

Women Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Implications for Curriculum Planning

By

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Abstract

Education continues to be the bedrock for sustainable development of all nations and of Nigeria in particular. Indigenous forms of education existed in Nigeria before the advent of Western education whereby boys took after their father's trade while girls were trained to become successful housewives. This singular thinking has placed women on the disadvantaged position for many years, creating a gap between women and men educationally. This paper focuses on the following discussions: concept of women education, sustainable development, necessity of women education for sustainable development in Nigeria, challenges of women education and implications for curriculum planners. The paper recommended among others that education should be made accessible to women at all levels.

Keywords: Women Education, Sustainable Development, Nigeria, Curriculum Planning.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that should be availed every citizen irrespective of age, sex or family background. Even though it has been proved through researches and studies that education is the key to industrialization, modernization and a prerequisite for socio-economic and political development, it had not been given the required attention. That is why despite the provision in the Nigerian constitution and the National Policy on Education (2013), the girl child continues to lag behind her male counterpart in terms of acquiring standard education due to cultural practices of Nigerian society.

Sustainable development is a broad concept that needs the contributions of many factors to be reliable. In Nigeria like most countries in Africa, there is a tile line of under-development. Under-development on the basis of comparism. Pertinent among the problems is the neglect of education. It is universally believed that

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education is essential for driving the changes of the society and achieving the sustainable development needs of the state (Khadija, 2016).

A popular adage says "if you educate a woman, you educate a nation". This cannot be faulted taking into cognizance the contributions of women in various spheres of national development viz-a-vis in the fields of education, economics, politics and agriculture just to mention a few. The process is not as easy as it sounds. There are many hindrances to women education and sustainable development. In this regard, all hands must be on deck in ensuring that every facet of discrimination and disturbance is drastically reduced. The neglect of women in the walls and structure of education is noted to be largely responsible for the immense challenge of sustainable development in the country. However, going by the natural potentials of women could contribute in no small measure to the social, economic, political and so on ensuring lasting development. It is on this premise that the paper emphasizes the necessity of women education as a catalyst for ensuring stable development given their natural, moral potentials and prudent management of resources as pedestal for sure development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

(i) Women Education:

Women constitute a high percentage of Nigeria population and a girl child today is tomorrow's mother/woman (Rebeca, 2012). Therefore, her education amounts to the education of the entire Nigerian society. This makes her education very expedient. It equally explains why the well known African proverb asserts that "if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a (nation)" aptly captures the necessity of educating the girl-child. Educating the girl-child will enable her to be self reliant, adequately socialized and fully empowered to contribute meaningfully to her community as well as have the coping skills to solve problems to an appreciable extent. In essence, she would be able to be strong and resourceful in such a way that she is able to contribute to the sustenance and development of the society.

In view of the above, Orgi, (2011) highlighted the following as some of the benefits of women education in a nation: reduces inequality; increases productivity and earnings; drives economic competitiveness; poverty reducing

effects; improves health and nutrition; contributes to democratization; women's fertility rate; lowers infants and child mortality rates; lowers mortality rates; protect against HIV/AIDS infection; increases women force and creates intergenerational educational benefits.

There is an indication from the above that the girl child would be able to her full potentials to think, question, and judge independently, develop sense, learn to respect her fellow human beings and be a good citizen. other hand, the girl child can bring socio-economic changes in the society educated (Jennifer 2017).

(ii) Sustainable Development:

There are many divergent views by different authors and scholars based on different perspectives and experiences. Nwadiani (2013), stated that the current national development addresses issues such as economic growth, structural technological advancement and social-political change. According to the present level of poverty, low standard of living, high inflation, high unemployment of qualified youths, corruption and injustice among others indices of positive national development.

The term development according to Nwadiani, (2013), has many interpretations. The technocrats focus on policies, instrument and projects; the politicians focus on freedom from colonial rule, democratization; the economist interpret economic growth, rapid and sustained rise in real output per head, resultant shift in the technological, economic and demographic character particularly in developing nations; the sociologist sees it as a process of differentiation that characterizes modern societies, while political scientists on problems of nation building as modernization occurs. The author then suggested that the term national development should include the following: economic growth and changes in economic structures; a decrease in poverty; malnutrition; improvement of the employment situation; decline in inequality; increase in literacy; improvement in health care; adequate services; adequate municipal and rural infrastructures; safety and security; positive attitudes and mentality; consolidation of the state and national independence; national independence and political democratization; increased social dis-

zero tolerance to corruption; and rationality in policy, applications of technological knowledge in structural and social relations and in thinking.

Sustainable development is the kind of development which can continue for a long time with progressive improvement in quality and quantity. It is also 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. In other words, sustainable development means to make the world a better place for everyone without destroying possibilities for the next generation to live happy and quality lives (Ogwauzor, 2017).

Mohammed (2012), asserted that "sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs". Furthermore, it is the process of changing in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment and the orientation of the technological development as well as the institutional changes are desired to meet both present and future development needs. In view of the above therefore, no sustainable development is possible if women remain discriminated against and disenfranchised (Grace, Solomon, Olugetenga, Vehat, Birta, and Maria, 2010). This simply means that sustainable development in a nation is all encompassing which is to say that every gender is involved and especially women and the girl-child who form a large population in the nation.

(iii) Necessity of Women Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

The involvement and participation of both men and women at the strata of development are required for sustainable development to be achieved. In the words of Ada (2013) it is inappropriate to try and address problems, to identify the appropriate strategies, or to implement the solutions if only half of the people concerned are involved in the process. Gender equality is therefore, an essential building block in sustainable development. Partnership and equality between men and women are the basis of strong families and viable societies. However, women have been consistently excluded from decision making processes across history and societies. If not the issue of 35% women affirmation in governance which brought women on the front burner, women would have being in struggle for

recognition. It may not be out of place to emphasize that this gender imbalance against women that is largely responsible for marginalization under-development in all areas of human endeavours.

In the field of education, educating the woman translates into educating and the society at large. The roles of women in our institutions of learning as principal officers (heads) or teachers cannot be over emphasized. Prof. Alele Williams was a one-time vice chancellor of the famous University of Lagos. Many other women such as Prof. (Mrs) O.C. Okobiah, (Vice Chancellor, Delta University Oghara-Delta State), Prof. (Mrs) Egochukwu, (President Counselling Association of Nigeria), Prof. (Mrs) H. Denga, Prof. Anigbogu, Prof. (Mrs) Nnodum and Prof. (Mrs) Fajomoyomi) among others making great impact in their various institutions. Others are occupying the offices of Rectors in polytechnics, Provosts in Colleges of Education, Rectors of Librarians, Bursars, Principals in secondary schools, Headmistresses in schools, Guidance Counselors and classroom teachers among others. Education contributes to the total development of an individual in that it enables an individual to live a better life. Nations of the world acknowledge the fact that if you educate the woman you educate the nation. (Ukiah, 2009)

(iv) Challenges of Women Education:

Over thirty three million children in sub-Saharan Africa did not have access to education, over half of which were girls, says the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report. Over five million out of the 113 million girls were in Nigeria, which makes it the country with the highest number of out-of-school girls in the whole Africa (Muhammad, 2016). It is believed that only about 20% of women in the North West and North East Nigeria are literate and have attended school (Abulafia, 2010). Some of the factors militating women education involves among others the following:

(a) Security Challenges:

Security challenges in public schools including vandalisation of school infrastructure by miscreants is one of the issues posing great challenge to girls' attendance, retention and completion in school. The inadequacy

female teachers especially in girl's school, in rural areas and low qualification and capacity on the part of the female teachers in another challenge bedeviling girls' education. (Muhammed 2016)

(b) **Early Marriage**

Ijeoma (2015), frowns against this practice of given out young girls in marriage before the age of eighteen years; sometimes even to older men who are old enough to be their grandfathers. According to him this is very common in the northern part of Nigeria. These girls who get married at this early age cannot as mothers or wives make meaningful contributions to the society, because they lack the knowledge, skills, experience and maturity with which to appraise what is going on in their society.

(c) **Socio-Economic Factor**

Polygamy is a serious hindrance to women education. Unfortunately, whether out of greed for many women, or out of competition with other men, many men marry more wives than they can economically manage. In this situation with many children, only some of the boys at best are sent to school; while the girls are made to hawk in the streets to earn income, part of which may be used to train the boys who are in schools. Due to circumstances outside their control, such girls who go about hawking, may be raped or eventually married at tender age (Okeoghene 2017).

(d) **Illiteracy**

The illiterate parents usually have no strong determination to send their children to school due to poverty except in very rare cases. Rather than think of what education can do for them in future, the parents especially the mothers prepare their daughters for married life (Muhammed, 2016).

(e) **Religious Factor**

Purdah encourages shielding of women from receiving secular or western education in Islamic religion. Unfortunately, with the advent of Boko Haram sect, and of recent, the marauding Fulani herdsmen, the situation has moved from the angle of women education to that of acute illiteracy and misconception of what education is. The result is now massive

destruction of lives and properties of innocent and law abiding this country (Shahidul 2012).

(v) **Implications for Curriculum Planners**

The girl-child education has become a contemporary issue to nations of The curriculum planners have a role to play in ensuring its enhance sustainable development to be achieved. In view of the above, curriculum planners should include in the curriculum the following: content and experiences, individual/group counseling, awareness service, sensitization and so on as stated below.

(a) **Content & Learning Experiences**

The curriculum planners should include in its content, the acquisition in the curriculum at all levels, the absence of which economic advancement difficult. The learning materials should be relevant to the girl child to encourage participation and performance is need to make the content taught as functional as possible especially the girl child to enable her use the knowledge acquired and contribute to the development of the wider society and consequently the nation of a necessity that the curriculum should be reviewed from time to time to conform with digitalization of the present century.

(b) **Individual/Group Counseling**

This is either on one-on-one basis or as a group by the teacher. The purpose is to encourage them that all hope is not lost and determination they can still make it. It is also to help them discover their strengths, weaknesses and interests based on their abilities and enable the girl-child to pursue them.

(c) **Awareness Service**

Awareness service should be created especially in a community where the majority of the girls and women are victims of circumstances, to create an opportunity to sensitize them on the benefits they will reap in future.

should take the decision and determine to be educated. In other words, delay is not denial.

(d) Parents' Sensitization

Curriculum Planners should create opportunity to identify those men who engage young girls in early marriages and those that have the tendency to be aware of dangers and consequences of their actions. Parents should be sensitized on the wrong cultural belief that educated girls are the properties of another family and be made to know that educating the boys is as good as educating the girls. Again, early marriage laws should be enacted or enforced to dissuade young girls from it and shift their attention to education.

Conclusion

Without good education, the girl-child/women have little or nothing to offer in their contribution to sustainable development. It is said that women do not have equal access as men to education, health, employment opportunities and social mobility. The importance of women education to the development and improvement of the nation is a contemporary issue that is pursued not only in Nigeria but the world over. This is because girls and women are usually discriminated against in all sphere of life. Women from creation are pillars of development, prudent managers of the available resources, hence the need for equal opportunity to show case their potentials for sustainable development. The paper identified concepts of women education, sustainable development, necessity of women education for sustainable development in Nigeria, challenges of women education and implications for teachers or planners.

Recommendations

Sequel to the above discussion, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Relevant curriculum learning materials should be used in schools to increase girl-child interest and achievement in school.
- (ii) Education should be made accessible to the girl-child at all levels and awareness programs should be floated and fostered to redeem the image of the girl-child.

- (iii) Government should train more female teachers to help in teaching child.
- (iv) Scholarship should be made available to the girl-child so as to delay early marriage and dropout rate due to poverty.
- (v) Promote and strengthen parent awareness on the role of improving the girl-child
- (vi) Government should invest more money in making the school environment favourable and conducive for girls to learn.
- (vii) Curriculum should be as functional as possible to aid the acquisition of basic skills needed for self reliance and development of the society

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Abstract

The study in Secondary Education examined two hypotheses and all the components comprising the study from departmental unit, departmental Cronbach Alpha and standard testing the hypothesis from 2.50 or management remuneration funds could be organized fund musical trophy philanthropist.

Keywords: F

Introduction

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