

**TRANSFORMING NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR
EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING:
A CHALLENGE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT.**

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Abstract

This paper examines Nigeria's educational system from the colonial era to the present day. Various Nigeria education policies, Historical development and contemporary realities are as well discussed. Education has been known by every society as a veritable instrument of social, political, economic and technological advancement. It is a means of improving the living standard of individual for effective performance of responsibilities. However, education in Nigeria is in a state of dilemma and disarray as a result of inconsistency and maladministration, non-implementation of educational polices, corruption which has been perpetuated by stakeholders in the education management. Therefore, there has been a serious outcry by concerned Nigerians to re-examine and reappraise our educational system for effective policy formulation and administration so as to transform the system. Against this backdrop, it was discovered that for Nigeria to rapidly develop and sustain such transformation, efforts through capacity building should be geared to eliminate those factors affecting the system negatively. Finally, it is recommended that transformative education should be offered to enhance quality and standard in the system for effective policy formulation and administration of the education system.

Keywords: Education, Transformation, Education Transformation.

Introduction

Nigeria's formal education was under the control of Christian missionaries for almost 40 years. Education administration and formulation of polices were also under their control too. Historically, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was the first to establish a training institute in Abeokuta in 1895. This institute was later

moved to Oyo in 1896 and was known as St. Andrews College Oyo. Due to this development, other training institutions sprang up such as Hope Wardell Institute Calabar, in 1861, the Baptist training Institute, 1897, at Ogbomosho, St. Paul's training College Awka, 1904. Oron training institute 1904 etc. These were institutions which the missionaries established for the purpose of training teachers (Liga, 2008). These institutions provided the much needed leadership in the production of primary school teachers in Nigeria. It was worthy of note that curriculum emphasis was on theology and religion. Nigeria's manpower needs was not met, which led to the colonial government's intervention in education particularly with the various educational ordinances such as 1882, 1887, 1904, 1926 coupled with the setting up of Ashby commission in 1962, which recommended the establishment of regional Universities in Lagos, Ibadon, Ife and Zaria.

These were the generation universities established in Nigeria. Presently, Nigeria has more than 75 federal universities and many state and private colleges and universities. According to UNESCO (1998), Barashamajel (1995) and Imogo (1993), illiteracy level in Nigeria increased from 139 million in 1970 to 156 million in 1980. Majority of Nigerians adult population were illiterates and even those who have gone to school were graduated as half-baked and were intellectually impotent. Human development is very important in the process of modernization. This basic problem of underdeveloped countries is not poverty of natural resources but the underdevelopment of their human resource. More so, if the spirit and human potentialities have not been fully harnessed, not much can be achieved because such people cannot develop economically, socially, politically and culturally. (Harbison and Brembeck, 1966). The first step in development is the building up of human resource.

In essence, one of the present concern of the 21st century education policy in Nigeria is how to ensure adequate utilization of resources in order to diversify the system of education in line with social, economic, political and technological changes and demand existing both domestically and internationally and how this new educational revival could benefit those in both urban and rural areas including children from poor and affluent families, women and men. Danger is looming if the system of education bequeited to us by the colonial masters continues un-reviewed; since the present educational system aims at transforming the system through effective planning and administration so as to achieve human capital and sustainable development.

Meaning of Education

Education is the transmission of what is worthwhile to individuals to make them knowledgeable and contributing members of the society (Peter, 1981). Education passes on knowledge as to how to adjust in the changing society and cope with the challenges. It is through education that knowledge, skills and behaviour modification is acquired, to making individuals patriotic and useful beings, contributing to nation-building and sustainable development. In their own

contribution to the roles of education to man and society, Anina (1996), Salami (2002) stated that education is not only the instrument for human socialization and development. They went further to say that education is self actualization. Education ensures equality in the society by means of income distribution, widening talent pool available to the society and as a weapon for eliminating illiteracy and ignorance.

It provides knowledge and skill for social development and civilization. In developed and developing countries including Nigeria, education is recognized as a key to solving world problems and ascending to prominent social ladder. Its relevance is inestimable as it promotes both individual and groups freedom and security. Dibia (2000) opined that education is indispensable mechanism that equips the individuals with knowledge, skills, attitude and habits that enable individual to become a functional member of the society. In all human activities, education prepares individual for proper religious observance, membership and participation in social organization, how to dress, eating habits, adaptability and acceptance of individuals in the society. The level of economic attainment of persons in the society is a times associated with the quality of education acquired by the people.

The quality of individuals to produce more increases when he is properly equipped with requisite knowledge, skills and attitude for the performance of his roles. The style of consumption of individuals is dependent on his level of education.

Fafunwa (1992) is of the view that illiterate individual is invariably a poor consumer of goods. The illiterate citizens are human “refuse” that cannot actively participate in the practical development of their nation. They are gullible and susceptible to manipulation by the political elite.

Infact, the beginning of capacity building and sustainable development is through equalization of education opportunities grounded on quality and standard. Researchers have stressed that much of economic growth and development can be attested to by human resources development through education rather than by the increase in capital, land and other classical factors of growth. Succinctly put, there is a high correlation between a county's education development and its economic productivity. Education is a master determinant of all forms of change. It is based on this that Aristotle, one of the educationist said that “knowledge” is a virtue while ignorance is a vice”. It is not every educational system or programme that is supportive of development.

Brief Historical and Contemporary Realities

UNESCO (1998) remarked on the state of education in Nigeria. That the Nigerian university system between 1948 and 1973 was elitist in the sense of creaming. UNESCO went further to say that top five percent of graduate's commitment to scholarship was high. University offered overseas training for non-doctoral degree holders. Great scholars and teachers from top overseas institutions were part of the teaching pool in Nigerian universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The welfare scheme for teachers was attractive and facilities, such as books were

available to support the instructional process in the universities. .These combined to facilitate quality teaching. Also, Obanya (2002) revealed that in terms of quality and quantity the research output of tertiary institutions in Nigerian was about the best in sub-Saharan African up to the last 80s.

It is no doubt that in 1980s, Nigerian had established a well organized higher education system offering instruction at an international standard in a number of disciplinary areas. The universities of Ibadan and Alhamadu Bello for example earned global recognition for their research in tropical health and agriculture (William, 2004), El-rufai (2006) maintained that government of the 70s in Nigeria focused then on developing the country, building refineries, roads, steel rolling mills and funding researchers in the universities. The country's per capital income is placed among the League of Nations with enormous potentials as compared to present realities where two third of the population is struggling to survive on less than one dollar a day.

The sparking reputation of universities became a thing of the past under successive military government during the 80's and 1990's. Enrollments grew at an astronomical rate and more universities were established and government interference in university affairs became more pronounced.

There were cases where military sole administrator and the vice-chancellors were appointed by the government. The university powers were eroded. Incentives and rewards for research, teaching excellence and associated innovations gradually disappeared leading to brain drain, low research output and quality, management structures became rigid. Between 1990 and 1997 real value of government allocations to universities declined by 27% and enrollment grew by 97% (Awonusi,2007). As observed by Obikeze (2003), the down ward pressure on staff salaries together with deteriorating working conditions and political repression on campus, generated a series of staff and students strikes during the 1990s culminating in year long closure of the university system in 1992 and 1996, even primary and secondary schools were not left out from months of strikes.

Inconsistency and Non-implementation of Educational policies

The inconsistencies in the formulation and implementation of government policies in Nigerian are numerous but that of education is multitudinous, which can be seen from the academic calendar, which was initially from January to December and later changed from October to June. In addition, the educational system was changed from 6-5-2-3to 6-3-3-4 and recently 9-3-3-4 system. Moreover, the higher school certificate (HSC) programmer that was discarded sometimes ago is now being proposed without any research or assessment conducted into its needs. This has adverse effect on sound educational development in a country that is aiming at transforming her educational system.

Based on this, non implementation of the national policy on education which advocates for bursary award to teachers, implementation of teachers salary scale (TSS) the full introduction of information communication technology (ICT) into the

school system, the repositioning of science, technology and vocational education and giving it its pride of place, have adversely affected education development in Nigerian.

The national policy on education advocates the adoption of education as an instrument, par excellence for achieving national development. In spite of its strength, Obanya (2002) noted lapses in a document which has made a gap in the implementation of the policy impossible. This was due to the incongruous position of the colleges of education in the policy on education and non-relevance of some courses in the colleges of education. In his observation, Obanya observed that some courses offered in the colleges of education are non-junior secondary school subjects as stipulated in the NCCE policy and are not necessary. The researcher further suggested that the policy should be reviewed to enhance effective educational administration. More so, the standard of NCE certificate must be raised to ensure quality. To say the fact, majority of graduates, particularly state colleges of education can hardly express themselves grammatically without mixing words. This indeed makes nonsense of our primary and junior secondary students, making the realization of quality being conceived impossible as NCE graduates are teachers in these levels of education.

Education and Incursion of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

Examination malpractices as a form of corruption have eaten deep into the fabric of educational system in this country. Olayinka (1998) defined examination malpractice as misconduct or improper practices in any examination with a view to obtaining good results through fraudulent action. He maintained that examination malpractices are abnormal behaviour exhibited by candidates or any officer charged with responsibility of conducting examination either internal or external. Azige and Imogie (1993) conceived examination malpractice as any act of wrong doing or neglect that contravenes the rules and acceptable practice before, during and after an examination by anybody which results to examination malpractice. Shonekan (1993) saw it as irregularities, which are premeditated and perpetuated by the candidate or their agents with the aim of gaining undue advantage over others. The problem of examination malpractice in Nigeria seems to be as old as the introduction of western education in this country (Daramola, and Oluyeba, 1993). The first recorded examination malpractice in Nigeria was in the year 1914, when the senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked. This scenario took an unprecedented dimension in 1963, when two public examinations of 1969, and 1972 leaked. These leakages attracted the attention of Federal government resulting to the enactment of Decree 22 of 1973; and miscellaneous Decree 20 of 1984 to minimize the rate of examination malpractices. These decrees prescribed 21 years imprisonment for offenders.

It is noteworthy that these measures put in place could not curtail the rate of examination malpractices in the society. For instance, in 1991, when WAEC conducted examination, about 30, 982 students were reported to have been involved

in examination malpractices in addition to 35,479 others Olujuwon, 1999). Based on this, the number of offenders and other related offences leading to cancellation of result was quite alarming.

Investigation conducted by vanguard Newspaper of Thursday 25th, 2004 indicated how teachers helped students to engage in examination malpractices by teaching them before examination day and the changing of wrong answers. This trend according to the report is used by the schools involved to improve their position in the performance tables, which have become a key indicator for parents choosing a school for their wards or children. Moreover, special centers have become the order of the day. This special centres seems to be hiding places where supervisors, invigilators, parents and students work collaboratively to cheat during public examination. This ugly trend is as a result of ineffectiveness of education administrators to control policies and programmes of educational sector.

Educational Transformation

Transformation is a process through which change is initiated within existing forms. Obikeze (2003) see it as a complete change in some one or something. Therefore, transformation refers to opening up to novel ideas, and ways of seeing the world, with the purposes of enriching that which has been inherited. To this end, transformation is necessary to open up new vistas and to bring each person and each society into the wider horizon to a fast changing world. (UNESCO, 1998). Obanya (2004) is of the view that within transformation, most cultures will become mere museum pieces, as they will be derived enrichment, dynamism of the capacity to changing times. In this regard, transformation entails creating something new or different through the remolding or fabricating the constituent elements of the old.

Transformation of education is refocusing and reemerging the education system which will bring about quality research, government and administration and above all, aligning with individuals needs, aspirations and goals towards a better society. Supporting this statement, Nwagwu (2003) suggested the following as a critical areas to reform education in order to improve upon the outcomes or results.

1. Quality primary school leavers, class size and low teachers students ratio.
2. Secondary school curriculum, providing adequate teaching and learning facilities and materials.
3. Time utilization and management, discipline and character formation
4. Boarding houses, recreational facilities and increase funding of the educational system.
5. Better policy formation and effective administration of the school system to enhance transformation and sustainable educational development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Success of any educational system, depends on planning, good policy formulation and implementation, efficient administration, adequate funding and motivation of the workers. Government needs to provide an enabling environment

for teaching and learning in our schools to enable the country have a pride of place in the community of nations. All dysfunction affecting educational industry should be eliminated and all the stakeholders' in education system should contribute their quota to revive the sector in Nigeria so as to achieve capacity and sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on this study the following recommendations are made

1. Education institutions should be periodically reviewed in order to ascertain if the policies guiding the system are still achieving the objectives of its enactment.
2. All stakeholders in the education industry should as a matter of urgency improve on the infrastructural base of our schools with adequate facilities to improve learning environment.
3. More teachers should be recruited to beef up short falls in teacher supply in our schools.
4. Staff salaries and fringe benefits should be paid as at and when due to reduce corruption with in the education sector.
5. Capital punishment should be imposed on those found guilty of examination malpractice.
6. Government should ensure that educational policies formulated are adequately implemented by education administrators for quick transformation of the system.

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