

**REVAMPING SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM THROUGH
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR CREATIVITY AND INVENTION
TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

The level of development and prosperity attained by a country is determined by its level and quality of educational development, which in turn is determined by its effective management. Despite the worldwide recognition of education as an instrument of change and the efforts made by Nigerian government, the philosophical goals and objectives of the nation has not been fully achieved. This is due to the problems bedeviling the secondary education system. This paper attempts to diagnose and address some issues affecting Nigerian secondary education system; ranging from poor planning, curricular deficiencies, insecurity, dual-proprietorship, inadequate facilities, poor pedagogical delivery system, examination malpractice, large class size, restriction of teachers mobility, ineffective supervision and inadequate funding. It is concluded that the quality of any system of education depends on the effective management of the system. It is hoped that the recommendations made herein, if properly adopted, will be a way forward to revamping Nigerian secondary education system for sustainable development.

It is quite obvious that secondary education stands as a change-over bridge receiving primary school leavers at one end and turning-out these learners for tertiary education at the other end, and for this reason it must be effectively managed. The fundamentals of any educational system or programme is to direct an individual to higher goals thereby achieving his/her creative potentials in life. The nation's education sector has over the years been faced with multiple problems most especially the secondary education. This is why Mobolaji (2014:3) asserts that EFA, MDG and other interventions like ETF and TET FUND have achieved quite a lot in the provision of infrastructural facilities and equipment as well as manpower development, yet what they have achieved is like a drop of water in a mighty ocean". It is pertinent to note that in salvaging the Nigerian educational system; all the levels involved are equally affected and therefore should be equally accorded desired attention that can lead to creativity and inventions for a meaningful and sustainable development.

The purpose of education in any nation is to have individuals who are balanced. That is those who are intellectually sound, emotionally stable, physically fit with good health habits. Unfortunately, most individuals in Nigeria today are experiencing deficits in almost all the attributes of the educated. This partly elucidates the reason for the high level of

unemployment and violent tendencies in the country. For instance, the nation is battling religious insurgence in the North, combating kidnappers mostly in the South-East, militancy and oil theft or bunkery in the South-South and armed robbery nation-wide. These ugly trends and engagements are taking a toll on the nation's treasury and human resources with devastating consequences on the Nigerian economy. This is why most countries all over the world are now conscious of the fact that a well managed educational system holds the key to any society's advancement. At a time like this when Nigeria is refocusing her attention on the revival of education as a paramount tool in its transformation agenda, this conference paper therefore becomes imperative and auspicious as it examines some key concepts, issues/problems of the secondary education system and makes some recommendations for revamping the secondary education system that will bring about creativity and invention for meaningful and sustainable development in this 21st century.

Concept of Education

Education is an omnipotent phenomenon and an invaluable gift to mankind which influences the survival and development of human societies and cultures (Mobolaji, 2014). Bassey and Amang (2001) as cited in Anashie and Ikwen (2014) defined education as a fostering, nurturing and cultivating process. To them education is regarded as the overall development of the child

socially, physically and intellectually. Education is an ongoing learning process designed to furnish skills, understanding, and healthy values in the circular as well as spiritual spheres of individuals so that they can develop themselves and the society in which they live and operate (Denga, 2008). This shows that education is truly a precursor and harbinger of national development. Indeed, it is affirmed that education is a process which facilitates, the learning and acquisition of both theoretical and practical skills for persons to utilize the environment effectively for the growth and development of any society or nation. According to Akpakwu (2012) education is a process of bringing desirable changes into the behavior as human being. Thus, these desirable changes and attitudes of individuals of the bye-product of the knowledge and skills acquired make them useful and acceptable members of the society, as well as contributing to societal growth and development.

Concept and Thrust of Secondary Education System

Secondary education is a type of formal education accorded to children who have successfully completed the primary level of education and are desirous for higher or tertiary education as well as for useful living within the society. According to Section 5 (20-22) of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:11) “secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary

stage. The broad goals of secondary education shall be to prepare the individual for:

- (i) useful living within the society; and
- (ii) higher education

In specific terms secondary education shall:

- (a) “Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background”.
- (b) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- (c) Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- (d) Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world’s cultural heritage.
- (e) Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.
- (f) Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
- (g) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appropriate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens.

- (h) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

The foretasted goals and objectives exemplified the meaning of secondary education and the significance of this level of education as an instrument par excellence for creativity and sustainable development.

What is Development?

Development is a process of socio-economic and political transformation of problem generating structures in such a way that it leads to improvement in the standard of living of the people including, income, education, health and nutrition as well as other related social services, decreasing inequality in the distribution of income, urban-rural imbalances and political and economic activities. In support of this view Nnadozie (1990) sees development as the capacity of members of the society to actualize them by participating actively in the social engineering of their lives and destiny.

Issues and Problems of Secondary Education System in Nigeria

The following are issues and problems hindering the secondary education system in Nigeria:

1. **Poor Planning:** It is quite obvious that no nation on earth can achieve her philosophical objectives and

make advancement in any sphere of development without proper and effective planning. Regrettably, some factors like political influence, inadequate data base, population explosion, etc impede proper planning of the secondary education system. Okwori (2011) affirms that education is planned so that the limited educational resources of a society can be rationally allocated among the various competing educational demands and programmes. The Nigerian education system is negatively affected as a result of poor planning which leads to ineffective, inefficient and uneven distribution/utilization of the nation's resources.

2. **Curricular Deficiency:** The National Policy on Education has florid and captivating phrases including the making of Nigeria an egalitarian society, a place of full opportunities for all, a virile economy, etc, these are ambiguous terms and the secondary school curriculum that is meant to implement these aims is not itself focused in a particular direction. This is why Udida (2008) maintains that curriculum is a mirror image of a society and therefore cannot be better or worse than the society it reflects. The lack of adequate curricular preparation and content to meet with the goals of secondary education in Nigeria and the global challenges is a factor that has greatly hindered the system from its lofty goals and enhancing sustainable development. The use of integrated science,

introduction to technology, social studies and business studies is another noticeable aspect of improper curriculum contents in the system. These four disciplines make the students “jack-of-all-trades and master of none”. As well as refrain them from studying the core science subjects very well within the six years of secondary education.

3. **Insecurity:** Insecurity is a global menace, which challenges the very basic of our development (World Bank, 2011). The abduction of over 200 Chibouk secondary school girls in Borno State since April, 2014 to date is still fresh in the minds of citizens and aliens. This is seriously diverting government’s attention and the nation’s resources that should have been used for the provision of qualitative education as a bedrock and launching pad for creativity and invention to enhance sustainable development. Rebelo (1991) asserts that evidence abounds that any form of insecurity instability such as violence brings no good to people and that insecurity retards development, scares away investors, stultifies creativity and contaminates social relations.

4. **Dual Proprietorship:** Apart from the issue of insecurity is the problem of dual proprietorship. This is one of the main issues impeding the attainment of quality education at the secondary school system in Nigeria. Today, some secondary schools are owned by either government, communities, missions and individuals.

Most of these secondary schools owned by individuals or communities are considered as ‘business outfits’ or ‘miracle centres’ that flout government rules and regulations regarding the quality of standards as well as charge high fees/levies. Moreso, such schools lack qualified teachers and basic facilities to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

5. **Inadequate and High Cost of Learning Facilities:** The lack of adequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian schools has posed serious setback in the achievement of educational goals (Udida, 2008). The cost of building and maintaining physical structures, providing learning facilities such as science laboratories, libraries, chalk or flannel boards, computers, overhead projectors, etc is increasing remarkably day-in day-out. The importance of these facilities/equipment is quite enormous and cannot be over-emphasized. They make teaching and learning more productive, effective and efficient. Moreso, they make instructions more scientific through providing a framework for systematic instructional planning. Raju (2004) opines that the absence of instructional aids affects teachers’ effectiveness, which invariably culminates in poor academic achievement by students. Currently, the objective of the junior secondary education scheme is not achieved, as the bulk of the imported equipment since 1985 are still locked up in create in

many schools across the country due to lack of workshop building to install them. Denga (1998) maintains that the educational problems can only be solved if the country innovates her own approaches to her peculiar myriads of problems in this 21st century.

6. Poor Pedagogical delivery System: The quality of the teachers determines the strength of any educational system and the quality of students produced. Today, there is a huge demand for teachers into Nigerian secondary schools, but many are half-baked and uncommitted school leavers who find their way into the teaching profession as a stepping stone. The teaching profession is polluted with half-trained or untrained teachers. Akpabio, Noah & Anashie (2012:42) asserted that:

“apart from the ill preparation is the poor condition of service and motivation for teacher, and as a matter of fact, teachers’ salary gives no incentive for them to do their best, even those who have the zeal, qualifications and the ability to teach at the secondary school level”.

According to Lawal (2009) some of the teachers’ poor attitude to work in secondary schools in Nigeria today ranges from late coming to absenteeism from school, faking sickness in order to do some other

personal private business that would yield more income to be able to cope with family demands. Thus, in a situation where most teachers manifest laissez-faire behaviour, are lamentably trained coupled with their poor condition of service, effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved.

7. Examination Malpractice: This is one of the major challenges confronting the Nigeria education system. As a result of the pervading emphasis placed on paper qualification (grades and certificates) instead of practical skills, Nigerians have introduced desperate competitions and pressure for academic excellence in order to further their education or get jobs. According to Ada (2004) examination malpractice is an ugly social virus that has devastated the educational system and that may be likened to an outbreak of a social malaise that appears to resist all forms of treatment. The Federal Ministry of Education (2007:10) defines examination malpractice as “any act of omission or commission, which compromises the reliability and integrity of any assessment or evaluation system”. This illegal and unethical behaviour exhibited by both students, parents, teachers, etc impedes the true test of ability and knowledge of examinees, thereby distorting the laudable objectives of examination and finally renders the whole process useless.

8. **Large Class Size:** Large class-size is one of the major challenges affecting Nigerian secondary education system today. Anashie, Ebuta & Adie (2014) affirmed that large class size adversely affects students' academic performance since the teacher is unable to carry out individualized teaching. Anashie et al, added that without effective management of the classroom, teaching becomes ineffective. This explains the reason for the poor quality of products in secondary schools in Nigeria today. Denga (1998) contends that the bulging enrolment figures in most cases outstrip the existing learning space in today's classrooms. Denga added that the size of the class has become increasingly unmanageable, with the students-teacher ratio of about 60:1 which makes it difficult for the teacher to give individualized attention to the children needing it.

9 **Restriction to Teachers Mobility:** Functional education as a bye-product of qualitative secondary education may not be attained in Nigeria if the current restriction imposed on the mobility of qualitative teaching personnel is not relented. The practice of employing Nigerians in their own country on contract basis is awkward and very appalling. This restriction insidiously hinders teacher's mobility so that while there is surplus in one part of the country, there is acute shortage of these qualified teachers in other parts. Indeed, the practice is inimical to strategies of revamping secondary

education in a democratized society like Nigeria.

10. **Ineffective Supervision in Nigerian Secondary Schools:**

It is obvious that no educational plan however excellent it may be can be effectively implemented if the school supervision is ineffective. According to Oluwole (2007), school supervision is the process by which an educational leader ensures that tasks are carried out by all concerned and in such a way that teaching and learning get better all the time. Raju (1987) in Anashie and Mando (2014) opined that supervision occurs when teachers are helped to grow on the job, as it brings about improvement of instruction by helping teachers and learners to do better. Today, so many factors like inadequate touring advance, lack of vehicle, inexperience, compromising standards, etc hinder effective regular supervision of schools, hence the deterioration in the performance of school personnel.

11. **Inadequate Funding:** The major issue which impedes the progress of secondary education is the inadequacy of finance. It is one of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational system with the dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of education. According to Denga (1998), funding education has increasingly become problematic in Nigeria. Regrettably, quality and functional education is expensive and

any government that tries to starve its educational system is most likely to vitiate the quality of education. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively adhere and implement the 26% funding formula for education recommended by the UNESCO impact negatively on the quality and functional role of education for sustainable development.

In summary, it is indeed worthy to note that these issues bedeviling Nigerian secondary education system are numerous and inexhaustible, but for the purpose of this conference paper the aforementioned are the major ones that are seriously impeding the quality and progress of Nigerian secondary education system.

Conclusions

It is now obvious that qualitative and functional education guaranteed through effective management can revamp the current state of secondary education system. The aforesaid issues can be speedily addressed through effective management to achieve qualitative education which is a precursor to nation building. This paper therefore has discussed some concepts and critical issues hindering qualitative education that leads to creativity and invention in Nigerian secondary schools. As a way forward, it has suggested some strategies towards effective management for improving the internal efficiency of the nation's secondary schools for creativity and invention aimed at achieving sustainable development.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned issues discussed so far, the following suggestions and recommendations are made herein as a way forward:

1. Proper Planning and Effective Implementation:

Education is a complex function with diffuse goals and numerous means, therefore proper and careful planning becomes one of the most effective managerial technique/tool to be adopted in ensuring the maximum co-operation of school personnel to accomplish the educational objective and enhance speedy national transformation and sustainable development.

2. Proper and Improved Curriculum Content:

This paper suggests that the Nigerian secondary school curricular provisions should be specifically fashioned to drive home particular objectives. The current curricular provisions are ambiguously broad and vague in many areas including the specification on skill in technology and business.

3. Beef up Security in all Secondary Schools:

Insecurity can be nipped in the bud if the enabling conditions are created for the promotion of sustainable development. This can be done if government makes a policy to ensure that all schools have perimeter fence with one or two gate(s) for entry and exist. More trained security personnel need to be recruited and

posted to each and every school to safeguard the school personnel and property.

4. Re-address the Issue of Proprietorship: As a way to encourage partnership and ensure standard, it is the opinion of this paper that government should seriously check individual proprietorship of schools and treat them according to the law. Recalcitrant proprietors should have their schools closed down and be surcharged to pay huge fines or be prosecuted to serve as a deterrent to others.

5. Provision of Adequate Teaching and Learning Facilities: The utilization of foreign materials and teaching strategies should be discouraged. Education problems can only be solved if the country adopts her own approaches to her teething problems. It is also suggested that specific agency for the production of quality and affordable textual materials as well as training teachers on the preparation of improvised instructional materials be established in all senatorial Zones of the Federation.

6. Good and Skillful Pedagogical Delivery System: The paper laments the fact that despite the high level unemployment of trained/qualified teachers, the unqualified persons are having a field day in most secondary schools due to 'god-fatherism'. This trend is not standard and it must be arrested with alacrity. Government at all

tiers needs to organize workshops/seminars for re-training of teachers during holidays to improve their pedagogical skills.

7. Zero Tolerance for Examination Malpractice: it is obvious that examination malpractices are caused by the social system and can be controlled if students cultivate good reading culture to study well and teachers adequately prepare their lessons in order to have a mastery of what is to be taught. They would have no reason to resort to examination malpractice when this is done. Government at all levels, should enact enabling laws to deal decisively with those students, teachers, inspectors, parents and WAEC or NECO officials involved in such ugly acts to serve as a deterrent to others.

8. Adopt Small Class Size: Government and individual proprietors should employ more qualified teachers and provide or expand existing accommodation for the increasing number of students in secondary schools. Similarly, school inspectors should always supervise secondary schools to ensure that large classes are reduced to manageable sizes to enable teachers accord learners individualized attention which is a more effective method of bringing about students' high academic achievement in school. The teacher-students ratio of 1:40 as enshrined in the NPE (2004) must be strictly adhered to by both public and private secondary schools.

9. Non Restriction of Teachers'

Mobility: This paper is of the opinion that government at all levels should allow free movement and employment of teachers in all parts of the country. Contractual appointment for non-indigenes should be stopped in the interest of revamping secondary education in our democratic society.

10. Effective and Regular

Supervision: Effective and regular supervision is very necessary for a virile and dynamic secondary education system, therefore, federal and state governments must not relent in the provision of supervision/hazard allowances and strong vehicles to school inspectors to enhance effective and regular supervision of secondary schools in this 21st century. Indeed, there is need for regular monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes, projects, teachers' and students' activities in the system. This would allow the application of new ideas and enhance sustainable development.

11. Improve Funding of

Secondary Education System: The government, non-governmental organizations and spirited individuals should jointly fund education and adapt best management techniques for timely release and utilization of funds judiciously. Embezzlement and misappropriation of school funds should not be treated with levity so as to shun corrupt practices and serve as a deterrent to others.

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