend the dimensions of texture of the natural world or plan in innovative varieties for this art education course should become a compulsory subject in primary schools. Studies in the

area of art education have pointed out the flaws that art education is necessary not only for creative development but for preparing students for their place in society. Art education caters for the material well-being of students through their aesthetic experience, and contact with ideas, symbols and art forms.

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