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## FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION: A CATALYST FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

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**NWAMAKA GEORGINA ONYEBU**

*Department of Education Management  
Shehu Shagari University of Education, Sokoto*

**And**

**HASSAN ABUAKAR HORO**

*Department of Educational Foundation  
Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto*

### **Abstract**

*The paper focused on the role of functional education in promoting good governance and national security for fostering nation unity in Nigeria. The thrust of the survival of any nation is embedded on its educational system. Nigerian national policy on education in recognition of the importance of education stated that no nation can rise beyond the quality of its education. To tackle insecurity and bad government, it is imperative to investigate the role of education particularly functional education in promoting national security and good democratic governance in Nigeria. Insecurity and the vices of maladministration such as corruption, poor leadership and poor resources allocation are threat to sustainable national integration in Nigeria. Based on the above, it is the position of this paper that there is a close relationship between and among functional education, good governance and national security. The study therefore argued that the only thing that can sustain good democratic governance and curb insecurity in Nigeria is quality functional education. The paper recommended among others that serious commitment in the provision of functional education among stakeholders can ensure good governance and promote self reliance for Nigerian graduates and the nation at large.*

**Keywords:** Functional Education, National Security and Good democratic governance.

## **Introduction**

Quality, functional and sustainable education ideally is geared towards the promotion of unity and enhancement of structural development for the nation (Onyebu 2021). The Federal Government of Nigeria (NPE 2013) stated that National education goal as inculcation of national consciousness and unity; the inculcation of the values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; the acquisition of skills abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his/her society. Presently, it is becoming evident that education should be examined in the light of its contribution to individual growth and to bring about fundamental structural changes in society, changes which are important for the creation of a just, peaceful, and harmonious living environment.

Education is viewed as the successful learning of knowledge, skills and attitudes, where what is learned is worthwhile to a learner (Wallace, 2015). The aims of education are to enrich an individual's knowledge and developing his full capacity, or to prepare people to undertake specific tasks and employment function which are essential for the transformation of their environment. According to Onyebu (2014), for education to be qualitative and functional, it should be relevant to the needs of the nation of society and should not only train high level man power but contribute to all development of the nation.

Education in Nigeria is an instrument “par excellence” for effective national development according to the National Policy FRN (NPE,2013). The constitution of Nigeria gives all citizens the right to education. Education is a foundation stone for acquiring necessary knowledge and skills, nurturing inner potentials, developing individual personality and attitude to life. Human beings are inherently noble, and the purpose of education is to cultivate such attributes, skills, virtues and qualities as will enable them to contribute their share to the building of civilization. It is a vital instrument for the total development and emancipation of man from involvement in societal evils that hinders national security. It is a dynamic process that creates awareness of human rights and equity, appreciates cultural diversity, rejects violence and inculcates respect for life that promotes good governance.

This paper examines functional education as an instrument for revamping the Nigeria society for national security and good governance for better national integration particularly in present Nigerian state of insecurity and maladministration. Presently, national integration is very paramount in achieving her desired national goals

## **Functional Education**

Education is the process of providing information to the individual for him to develop physically, mentally, socially, economically, spiritually, politically and emotionally for full contributions to development of society. In this paper functional education is used synonymously with qualitative education. Musa and Joseph (2018) defined functional education as the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. Its purpose is to develop the life of the mind that acts from the wholeness of organic life, with relation to practical life in the present and in the future. In other words, functional education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers who will contribute to economic development and sustainable communities (Arogundade, 2011). Also Cookey (2003) view functional education as the education in which the ability to perform productive tasks is more emphasized than education that aim at producing ideological conformity. Consequently, the focus is on practice more than theory, Functional Education is more encompassing, meaningful and most desirable. It gears towards producing graduates who are entrepreneurs and self-dependent and ready to practice skills learned in the school thereby promoting self- reliance, job creation, reduction problems of unemployment and poverty.

From the above definitions of functional education from various scholars portray that functional education will lead to reduction or elimination insecurity challenges hindering desired development and other social ills in the country. Thus vices like corruption, insecurity, poor governance, ethno religious crisis and even illiteracy among others could be attributed to high rate of unemployment and poverty in the country as result of bad governance and insecurity. A functional education promotes the welfare of its citizenry, advances science and technology and economic growth enhance democracy, education is a pivot on which other factors are resolved.

## **Good Governance**

Governance applies to the exercise of power of which is to direct, control and regulate activities in the interests of majority of the citizens. Good governance entails accountability, Legitimacy, and transparency carrying out government affairs. Most Rev. Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji, stated at the opening session of the 2022 Second Plenary Assembly of the CBCN at the Sacred Heart Pastoral Centre, Orlu in Imo State that good governance generates peace, which is the bedrock of development, and which takes root when people's dignity and rights are respected when there is the rule of law; when citizens are not excluded

from political participation; when there is equitable distribution of national resources and people are free from hunger, poverty, and unemployment. He further maintained that lack of good governance results in extreme poverty, unemployment, hardship, crime, and violent conflicts. Good governance according to. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that good government is anchored on eight principles which include: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus-oriented equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. A critical look into Nigeria present government would clearly indicate that none of these principles is adequately observed or practiced. Ayuba (2014) regarded bad governance as a condition where government fails to manage the resources (human and material) and the institutions of the nation for the optimum benefit of the generality of the populace. Thus, good governance guarantees the security of lives and property of citizenry. In the light Rasheed (2022) maintained that good governance that satisfied the economic and psychological needs of the people was considered a sine-qua-non for national security. Governor Ganduje of Kano underscored the importance of good governance which would mean improving the society's productive capacity, peoples' welfare and enhancing their freedoms. He recommended as a necessity, the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. Without which there can be no political, social and economic stability in Nigeria.

### **National Security**

Security is the totality of measures undertaken to ensure general protection of lives and property of members of the society. Security simply refers to the state of being free from attack, harm or any form of threats as well as the measures taken to ensure that one is safe and protected from any form of danger. Security is needed in all aspects of our human existence – physically, socially, economically, educationally, morally, financially and others. According to Odekunle (2012) security is protection or defense of people against all forms of victimization which include protection from external aggression, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, disease or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation, criminality act, etc. Alemika (2015) on his part saw security to mean protection from danger, violence, fear and want that impair, or capable of impairing the full development and existential well-being of citizens. Obviously, security encompass the socio-economic wellbeing of the individuals which enables the mutual co-existence all agents of development to work peacefully, which should eventually enhance the ability of each to contribute its quota in sustainable development. National security therefore means the totality of measures instituted by the government to protect the territorial integrity and cherished the values and the interest of

people as well as guaranteed freedom of the citizenry from anxiety, threats to life and property and their safety from natural or man – made disasters (Onyebu, 2014)

Presently, the issue of security in Nigeria is a major concern of citizens. Nigerians live in immeasurable fear of being killed. The critical security condition confronting Nigeria emanate in different forms as Boko Haram, kidnapping, banditry, socio-economic agitations (ENDSARS) boundary disputes, cultism, corruption, all manner of robbery including pen robbery, looting of the national treasury by some public officials, election conflict and anarchy. People cannot easily travel on Nigerian roads now especially in the northern part because one can either be robbed or kidnapped for a ransom or may be killed when the ransom is not forthcoming as expected. National security and sustainable development cannot be achieved in chaotic atmosphere; it must be on an enabling functional environment. National Security in Nigeria context can be defined as the aggregation of the security interests of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities and institutions within its territorial zone. In the world today, the issues of national security are of vital to the progress and development of any nation. Thus, managing and implementing functional education is critical to the success of national security. The quest to attain effective function education in Nigeria, like many other developing countries has been inhibited by internal and external factors. These factors pose tremendous challenges to National Security. They include political unrest; students uprising, ethno-religion crisis; communal violence, poverty; illiteracy; unemployment; and other organized crimes like kidnapping etc. Thus, national security is the ability of a state to overcome any of its challenges no matter what the challenge is.

## **The Role of Functional Education in Promoting National Security and Good Governance**

### **Guarantor of National Security**

According to Rasheed (2022) good governance is the best foundation and guarantor of national security. He maintained that, “we must build institutions (education), enhance processes and strengthen our systems, not only to make them work more efficiently, but also to make them work for the people.” Hence, there is need to encourage in our populace, a sense of “ownership” and that the people must have the feeling, indeed, the belief that they are partners in governance and that public facilities and infrastructure are there for their own comfort and welfare (Rasheed, 2022). However, bad governance resulted in insurrection, insurgency, militancy, ritual killings and kids’ rape. In order to contain the situation, the imperative of good governance must be embarked upon as an obligation of the government. He further noted that the threats to our peace and stability, including the sustenance of our

fledgling democracy, can and should be addressed by good governance because there is an inextricable relationship between national security and good governance. Functional education can allow sanity to prevail in the running of the affairs of this country when right values are inculcated in the young ones who are future leaders. Rasheed (2022) posited that higher education had greater implications for ensuring peace, security and governance than most people could realize, thereby transforming the youths of today with skills, knowledge and values that would enhance the security of the nation and its people.

### **Patriotism**

Rasheed (2022) stressed that there is a connect between education with a sense of mission, social duty and patriotism, which had a role to play in rolling back irrational and anti-social behaviour, ridding the country of cultism, negative radical ideas/tendencies, corruption and indiscipline. He reiterated that in doing so, higher education had the capacity to develop the mind to be tolerant of alternative views and beliefs system as well as the capacity to live with and accommodate others. He further underscored the role of higher education by stating that it should produce national elite that would serve as the vanguard of national peace, unity and harmonious coexistence.

### **National Unity**

National unity is when people in a country are living and working in harmony and love. In Nigeria, there are different people which belong to different ethnic, religious and political groups. All groups have to live as well as come together and work for the common good of the nation. Ololube and Egbezor (2012) described education as a catalyst for national unity, human capital development, cultural diversity and human rights, and empowering individuals to participate in global knowledge chains by expanding and improving access, capacity building and information sharing. Education is therefore the main instrument employed by the society to preserve, maintain and grapple with its social equilibrium; hence a society's future depends largely on the quality of its citizen's education. There are other value of the national goals of education that help to promote peaceful co-existence in the society such as tolerance, respect for others, cooperation, fairness, honesty, self –discipline, forgiveness, and moderation. Considering the implications of violence on socio-economic, moral and political lives of Nigerian citizens, education has a prominent role to play in preventing, eliminating or transforming this phenomenon from the Nigerian society

### **Illiteracy and Enlightenment**

According to Danmole (1995), education is the only way of raising a literate and enlightened citizenry. Education is important because it helps people get more out of life; increases their knowledge and understanding of the world and helps adjust to change. This philosophy becomes a vital instrument for the emergence of peace. When issues are justly handled without any element of favoritism necessitated by the virtue of tribalism, nepotism or religious inclination, then peaceful existence would emerge and development then follows. With functional education Nigerians should be able to brace up to share the values of good governance based on the common good, and use their votes to elect people of unassailable integrity, who have the character, competence, capacity, and track record to lead the nation out of the present economic doldrums (Uzoroji, 2022).

### **Employment and Wealth Creation**

Considering the enormous manpower lost to national development, unquantifiable wealth and hope lost to parents and guardians of unemployed graduates and social malaise which occasion graduate unemployment, as they offer ready manpower to crime and political thuggery, university programmes should be tailored towards functional employment and wealth creation. Education is one sure way to prepare the workforce of any nation. Functional education equips the students with skills that should make them employable. Creation and utilization of employment opportunities to the masses is a sure means of ensuring participation of all citizens in the process of national development.

### **Poverty Reduction**

Developed nations have been able to overcome several developmental challenges i.e. poverty, unemployment, inequality, ignorance etc which are inimical to human existence and whose presence could lead to other social vices like, insecurity, crisis and conflicts, and war among other social ills threatening national integration. Poverty implies economic, social, political and cultural deprivations. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in societal development. However, development cannot be achieved without eradicating poverty due to the fact that poverty is a major attribute of underdevelopment especially among the developing nations. Therefore, developmental goals should be geared toward improving the economic, social, political and cultural needs and aspirations of the people. There is therefore the need for capacity building through qualitative and effective education. Functional education generate new knowledge in various fields of learning, accelerate economic growth, equalize income distribution, forge national unity and integration and enhance cultural and social advancement. Also through functional education, qualitative

manpower is produced. The educational system of any nation determines its type, nature and caliber of manpower to be supplied. The educational system should be committed to human resource development.

### **Corrupt Practices**

Education is a major instrument for the fight against corruption, social marginalization, injustice and bad leadership. Aliyu and Elijah (2008) observed that corruption has negative effect on economic growth and development; it exerts negative effect on human capital development and total employment but impacts positively on government expenditure due to inflated public expenditure geared towards misappropriating certain percentage of the resources. The unprecedented number of social vices observed in Nigeria in recent times is attributed to lack of relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable them become functional and active members of the society and contribute significantly to the development of the society. According Mbakwem and Ibe (2019) the incidence of anti-social behaviors such as: corruption in public offices, kidnapping, intolerance, bunkering, rape, armed robbery, lack of respect for sanctity of life, use of illegal arms and weapons, cultism, lack of respect for elders, money politics and politically motivated ethnic/religious crisis are observed all over Nigeria. Honesty, handwork and loyalty to constituted authority and the nation have been thrown overboard. The provision of functional citizenship education is one of the major avenues of fighting corruption and other anti-social ills. Corruption increases the allocation of public investment above the required resources. Project allocations and contracts are inflated in Nigeria with a view to misappropriating the resources. This demonstrates the injustice and dishonesty among public officers, signifying non adherence to rule of law and ethical code of conduct. Corruption Perception Index (CPI), in transparency International (2020) report ranked Nigeria 149 out of 180 of countries assessed and the 31st most corrupt country in the world with a score of 25 out of 100 (Wikipedia Encyclopedia 2021)Hence entrepreneurship education is a pursuable path towards not only in making Nigeria's graduates employable but also job creators. Aregbesola in Makata (2015) captured this aptly when he said that, "the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is rapidly increasing especially with the disappearance of jobs in the public service and the churning out of an estimated 120,000 graduates annually by Nigerian Universities and Polytechnics.

### **Conclusion**

No nation can achieve quality transformation with regards to achieving national development goals effectively and efficiently, without functional education being managed



and implemented effectively by aligning the diversity in learners cultural, experimental backgrounds, and providing instruction that is responsive and adaptive to culture, peace and development that promote good governance and national security in Nigeria. Maladministration erodes the resource of the state and derivatively creates accompanying destruction of what the society lives for, and eventually results to anarchy and disintegration. The value allocations or political legitimacy depend on the effective and efficient national security, good governance and national building are conducted in the society, these, have serious implications for the policing and stability of that society. It also determines the extent of the peace, security and sustainable development such a nation will experience. The failure to appreciate and handle these issues effectively has created several problems in Nigeria and other developing nations.

### **Recommendations**

1. Schools curriculum should be fashioned to be more content-based than outcome-driven which should be reviewed.
2. Educational institution should be equip with practical and managerial skills required in the effective training of students.
3. Government should adequately fund education system to get Nigerians graduates to where they should be.
4. Managing education for national security in Nigeria demands that the concept “education” be seen and applied, as a means of socializing and equipping the citizens with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, morals, attitudes, awareness, understanding, etc of individuals, personal and collective rights, liberties, obligations and responsibilities as citizens of a nation.
5. Corruption should attract capital punishment to deter others.
6. Government should develop non-oil sector, cost conscious industries be located in economically depressed areas in the country to take advantage of low cost labour and land as a means of national economic development.
7. Government and stakeholder should strengthen institutions and coordination in preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the country.
8. The rule of law should be strengthened and access to Justice and Human Rights be provided.
9. State governments should engage communities and build resilience in security matters. There should be zero-tolerance for any form of criminality to attract foreign investments.
10. Integrating Strategic Communication techniques in preventing and countering violent extremism Programme in the country.

11. State governments should sign a law on cultism and other violent behaviours which prohibits such vices with the support of other partnerships and collaborations.

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