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Revitalizing Education Management for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Education has been identified as a critical agent in the development of a modern society because it plays a pivotal role in training and building human capacity for the nation. It is argued "as information grows exponentially, and its incorporation in the production process becomes increasingly complex, the ability to absorb, and adapt new knowledge is determined by the nature, quality and quantity of the education system". This paper in a quest to examining the issues pertaining to the decay, finds poor funding, limited access to good education, obsolete curricula, brain drain, corruption, incessant University strikes, examination malpractice, inept leadership, and poor budgetary allocation to education as part of the problem. Findings show a positive relationship between education, health and economic growth. Therefore, except the system is revived and revamped, it will be a mirage for the country to catch up with the global competitiveness. As a way forward, Government must increase funding, tackle corruption and improve infrastructure. Excellence must be rewarded and indigenous R&D improved. They must stem the tide of brain drain by creating environment for good education.

Keywords: Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Education is said to be positively related to economic growth as the findings of (Afolabi and Loto, 2012) show in the case of Nigeria. Quality manpower therefore, is derived from standard education and it is the key for economic growth. Eboh and Uma 2009, Uma and Eboh, 2013 pointed out that the quality of manpower is a sine qua non for good governance. As information grows exponentially, and as its incorporation in the production process becomes increasingly complex, the ability to assimilate, acquire, adopt and adapt new knowledge becomes an important determinant of growth (Isola, 2002). Regrettably, the good thing (in terms of education) Nigerian inherited from the West has been allowed to decay because of many years of neglect.

Education seeks to develop the innate inner capacities of man. By educating an individual we attempt to give him some desirable knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, attitudes and critical thinking. As an individual in the society, he has to think critically about various issues in life and take decisions around them that is free from bias, prejudices, superstitions and blind beliefs. Thus, he has to learn all these qualities of head, hand and heart through the process of education. According to Aslanbek Naziew (2017), “Education is the socially organized and regulated process of continuous transference of socially significant experience from previous to following generations”. The main process of obtaining education is to take a course of training in the system of educational institutions. In addition, Zewu Frank (2019), defined “Education as the experience gained after perennial process of learning that brings development to the life of the individual and the society”. In whatever package it comes (casual, informal, non-formal or formal), education is a basic instrument of development and an important end in itself. This is so because education plays a key role in the ability of any developing country to absorb modern technology and to develop the capacity for self-sustaining growth and development (Todaro and Smith, 2009). In order words, education is the master key that unlocks a country’ s potentials towards national transformation and sustainable national development (Ilechukwu, 2014).

Education for Sustainable Development from time immemorial, intellectuals have been very much concerned about the relationship between education and development. Indeed, political philosophers since the time of Plato and Aristotle have affirmed the dictums enunciated in the phrases, “As is the state, so is the school”, “what you want in the state, you must put into the school” (Akinsanya, 2004). The truism that education is the surest way to sustainably develop any people or society needs no contention. Education, as earlier mentioned, is the process of imparting and acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and experiences in institutions of learning. The skills so acquired are subsequently applied to sustain present and future generation in everyday life. It is the proper nurturing, transmission and application of such skills and knowledge that guarantees development and sustenance of the society (Abiodun, 2002).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which is sometime referred to as Sustainability Education is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It was a United Nations programmes that is defined as education that encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable a more sustainable and just society for all (United Nations Educational, scientific and

cultural-UNESCO, 2013). It achieves its purpose by transforming society. In addition, Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption, (UNESCO, 2014). It empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. Education for Sustainable Development is design at empowerment and equipment of current and future generations in order to meet their needs using a balanced and integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It is the term most used internationally and by the United Nations, (United Nations, 2017). Agenda 21 was the first international document that identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted areas of action for education, (Bernad-Cavero; Olga; Llevot-Calvet; Núria, 2018). In December 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations Decade of Education for sustainable Development, spanning the years 2005 to 2014, with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency for the Decade (Ilechukwu, 2014).

The Importance of Revitalizing Education for Sustainable Economic Development

Revitalizing education is an essential tool for achieving a more sustainable world. This was emphasised at the UN World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 where the reorientation of current education systems was outlined as key to sustainable development. Education for sustainable development (ESD) promotes the development of the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and actions required to create a sustainable world, which ensures environmental protection and conservation, promotes social equity and encourages economic sustainability (United Nations, 2002) The graduates leaving universities now are entering a very different world from that encountered by their forebears, even a decade or so ago. It is pronounced by uncertainty, complexity and rapid change, manifested through a bewildering array of global issues relating to economic instability, climate change, inequity, loss of biodiversity, security challenge and migration, to mention a few, (Stephen Sterling, 2014). While sustainable development can be promoted through policy instruments, these tend to be effective for only as long as they are applied. Education can enhance the effectiveness of each of these instruments through developing informed engagement, agency and empowerment among all affected stakeholders. Education which is one of the principles for sustainable

economic and security development presupposes that the society needs educated and environmentally aware citizenry and workforce to help guide nations in the implementation of sustainable development goals.

Prospects of Revamping the System

At every stage in the development of a country, there are always challenges which, in a way help to bring new strategies for desired transformation. Nigeria as a developing country has such challenges that if properly tackled, will gradually reposition the educational standard in the polity. The following measures are worth considering in improving the standard.

- i. Expansion of existing institutions of learning by providing relevant quality facilities that will improve the absorption of more students. Government must co-opt individual, philanthropist, industrialist, and private sectors to assist in funding and research as done in other countries. The rate of expansion in enrolment should match the rate of provision of facilities and human resources.
- ii. Ethnicity, culture, and Religion must not be allowed to dictate the pace of education in Nigeria.
- iii. Collaborative learning should be explored and encouraged. A situation where some schools could establish an understanding with foreign institutions to exchange ideas.
- iv. The academia should lead the campaign for improved funding of the institutions through improved cost recovery and making the case for appropriate school fees. These are all within the purview of the academia and should constitute his role in reviving academic standards in our institutions of higher learning.
- v. A Bridge from school to work: schools should have affiliated industries either privately or publicly owned so as to support practical training. This will go a long way to minimize 'paper certificate', and theoretical graduates who might not have seen any physical gadgets needed for processing raw materials or doing any work in their fields of training. It will enhance the bridge from school to work and reduce youth unemployment.
- vi. Focus on moving education towards equipping students with skills that will lead to their path of employment.
- vii. Manpower needs of the education system in Nigeria should be addressed. The methodology for handling children, teenagers and adults are not the same. This calls for training and retraining of teachers in educational institutions.

- viii. Visual aid teaching has almost gone in all facets of learning in Nigeria. It must be reintroduced from the pre-nursery to the tertiary institutions.
- ix. Reward system is discouraging. The teachers in schools are the least paid in the country. A local government councilor in Nigeria earns higher than a senior lecturer in the University. The annual income of a professor in Nigeria is less than the monthly income of a senator.
- x. Patronizer's of foreign education should pay tax on education. Whereas we do not advocate for the closing of window for educational tourism, yet the highly placed Nigerians, who prefer to send their children to advanced countries should be made to pay a form of high import of service duty.
- xi. Education environment, research grants security of life and property and other welfare packages need be addressed to minimize brain drain. A situation where a lecturer in the University takes home N68 (i.e. \$0.34) as monthly hazard allowance is laughable.
- xii. Government must trim the bogus and jumbo pay of the politicians to be able to finance the education sector.
- xiii. Corruption must be tackled with every measure of sincerity or else nothing meaningful would be achieved.

Suggestions for Improvement

- 1) Integrate education for sustainable development with special stress on economic and security development across the primary and secondary curriculum: It is important to fully integrate education for sustainable development in curricula across all subjects and within a clear framework.
- 2) Present-day sustainable development education should focus on diversity of issues such as health, human rights, conflict resolution, security, ethics, gender, economic development, poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability etc.
- 3) Provide professional training for administrators, teachers etc, to ensure education for sustainable economic and security development policy implementation.
- 4) Education for Sustainable economic and security development issues/concepts should be taught formally and informally in ways that they become the core of people's lives.
- 5) Students, community members, professionals and practitioners should be encouraged to develop skills necessary for sustainable development.
- 6) The revitalization of existing education at all levels to include principles, skills, perspectives and values of sustainable development.

- 7) School administrators should adopt education for sustainable development management practices with special emphasis on economic and security development, in order to complement and support the concept in the curriculum.
- 8) School administrators also need to adopt new management practices and structures, such as different time schedules in schools.
- 9) More research is needed to identify best practices.

Conclusion

Education for sustainable development is the process of achieving sustainable development, be it economic development, human development, security development and environmental protection and conservation. The concept of education for sustainable development, evolved largely from environmental education, which has sought to develop the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours in people to care for their environment.

Sustainable development should be mainstreamed into all areas of education and training. In this regard administrators, teachers and trainers should be well equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for adequate education of the society. Revitalization of the education for sustainable economic and security development in this season of rapid Industrialisation cannot be underscore as it would lead to more awareness of the ecosystem by the citizenry.

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