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# **111 Years of Amalgamation in Nigeria (1914 – 2025), Music and Integration**

**Falusi, J. Olabode**

*Department of Music*

*Adeyemi Federal University of Education,*

*Ondo State, Nigeria*

## ***Abstract***

The importance of music as a unifying factor in Nigeria's Amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern protectorates for the past 111 years cannot be overemphasized. However, much of its impact has not been felt due to its past neglect as an agent of change, integration, solidarity, and transformation. Thus, the past 111 years of Nigeria's amalgamation have witnessed numerous ups and downs, as well as political upheavals, due to the challenges of integration. The paper identified these challenges, which include political power tussle (between the federating units), cultural differences, tribal sentiment, religious intolerance, and ideological differences, amongst others. In this regard, the paper recommends: the use of music as a medium of unity and conflict resolution, the use of satirical songs, music festivals, religious music (in churches, mosques, and traditional settings) for moral instructions, etc., as the way forward toward peaceful co-existence and further integration.

**Key words:** Amalgamation, music, and integration, etc.

## **Introduction**

Nigeria, a nation, came into existence through the coming together of various nationalities that make up the country known as Nigeria. The coming together of various ethnic groups through the merger of the Northern and Southern protectorates is generally recognized as an amalgamation. The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates occurred in January 1914, approximately 111 years ago, under the Governorship of Sir Frederick Lord Lugard. He was the first British Administrator (army officer) who pioneered the Nigerian project prior to the event of 1914. The entire federation operated under two protectorates, known as the Northern and Southern Protectorates, and the colony of Lagos. Each of these protectorates consists of different federating units (Nationalities).

Through research studies and available records, it has been affirmed that Nigeria comprises over 200 tribes (Vidal, 2002), with diverse languages, approximately 400 languages (Bamgbose, 1992), and distinct cultures. Before the formation of these federating units and the colony of Lagos by the colonial powers, which later led to amalgamation, these federating units had existed independently as empires or kingdoms. The remarkable picture of the socio-political situation in the pre-colonial era in Nigeria was expressed by Orizu (1980), thus:

The name “Nigeria” is indeed an English name. What really exists in that part of the Western Sudanese territory were a number of independent national states which were all politically and territorially separate and in many cases linguistically and culturally different. It will be an unforgivable mistake to give the impression that because Nigeria today is taken as one nation, that therefore, there was a common political background or heritage in all of the previous national states. (p.111)

The above summarizes the political situation of the Federating units in the independent states of Nigeria, which Sir Fredrick Lugard amalgamated and named Nigeria. The research and reality on the ground revealed that these independent states had little in common and were often very antagonistic to one another.

The nationalities that make up the nation of Nigeria existed in different forms, such as kingdoms or empires, including the Kanem-Bornu Empire, which has a historical record spanning approximately a thousand years, and the Sokoto Caliphate, which had a significant influence on the savannah Zone of Northern Nigeria. Others include the Kingdoms of Ife, Benin, the Oyo Empire, the Ondo Empire, and the city-states of the Niger Delta, among others. Some of these empires were under the control of kings (Obas, emirs, Ezes, etc.) before Nigeria gained independence in 1960, following more than half a century of British rule. Three years later, she adopted a republican constitution but remained a member of the British Commonwealth.

However, the relics of British rule are evident in every aspect of Nigerian life, even to this day. Her monetary and educational systems are patterned after those of the British and her official language, English, has been adopted for a very long time and has remained unchanged due to the fact that many nationalities that make up the country speak over 200 different languages. Nigeria, with a population of approximately 56 million according to the 1963 census, was considered a Federal republic and the most densely populated country in Africa. The area, which spans 356,700 square miles — approximately four times the size of the United Kingdom — is equally impressive and endowed with a wide range of natural resources, including groundnuts, cocoa, palm produce, rubber, petroleum, and tin.

Music, whether through formal or informal mediums or community practices, has been one of the unifying factors that serve as a cultural heritage to the Nigerian citizens and government of the nation. The importance of music as a unifying factor in the Nigerian project cannot be overemphasized. Music is often regarded as an agent of change, integration, solidarity, and transformation. However, in Nigerian history, the past 111 years of her amalgamation have witnessed numerous ups and downs, as well as political upheavals, due to the challenges of integration. In this regard, her musical practice and creativity have suffered numerous setbacks due to their neglect in the national scheme of things. It is against this backdrop that the article is considering “111 years of amalgamation in Nigeria (1914 – 2025) music and integration.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Under the conceptual framework, the following salient points are considered. These include amalgamation, music, and integration.

**Amalgamation:** The term “amalgamation” means the joining together of smaller units to form a larger unit. To amalgamate, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s

Dictionary of Current English, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (Hornby, 2010: 42), “means to put two or more things together so that they form one,” that is, they are merged. Before the commencement of the journey to amalgamation at the beginning of the Colonial era in the territories that make up today’s Nigeria, most of the communities and ethnic groups that constitute the nation of Nigeria were independent of one another. The British Colonial authority, in its wisdom, set out from the beginning to unify or amalgamate the different territories for administrative convenience (Okafor, 2013). The peak of this amalgamation was in 1914 when Sir Fredrick Lugard unified them into one, the Northern Protectorate, the Southern Protectorate, and the Colony of Lagos to form the nation, Nigeria. However, many people have ill feelings toward this amalgamation project as they believe it was done in error, as a proper referendum was not carried out before merging the federating units as one country.

However, it was necessary to remark here that the expansion of the protectorates and the declaration of protection over these areas were neither peaceful nor friendly. Afigbo (1981) remarks, in the case of Igbo, “it was virtually impossible to enumerate all the military expeditions and patrols which operate in Igbo land in the process of bringing the people under British rule. In corroboration, Crowther (1978) recounts how the Sultan and the Emirs of Sokoto Caliphate consistently mounted a daunting and bloody resistance to the imposition of British rule, but were all the same, defeated and subjugated. This action was similar in all the territories of Nigeria.

**Music:** Many scholars view the concept of music from different perspectives. Music making is a lifelong activity that is inseparable from man and his immediate environment. Blacking (1973) sees music as a humanly organized sound. It means that in our universe, music is everywhere, as sounds are constantly being produced. It is a realistic fact that music is the expression of human feelings. The Encyclopaedia views it as the art by which a composer, through a performer as an intermediary, communicates certain ideas, feelings, or states of mind to a listener. Music employs tone-ringing and, in combination with various rhythmic configurations, can be subjective or objective, appealing to the human intellect. Music is one of the principal aspects of human culture. To the Africans, as to many other peoples of the world, music remains a veritable instrument for fostering interpersonal relationships and promoting societal interests, especially as a unifying factor and a means of preserving cultural heritage. And no occasion, whether sad or joyful, is without its attendants’ musical expression (Okafor, 2005).

**Integration:** The term “integration” is closely related to amalgamation. It is the act or process of combining two or more things so that they work together. Generally, music is an integral aspect of culture, as culture is the people’s way of life. The music of a particular society conveys to the audience how well the cultural practices of that society are practical. The musical integral nature of a particular society cannot be overstated due to its profoundly positive influence on interpersonal relationships between the older and younger generations.

The musical integrative nature also serves as a unifying factor for people of different nationalities, acting as a potent instrument of universality that is practicable among diverse nationalities, tribes, and cultures. It also serves as an instrument of change in amalgamation, acculturation, resolution, etc., as it may affect warring factions. Its

application on most occasions, such as festivals, music concerts, recital programs, and religious worship, brings about peaceful coexistence among the various nationalities in the Nigerian amalgamation process.

## **111 Years of Amalgamation: Challenges of Integration**

The present status of the country after 1914 years of amalgamation of the southern and the northern protectorates showed that the nation (Nigeria) has advanced and experienced various developmental stages. Besides, many achievements have been recorded. The country of Nigeria has made significant strides in the fields of education, medicine, Agriculture, Engineering, technology, sciences, arts, culture, and oil exploration. Since the time of the amalgamation, Nigeria has experienced growth in various sections of the economy. Additionally, it has faced numerous challenges due to the diverse needs of the various nationalities that comprise Nigeria. Since its inception as a nation, Nigeria has spent 46 years under colonial rule and has also spent 44 years as an independent nation. However, there is still more ground to cover, as there is a need for further progress and accomplishments in all fields, because glaring challenges are staring us in the face. They include the following, among others: Political power tussle for supremacy between the Federating units, Cultural differences and tribal sentiments, Religious intolerance and Ideological differences, Position seeking, corruption, and selfishness among the leaders, etc.

### **I. Political Power Tussle for Supremacy among the Federating Units**

Right from the time of independence in 1960 and when the Nigeria as a nation became a republic in 1963 under the leadership of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first indigenous president and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa as the Prime minister, there have been series of political power tussles among the federating units that make up Nigeria as a nation. This development has led to political upheavals, resulting in changes of government on several occasions between the military and civilians. Among the military, both northerners and southerners in leadership positions are outmanoeuvring or eliminating one another in order to reach the top during the military era. Likewise, during the present dispensation of the civilian regime, the politicians in the north as well as those in the southern protectorates are contesting for supremacy among themselves to retain the highest leadership position by crooked means, either by rigging, bribery, falsification of results, etc in order to win the election at all costs. In this regard, many had turned the contest for an electioneering position into a do-or-die affair.

### **II. Cultural Differences and Tribal Sentiments**

Culture is described or recognized as the people's ways of life, while tribal sentiments have to do with having more consideration for people of one's tribe in political appointments and other opportunities. It also means the exhibition of favouritism among people of political or tribal inclinations. The cultural differences between Western countries and African countries are notable. Likewise, among the Africans, especially Nigerians, different cultural practices exist among the federating units, which include the Hausas, the Fulanis, the Igbos, the Itsekiris, the Ibibios, the Igbiras, and the Yorubas. In this regard, people of the same culture were grouped by the Nigerian government during past regimes into six geo-political zones covering the whole federation.

These zonal groupings include the western zone, the eastern zone, the south-south zone, the north-central (Middle Belt) zone, the northwestern zone, and the northeastern zone.

Under each zone, states that practice the same culture are grouped. For instance, states such as Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ogun, and parts of Kwara and Kogi states belong to the Western zone due to their similarities in cultural practices. Likewise, states like Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, and Imo are grouped under the Eastern zone. Consequently, states in the south-south zones include Delta, Edo, Rivers, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, and Bayelsa, all of which share similar cultural practices. There are also states like Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Benue, Abuja (FCT), Nasarawa and Plateau under the North central zone. While states like Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Gombe belong to the North-Eastern Zone. The North Western Zone consists of states that include Sokoto, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi and Kaduna. In this regard, it has been a herculean task for any chosen leader from any political zone to govern the entire nation successfully due to tribal sentiments and cultural differences. Hence, there are agitations for zonal relevance or secession from the entire federating unit.

### **iii. Religious Intolerance and Ideological Differences**

Nigeria's populace practices various religions, including Islam, Christianity, and traditional beliefs, but Christianity and Islam are the predominant faiths in different geo-political zones. From political inception and for easy administration in Nigeria, the administrative practices after election or selection of who governs the country as a nation always have the pair or combination of Christian and muslim ticket, that is, if the elected president is a Christian, his vice will be a Muslim and vice versa.

However, on rare occasions, there are cases where a contesting President or a contesting Governor prefers the pair of Muslim-Muslim or Christian - Christian ticket as it was allowed during the Abiola and Kingibe era in 1983 whose pair of the duo as muslim – muslim ticket in the presidential election of that year eventually won but was annulled by the sitting head of state (General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida). Due to religious intolerance and differences in ideology, either as a Muslim or a Christian, there have been selfish practices among the leaders in positions of authority. For instance, a Christian leader wants the majority of his political appointees or cabinet members to be Christians with muslim minorities, and vice versa, a muslim leader will usually desire that his political appointees or cabinet members be in the majority. This is a great challenge to integration.

### **IV. Position Seeking, Corruption, and Selfishness of the Leaders**

Election or appointment into political offices in Nigeria has been judged by many as a lucrative business. It is also affirmed that Nigerian political officeholders earn higher salaries and remuneration than their counterparts in the Western world and other African countries. Even a councillor or the Chairman of a Local government earns a higher salary and allowances than a University Professor in Nigeria. Likewise, a monthly take-home salary (including allowances) of a senator in Nigeria can comfortably cover the salaries of 20 lecturers. The lucrative nature of political appointments to offices fosters unprecedented corruption in high places, such that electioneering campaigns and the election period are often a do-or-die affair, as many resorts to diabolical means to secure power. During elections or voting periods, electorates are often bribed with money to influence their votes. The selfishness among the politicians is so obvious that the political party in power in any state, wanting to be the winner, takes all of the political offices, such as Local government, councillor election, political appointments, etc. These developments pose a great threat to integration.



## **Music as a Panacea to Challenges of Integration Beyond 2025**

After 111 years, what are the strengths and lapses, and what is the proposed solution to the problem of integration? In offering an answer that is the required solution, as per the people's voice, as expressed by concerned citizens and patriotic Nigerians. In their suggestions, emphasis is placed on the implementation of the 2014 conference, which was held during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, and on further holding another National conference to address various problems and issues, such as problems of integration. Many of their suggestions made the following clarifications;

- The ethnic nationalities must be allowed to voice their grievances
- The discussion and resolution at the conference should form part of the Nigerian constitution
- There must be fair representation by both the majority and the minority groups
- There should be room for self-determination by the various nationalities with great strength at the centre
- The political parties should be committed to the economic development of the nation.
- There must be removal of obstacles to Nation building, for instance, the problem of hostilities to nationhood, and the problem of unfairness on the part of those in leadership positions.
- Those saddled with leadership responsibilities are to demonstrate good leadership roles and be patriotic enough about the progress of the country.
- There should be proper enlightenment through music and jingles in the mass media, such as in the radio, Television, home theatre, filmography, and cinemas, etc.
- The national conference should be well organized with music as complement to address various problems affecting all the existing nationalities
- Education, especially through music, should be given priority in the scheme of things as regards the national project

However, further integration through music education's functionality and application will yield the desired results in national quests in the reinforcement of the amalgamation profits and dividends through the following mediums;

- There should be more sensitization through religious music as applicable in churches, mosques, traditional settings, and as moral instruction in schools
- There should be employment of social music for performance in various occasions of secular activities, e.g, title taking that is, king's coronation, sporting events as in athletics, football games, wrestling, occupation, i.e., songs for farming activities – ise agbe etc.

- Music festivals of arts and cultures, which are performed as a unifying factor during national festivals that bring together people of different tribes, cultures, races, etc.
- Music filmography, cinema, home videos/theatres, and folk songs, etc., will proffer the required solution to the challenge of integration
- The use of satirical songs in correcting leadership bad influences and societal social vices.
- The use of music as an empowerment machinery, etc.

## Conclusion

The paper has highlighted the challenges of Nigeria's 111 years of amalgamation, which include cultural differences, tribal sentiments, religious intolerance, and ideological differences. However, the paper suggested the way forward through the use of satirical songs, religious music, social music, music festivals, among others, in proffering the required solution to the problem of integration.

## Recommendations

The paper identified various challenges, including political power tussles (between the federating units), cultural differences, tribal sentiments, religious intolerance, and ideological differences, among others. It is against this backdrop that the paper recommends: the use of music as a medium of unity and conflict resolution, the use of satirical songs, music festivals, religious music (in churches, mosques, traditional settings, etc.) for moral instructions etc. as the way forward toward peaceful co-existence and further integration. This development will further enhance the peaceful coexistence of the various nationalities that constitute the nation of Nigeria and also reinforce Nigeria's amalgamation in the next century and beyond.

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