OVERCOMING DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA THROUGH A PROPERLY ADMINISTERED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Though the developmental challenges facing Nigeria as a Nation are enormous, a proper management of her educational system can help ameliorate the situation. This paper has highlighted the challenges of the educational process, benefits of education to the citizenry and influence on growth of the society. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made to government and stakeholders. It was noted that if proper attention is given to education, the expectant economic and social growth will be achieved.

Key words: *Education, Challenges, Overcoming, Africa, Properly, Administered, System.*

Education has been noted in man's life as the most vital instrument for enhancing civilization, education has also been a potent means of socialization and development in all ramifications, which has proven as the only sustainable means of responding to the ever growing and changing aspiration of the populace in the society to which they belong. It is quite optimistic that the level of the educational standard in a nation determines the level of the nation's growth and developmental status which is viewed as the perspective of how efficient and effective the resources of the society is been used to foster her educational endeavour, though, the needs of the society might seem to embrace the doctrine of being intractable and dynamic in nature but a

progressive and successful society must ensure that the educational system responds to her changing needs. (Ogbodo, 2011).

When the challenges of a society is discussed, one discovers the lapses in her educational achievement, it is logical that education must first be patterned to the benefit of the individuals that are nurtured and molded as to make them become academically and socially positioned. Based on this social and academic position, the educated elite will explore their environment for their economic gains which will automatically result to the economic and social development of their society.

Nigeria has always seen education as an instrument for empowering people and equally the best legacy any nation can bequeath to its citizenry. Adeyemi (2008), writing on the role of education in national development agreed that for development to take effect, a country must have a very considerable proportion of trained, educated citizens not only to act as doctors, engineers, teachers, agriculturists, scientists and the like, but must create a new class sufficiently large and hence, sufficiently strong to establish its own value of justice, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency. Hence, the pursuit of educational achievement has been one of the paramount focuses of most countries of the world – Nigeria inclusive. Adeyemi (2012) summing up the national objectives of Nigerian education, as stated in the National Policy on Education (2013) described education as the integration of individuals into sound and effective citizens. The broad "objectives of Nigerian Education" therefore, include:

- *The inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and society;*
- *The training of the mind in building valuable concepts, general actions and understanding of the world around them;*
- *The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in his society;*
- *The acquisition of a relevant and balanced knowledge of facts about local and world technology (NPE, 2013).*

As part of the programme and educational structure in achieving the set objectives of education in Nigeria, distance education has also been used to provide learning opportunities for students. Distance education provides Nigerian education system multi-made approach (a combination of face-to-face, print, audio/video broadcasts, teleconferencing etc.) to teach students. Distance education can therefore be conceptualized as any form of organized educational experience in which teaching and learning c*an*take place, with the teachers at a distance from the learners most of the time. It is a form of education that enables a limited number of teachers to reach a very large number of learners which paves ways for cost reduction and economics of scale (Adeyemi, 2008).

The need for the educated elites to keep up the task of exploring all avenues for making our educational system sound and progressive is more encouraged as to enhance the beneficiaries to remain relevant to the nation's growth and development. In the course of this paper effort is made to deliberate on issues that relates to, the concept of education, influence of education on development, challenges of educational achievement, education for good governance and benefits of education to Africa, and the recommendations for ways forward were also proffered.

The Concept of Education

Ellah (2013), saw the etymology of the word education from the perspective of different renowned scholars that some educators believe that the word education is derived from the Latin word Educere meaning to lead out; or bring out. Others argued that the word education is derived from another Latin word Educare meaning to put in; to form or to train the child. It is obvious that the word education is derived from a Latin word Educare or Educere but education consist of giving of information.

Locke in Ellah (2013), hew that the child's mind is regarded as a kind of blank slate on which the teacher has to write all that is good and useful to the society but somehow this view is not totally correct as every child inherits some traits from parents, which need to be developed by the teacher.

Plato in Ellah (2013) *a*ffirmed that education is the training given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children, when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in non-rational Soul. The particular training in respect of pleasure and pain which leads to hate and love is called "EDUCATION". Plato sees Education as a kind of training given to children by an adult. He also opined that education has a moral emphasis since it talks about "GOOD" and "BAD", "pleasure" and "pain".

Administration of Educational Programmes in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria Coordinates educational planning, policy and financing through the National Council on Education (NCE) which comprises all Commissioners and Minister of education in Nigeria and the joint Consultative Committee of Education (JCCE). At the primary level, Local Governments share responsibilities with the Federal Government. Atthe secondary level, the responsibilities are being borne by the state government and the Federal Government has the absolute responsibilities over the federally owned universities or the tertiary institutions in the country.

The Federal Minister of education plays a vital role in the maintenance of educational standards in the whole nation through operating national organizations which are devoted to the development of specialized aspects of education. Such organizations include the Federal Inspectorate Service and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) which among other functions, is actively involved in curricular review and renewal. Other educational services for

improvement of standards include the Service Equipment Centre and the School Broadcasting Unit. The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), was setup by Decree 31 of August, 1972.

Challenges of Educational Administration in Nigeria

According to Olawolu (2011), challenges of educational administration were outlined as follows;

The problem of inadequate access to schooling opportunities: - The Nigerian children are not given the due opportunity to enroll in school at the exact time or not going to school at all in their life time rendering them with the choice of being an illiterate among the other citizens in the country. This situation is most common in the Eastern part of the country (especially the Igbo Speaking areas of the country). Some of these people also fall within the categories of school dropouts with no access of continuing their educational pursuit again, when this issue of dropout is among the girl-child, it is always as a result of early marriage to cultural values and beliefs of the people opposing female education rather giving them out for marriage which has left more boys than girls in the academic pursuit in Nigeria today.

The problem of indiscipline to the school authorities: - This is one seeming intractable problem which manifests in such areas as examination malpractices and secret cult menace. Crises in the universities have led to brain-drain syndrome, academics drift away from the universities in search of greener pastures in other sectors of the Nigerian economy or outside the country.

The problem of inadequate funding of education: - The managers of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria are in consensus that these institutions are grossly underfunded. Evidence exists on the degree of dilapidation that characterize the primary, secondary and tertiary institution's building and other school's equipment in the school environments, the non-payment of teachers' salaries and allowances as a result of which strikes without response from constituted authorities are always the order of the day. The lack of necessary teaching and learning materials at all levels of the educational system. Poor working conditions of all teachers in the country, among other indices. It has also been argued that financial mismanagement and lack of accountability by officials led to diverting substantial resources from the educational institutions to other sectors.

The problem of lack of proper supervision in the schools; - we noticed the improper checkmating of the teachers in the educational system today as the people assigned to supervise the teachers will in most instances prefer to collect bribe rather

than attending to their responsibilities even some of them ignoring the task of supervising the teachers but they have been paid to do the job.

The problem of lack of well trained teachers: - the teachers that are even employed always struggle in the school system which show that many of the teachers lack proper training as such could not fit in to the educational system as their performances are questionable, even this improper supervision can lead to low quality of the teacher which will in other words hinder their productivities in the educational sector.

Poor managerial abilities among heads of institutions: - Many of the heads of institutions lack managerial abilities. This inability to manage staff results in frequent strikes by staff and riot by students. Teaching is affected and leads to poor preparation of the students. Society bears the brunt as half baked or poorly educated graduates wreck havoc on the economy by propounding poorly conceived policies.

The organisation of distance education in Nigeria: - this type of the educational system is bedeviled by some problems like lack of single line of command in the system as authority comes from various angle, dilution of efforts by assigning too many tasks to extension workers, excessive large areas of operation without providing any logistics support, like vehicle, lack of regular training for updating knowledge of workers and others.

The problem of improper coordination of nomadic and migrant fishermen education

Nomadic education was conceived to cater for Nomads. Some schools were established in the Northern part of the country. But this has not fully addressed the problem because the Fulani herdsmen that move with the cattles still move Southward in search of grazing pasture. There are no nomadic schools in the South. The same problem is faced by migrant fishermen. Some schools were established for them in the Riverine areas of the South-South but migrant fishermen in the Riverine areas of the South West and even the Rivers Niger and Benue Basins were neglected.

The problem of poor coordination of education for the physically challenged persons

In Nigeria we only have one higher institution that is a special school for the physically challenged which is college of education (special) Oyo. Physically challenged persons from other parts of the country have to travel to Oyo if they want higher education. The logistic problems this poses are enormous.

The Prospects of Educational Administration in Nigeria

With regards to the problem of access to education, specialized programmes have been designed for the disadvantaged groups such as the nomads and migrant, fishermen and for the disabled, especially blind or visually impaired ones. These groups for environmental and economic reasons cannot benefit from the formal educational system offered in the regular schooling situation. So it becomes necessary to extend access to them, combined efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Federal Ministry of Education and State Agencies for Mass Education have been directed at providing Non-Formal Education Curriculum and the associated reading materials development for the out-of-school learners. The Universal Basic Education Programme helped to solve the problem of access to formal education for many school age children. There is awareness as regards gender sensitivity and gender equity which enable parents to see the need for educating their children whether male or female hence they would make up the labour force to enhance national development.

Concerning indiscipline, the youths through enlightenment campaigns and seminars realize the ills of examination malpractices and secret cult activities. The trend of brain-drain should be checked through improved working conditions for academics and appeals to their patriotic spirit so as to avoid disaster for the country and the continent. The issues of proper funding, fund management and accountability are major keys to educational development in the continent. All these must be adequately addressed if quality, growth and development must be guaranteed.

An indigenous philosophical based relevant to society need must be inculcated which include the provision of standard library, equipment, infrastructure and textbook in every school, availability of manpower in every school and capacity building, quality inspection and supervision, availability of the right statistics or data base of every school for educational growth and development but not for political reasons as most aspirant do, good planners and administrators and quality instructional delivery among others.

Government and stakeholders in control of the educational system in Nigeria and other parts of Africa should endeavour to;

- *Ensure that educational opportunities are being provided for the citizens of their country in order to educate the little ones before they advance to old age and get influenced by other societal vices.*
- *Ensure that the school authority takes blame of their misconducts in the school or educational sector.*
- *Ensure that the educational sector gets enough financial votes in the budget allocation and that such fund is used judiciously.*
- *In our open or distance educational system it should b e handled as to relate to the standard of even the regular school system.*

Influence of Education on Societal Growth and Development

There have been worries in various sectors of our economy today regarding the quality of our educational products among the present generation and the leaders of our nation today, just as an eminent educationist in India rightly quoted that; "knowledge is vilely important; but it is to transform our society from a state of relative stagnation to one of dynamism and progress, there must be a general willingness and determination to make use of it in the service of the community" (Ahmed 2002; 2). This statement find support from individuals who are concerned about the direction Nigerian education is moving towards building a strong and reliant nation. Education needs to be a positive force in building peaceful communities in a rapidly changing world. Thus, the educational programmes and structures are being looked upon to take the responsibilities of nurturing religious pluralism, morality, mutual co-existence, sectionalism and united focus on development of the society.

Based on the philosophical view of Dewey (2009), considered two fundamental elements of "schools and civic society", as being the major topics needing attention and reconstruction in order to encourage experiential intelligence and plurality. Education therefore, is not merely narrow or limited to classroom experiences but, a holistic experiential learning aimed at social transformation. In support of this view, Brameld (2014) pointed out that Education is the one power left in the world that is greater than the forces of nature that man has now enslaved. Only the power of education is capable of controlling the other powers that man has gained and will use either for his annihilation or for his development in the society to which he belongs.

As noted in the above discussion, one will discover that education has a great part to play in the challenges of our continent today; this is as a result of the desire for an economic growth among our society and the continent in general. Though education is an invisible transformer of our society, it has been acting as a powerful instrument for the growth and development of our nation as it empowers people, sensitizes people on social issues, improves the livelihood of citizenry and provides push for the development of the society. It has been generally accepted that education is a cornerstone of economic and social development; primary education is its foundation. A completed educational career helps in the alleviation of poverty and advances economic and social development. A diverse body of literature demonstrates that the adults in developing nations who have higher levels of educational achievement have more employment, higher individual earning, greater productivities, lower fertility, better health and nutritional status, and more modern attitudes than adults who have lower educational achievement which are the symptom of growth and development (Obanya, 2009).

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the concept of education, the administration of education, the benefits of education, the challenges of education, the influence of education to societal growth and development, some recommendations on the way forward were also made and conclusion of the study were drawn.

It is quite obvious that knowledge can play a drastic role in the growth and development of any society as it helps to alleviate the society from the state of stagnation to the level of dynamism and progress. Educational development can thus be enhanced by improving the standard of education and reducing the rate of illiteracy and level of inequality among the citizenry in the society. By so doing, the society will progress depending on the capability of the individuals and accumulated social assets. The inter relationship among equitable policies, appropriate process, strong political will to implement, achievements of desired results and their impacts on the society are extremely important for the much desired education for social growth and development of the society.

Recommendations

The paper put up the following recommendation as a way forward in our educational sector in Nigeria and Africa in general:

1. That government at all levels of every nation should change her mentality or attitude towards the funding of her educational activities and there should be more massive injection of fund to the educational sector as it prepares the leaders of our future and help to produce a sound leaders tomorrow.
2. That the display of ignorance by the government as regards the importance of education to the national growth and development should be checkmated and changes adapted and enlightenment campaigns being conducted to the general populace at all levels of the society as to give them knowledge about the importance and benefits of education to the growth and development of the society and nation in general.
3. Efforts should be made to bring education to the door step of those that are financially handicapped to enable them use their limited resources and acquire education affordable by them. This can be achieved through the introduction of distance and extension education programmes to the rural area.
4. Educational endeavour should be equitably distributed irrespective of sex, age, religion, tribe, ethnicity culture, belief and geographical locations. In this vain, it should be made compulsory as this elevates our standard of living and economical growth and development in the nation.
5. Regular inspection should be put in place to monitor stated objectives and its achievement amongst the school authorities and the host communities. This can be through a committee which checks the usage and the availabilities of infrastructures.

6. Children should be made to enroll in school as free education instances and any child found not schooling, the parent or guardian should be made to face some penalty.
7. Finally, there should be no politics in the provision of educational instructional material; it should be made available to all schools irrespective of their location.

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