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QUALITY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examined quality education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. Over the years, there have been the quest to pursue national development and one of such means is through quality education. The paper therefore argued that national development is possible if only quality education is prompted as a means for sustainable development. The paper which adopted the analytical approach posits that quality education is a *sine-qua non* to achieving national development through effective government policies anchored on effective curriculum. The study further posited that the quality of education will be adequately sustained when the content of the curriculum is explored and therefore becomes a prerequisite for attaining national development. This focuses on the components of sustainable national development, quality education and equally shows the nexus between the quality of life of the people in Nigeria. Often time, there have been some dismal performance by our policy makers which rob off some of the qualities of education and make national development a mirage. The paper concluded that national development is possible when all the paraphernalia of teaching are put in place. The paper therefore came up with the following suggestions; that the existing curriculum should reflect the outcome of the learner's ability. Again, teachers should be adequately motivated to give the teaching profession adequate attention. Government intervention role must be in tune with modern standard of learning, among others.

Introduction

The desire for the attainment of national development is the drive of every existing nation of the world and so every sovereign state is challenged by different approaches to actualize this goal. For some nations, it

could be technology, sports, culture, and education, to mention a few. In all, education is the rallying point to attain national goal. This is because education has been considered as a means to improve the quality of life of the people in an existing society. It is the key that unlocks

the door to civilization. Therefore, a good environment anchored on proper and effective teaching will help promote quality education which will in turn make national development possible. In advanced countries like United States of America, Britain, Canada, among others where education serves as a means for pursuing sustainable national development, the effect of it reflects on the citizens of these countries. For instance, the standard of living is satisfactory, their health condition is good enough and social status is commendable. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria despite the fact that we provide education as a means to pursuing national development. According to Oguazor (2012), the education we offer in and outside the school system must provide answers and solutions to the dynamic societal needs and problems respectively. Corroborating the aforementioned, Adeyeye (2002) maintained that one of the outstanding human achievements of the past two hundred years is the realization of the importance of education for all.

So, education in its pursuit must primarily be targeted at the sustenance of national development, bearing in mind that the content of the curriculum should be adequately explored to the knowledge and interest of the learner. That is the student

could be helped to actualize some of the ultimate goals of education which include the provision of self-realization and self-reliance, providing solutions to existing problems, motivate the pursuit of knowledge in the learners in order to keep learning as he/she grows into whatever he/she choses to be, create a healthy mind in a healthy body, among others. When these fundamental goals of education are not achieved, sustainable national development may be in quagmire. Stakeholders of education are the learners and the learned who must bear these goals in their minds to promote a healthy and egalitarian society.

It is pertinent to acknowledge that, when the quality education is bestowed upon the citizen of a country, it becomes a prerequisite for national growth and development of that society and to achieve this, teachers must devise strategies, come up with innovations on how better and quality services can be inculcated into learners in order to sustain needs and development when the learners eventually graduate. Dike (2005) lamented that Nigeria has long neglected the important source of workforce preparation for development.

Conceptual Clarifications

National Development: National development connotes things that make realistic and meaningful impact in the life of the citizens of a country. It could be education that helps transform the life of a people. According to Fadeyiye in Ukadike and Iwegbu (2010), national development are those positive and meaningful changes in the areas of social economics, political, educational, and cultural aspects of life which usher in progress and enhance better quality of life for the overall benefits of a particular people, or the entire people of the state. The logical derivation here is that, poverty, for instance, can not be seen as a positive and meaningful index of change in the area mentioned in Fadeyiye's description. Education is an instrument used in transforming the learner through formal learning (social and formal interaction). Education teaches morals, tolerance, decency and other ethics that enhance human relations.

Education: Education implies the process of accepting and giving instructions at existing institutions of learning. It may assume a formal, non-formal or informal setting. It means the process of inculcating transformatory experience and facilitating learning through the acquisition of skills, values, knowledge, among others. Lindsey and Beach (2000) opined that education is

a process of transmission and renewal of the culture of a people from one generation to another. Education is the development in character and mental exposition of a man and his country. It is the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, and skills developed (Ireyefoju, 2017). Nwaham (2010) sees education as the only process through which an individual develops and becomes a productive citizen. So, education teaches skills acquisition, knowledge and creativity, among others that will enable the citizen to rationally use such acquired knowledge and skills to his use and the society in general.

Quality Education: Quality education is the education that is targeted at helping the society to achieve the ultimate goals of education such as the pursuit of knowledge in the learners so that they can keep on learning as they grow into whoever they choose to be. Quality education helps to galvanize the innate potentials in the individual to be creative and useful to the society. According to Okokoyo (2007), qualitative education is a veritable instrument of change that unlocks the doors to modernization, and the teacher undisputedly holds the key to this door. So, the teacher to whom much is expected must be seen to be doing his work efficiently and effectively in order to help

produce citizens whose output will sustain national development.

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development is the development that consistently helps to harness and promote the system through the use of its resources (material and human) in order to progressively sustain a happy and healthy living among the citizens. Sustainable development is the kind of development which continues for a long time with progressive improvement in quality and quantity. It is the growth of national development no matter how gradual so that it becomes more advanced, better, stronger and long lasting without reduction in quality and quantity (Ogwuazor, 2017). So, it is sustainable development when the resources of a given state are progressively and consistently turned into positive uses for the enhancement of the citizens and society in general. The components of sustainable developments are social progress, economic development, climate and environments.

Quality Education in Nigeria and Sustainable National Development

Over the years, the need to achieve sustainable national development by successive administrations have been their concern particularly through education since education has been widely seen by

many intellectual pundits as the key that unlocks the door to modernization. In developed countries of the world like United States of America, Britain, Canada and Germany, to mention a few, education has made tremendous and very overwhelming impact in the lives of the citizens of these aforementioned countries. Often times, the different studies embarked upon by researchers make justifiable realistic impacts in the lives and economy of these nations. This is because some of them are creative enough to practicalise what they have been exposed to through learning in various institutions. Even when employed by the government, their creativity is felt in their various departments. For those who would not work for the government in order to have some level of autonomy, help very fabulously in helping to galvanize the growth of the economy through their personal initiatives in their private industries and companies. The overall effect of such endeavour is to help promote and sustain national development of such country. This helps to promote happiness and good life in the form of human development. It is about people realizing their potentials, increasing their choices and enjoying the freedom to lead the lives they value (Obanya, 2014). The idea here is, the goal of education is not primarily to seek knowledge as the case

may be, but to transform the acquired knowledge into practical actualization of human goals. That is to create the possibility of personal invention and discovery, and produce capable men and women with innovative ideas on how to assist in their individual capacities and move or turn the world around.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Nigeria. The poor quality of education has reflected in our character and learning. Almost everyone wants to regurgitate what he or she learnt in the higher institutions without any sense of creativity. Consequently, we have now in our society graduates whose vested areas of interest are to organize examination centres for students to cheat in order to pass their examinations; Doctors who can not diagnose sick patients and offer the right prescriptions; Lawyers who can not effectively dispense justice; judges who must take bribe before they will conscientiously and dutifully pronounce judgment; graduates turning out to become kidnapers and "Okada" riders with the flimsy excuse that government could not provide jobs for them. The obvious and glaring truth is that their creativity over what they learnt in the higher institution have eluded them. What is important to us is that entrepreneurship is synonymous with innovation, which brings about a new

production function that enables an economy to achieve a higher equilibrium level. In other words, innovations help the entrepreneur to attain greater levels of productivity and that constitutes the essence of economic progress (Inegbenebor & Iredia, 1995).

Quality education in Nigeria is not aimed at gender equality. In our country, we have more of the men pursuing education with every enthusiasm and jettisoning the personal ambition of the women. Consequently, the women become either nannies or full-time house-wives littering the homes with children like rabbits without proper and adequate care. No doubt, sustainable national development will suffer. This is because human capital development is an antidote to national development. According to Humphreys and Crawford (2015), there is gender inequality in school enrolment with less female enrolments in the North, while the reverse is the case in the South West, South-South and South East. This has affected women participation in politics and governance and other echelons of human administration.

As observed by Nwosu and Ibe (2014), gender inequality in Nigeria will further widen if the motion by the Nigeria military to end admission of female cadets into combatant course of the Nigeria Defence

Academy is upheld. The gender issue is of considerable significance in development studies. This concern is enormous when it is remembered that about two thirds of illiterate people in the world are females (World Bank, 2003). In this regard, UNICEF (2012) notes that girl-child education is a more effective tool for a just inclusive and prosperous society because when females are educated and empowered, the benefits are immediately felt in the construction of citizenship and strengthening of traditions of solidarity and promotion of socially egalitarian relations and expansion of community values among genders.

Another factor that the supposed quality of education does not promote in Nigeria is character. Whether we like it or not a man's image is his character. More often than not you see a graduate who ordinarily should show good and exemplary character for others to emulate behave like somebody who never went to the university. Suffice to say that this same bizarre behaviour follows some of us outside the shores of this country. Character helps in sustaining national development. When another country that may have the desire to invest in Nigeria knows that some Nigerians have criminal tendencies or not straight forward in their dealings, she may cease to come and

invest. In Nigeria, education has been identified as the key that would unlock the potentials of our people as they strive for greater prosperity (National University Commission, 2004; Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009).

So, the Nigerian society must and should begin to imbibe the culture of looking beyond mere expression of what is learnt in the higher institutions. The ability to practicalise what is learnt with high initiatives and innovations will not only enhance the status of the individual but also sustain national development. UNESCO (2013) advocates that education is not only a means of obtaining access to information and freedom of expression and association, but also for gaining the opportunity to live a long and fruitful life.

For many years in Nigeria, successive governments have taken it as a challenge to use quality education to achieve national goals and recognition in a highly competitive global world. This is obviously so because education has been widely considered as a fundamental and indispensable means of unlocking the human mind and giving graduate protection to his personality. As good as this endeavour may seem, millions of people year in year out are obviously added to the list of highly illiterate people. Consequently, our unfinished business as a

sovereign state is to consistently and earnestly be in pursuit of literacy. It is pertinent to say that in Nigeria the quality of education leaves much to be desired.

Adequate attention often time is not devoted to the education sector which makes it laughable and mockery in the eyes of many and the international community in general. At any rate, 'education for all' should not just be a slogan because Nigeria did not achieve the education component of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of United Nations. Among other priorities envisaged is the attainment of universal enrolment in primary education and a strong tertiary education system to support development efforts (Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). Even then, since the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 (UNESCO 2000), there has been a global resurgence in the recognition of the indispensable role education plays in economic and social development. Nigeria is no exception to this global awareness

and the government has embraced basic education for all as an integral part of its development strategy (National Planning Commission, 2004).

Even with this, the quality of education in Nigeria is still abysmally poor and disgusting. The impact is not in anyway being felt in our national endeavour. Education is described as qualitative when its set goals are congruent with its context, and the inputs and processes meet minimum standard that is internationally recognized (Odili, 2019). Perhaps, sustainable development indicators will help to give a clearer picture regarding the poor quality of education in Nigeria.

The United Nations Economic and Society Affair Department has worked consistently on the development of indicators of sustainable development and produced 15 core areas that impact on human happiness.

Below is the table.

Table 1: Sustainable Development Indicators Themes

S/N	THEMES	FOCUS AREAS
1	Poverty	Income poverty income inequality sanitation drinking water access to energy living conditions
2	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crime - Corruption
3	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mortality and natality - Healthcare delivery - Nutritional status
4	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational quality - Literacy
5	Demography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population - Tourism
6	Natural hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerability to natural hazards - Disaster preparedness and response
7	Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate change - Ozone layer depletion - Air quality
8	Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land uses and status - Desertification - Agriculture, forests and wildlife
9	Oceans, seas and coasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coastal zones - Fisheries - Marine environment
10	Fresh water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water quantity and water quality
11	Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecosystem species
12	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable public finance - Employment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICT - Research and development
13	Global economic partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade - External financing
14	Consumption and production patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material consumption - Energy use - Waste generation and management
15	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modal split of passenger transportation.

Source: UN Economic and Social Affairs. (2007)

Sustainable development as it were should reflect all these aforementioned indicators, such as overcoming poverty, governance, health, among others. Unfortunately, in Nigeria the quality of education more often than not leaves the average Nigerian graduate with the striking problem of poverty that reflects poor income, poor drinking water, poor living conditions, and so on. Again, another indicator that serves as the outcome of poor quality education from the table shown is governance. Some of these graduates end up in crime and corrupt practices as means of survival. We have "419ners", "yahoo boys", tricksters in our political system. Talking about education as another indicator is the fact that the services of education are even more in quantity than quality which makes mockery of the entire system. Thus, our society is full of graduates that are unemployable and unenterprising. The

point to note is that these aforementioned sustainable development indicators in real situation as postulated by the UN economic and social affairs are germane and fundamental to the development of the average citizens who would have graduated. Such indicators should impart happiness in their lives. Here in Nigeria looking at the land indicator, we have Nigerian graduates of agriculture who will not apply his knowledge to produce goods and services that revolve around agriculture. Graduates now turned kidnappers, thugs and thieves. Looking at the health indicator indices, life span has become so short because of the inability of the average Nigerian medical doctor to diagnose and prescribe drugs effectively. The healthcare system in Nigeria have poorly untrained nurses with bizarre behaviours that remind one of a marketer. The list is endless. With this poor

outcome of services arising from poor quality education, society is in serious problem of inability to actualizing sustainable development.

Having examined some of the indicators of sustainable development indicators, it is now imperative to come up with the means of revitalizing the quality of education in Nigeria.

Means of Revitalizing Education Quality for Sustainable National Development

To be able to have educational quality for sustainable national development the following means should and must be put in place.

Teachers' approach to the curriculum: Teachers' approach to the subject should be such that we leave the learner with some level of independence and creativity that will enable him think of something out of what he has been taught. In other words, the effort of the teacher should be targeted at making the learner to assume a self-reliance status at the end of the programme or study.

Improvement in the quality of teachers and infrastructural facilities of the school: In order to attain some semblance of quality education for sustainable development, teachers must be up to date

with contemporary ideas, thinking and inculcate them into learners during learning process. The environment must be dignifying and conducive. Some of the private institutions have infrastructures that are better than those of public institutions and the teaching staff are of doubtful quality in many of them, and that is a lesson the government has refused to learn (Utomi, 2002; and Omeifun 2004).

Gender equality in schools should be encouraged: Enrolment and access to education in the lower grades in Nigeria has become fairly gender equitable as sensitization towards girl education has intensified in recent years (Ifedili & Ochuba, 2009). The point to note here is that, women should be encouraged to go to school like their male counterparts. By so doing, the pace for sustainable national development is on course.

Conclusion

This paper looked at the quality education in Nigeria and sustainable national development. Some of the problems and outcomes have been mentioned. Findings suggest very strongly the need for better character of the learner and improved quality of teachers with the right infrastructural facilities in a better and sustainable environment. There is no one way or simple approach to pursuing this

means of learning that enhances the sustainability of national development. Hence the need for collective effort (both teachers and learners) to inculcate and imbibe the spirit of learning that will make sustainable national development that promote change. Therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria needs to be more involved in better and effective policy to pursue this national goal through quality education. The point here is that, without quality education, adequate and sustainable national development in Nigeria will be a mirage and the citizens who are the fulcrum of this exercise will continue to wallow in abject poverty, and national development will suffer.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is only important to make some valuable recommendations to improve quality education in Nigeria.

The study among others makes the following suggestions:

1. Better and quality materials for learning should be adequately provided. For instance, a highly and richly equipped library and laboratories are effective bulwark for the attainment of quality education for sustainable national development.

2. A decent learning environment with all the paraphernalia of modern teaching environment should be provided.
3. Courses that will promote creativity on the part of the learner should be encouraged. This will enhance sustainable national development as such graduands are capable of practicalising what they have been taught in the higher institutions.
4. Paper qualifications should not be the priority. Creative learning should be the focus, so that we will not have doctors that can not treat patients and lawyers that can not dispense justice.
5. Curriculum development and innovations should be the hallmark with students having the right initiative to acquire skills that will create sustainability in national development.

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