

Functional Education: A Panacea to Bad Governance, Insecurity and National Dis-Unity in Nigeria

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Abstract: *Nigeria's national policy on education in recognition of the relevance of education stated that no nation can rise beyond the quality of its educational system. thus, education is seen as a catalyst for socioeconomic and political development of a nation. the success of many nations in tackling major security and development problems such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, challenges of democracy, inequality among others can be traced to their educational system. one of the developmental problems in Nigeria which served as a catalyst to several other problems is the increasing rate of insecurity and challenges of democracy in Nigeria which marred national unity. it is not surprising that in a decade now, our youths had resorted to terrorism because of large scale democratic imbalanced and porous security. This paper therefore examined functional education as a panacea to bad governance, insecurity and national dis-unity in Nigeria. The paper started with clarification of the major concepts which include democracy and education, issues and challenges for leadership in Nigerian schools, functional education and national security in Nigeria, education and national unity, as well as contributions of education to national development. The challenges confronting education that had effects on sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria also formed issues for discussion. This paper has shown that, functional education had made the youths to participate on matter of governance and give them less time to plan evil which caused insecurity in the country and hindered national unity. The paper concluded that functional education is the process through which educational goals and objectives are achieved through collective and collaborative human efforts in suitable environment for sustainable democracy, peace and unity. It was recommended among others that education should be given priority in the nation's budget. Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching and learning facilities to enhance transfer of adequate knowledge. All these will foster unity, national development and ensure security in Nigeria.*

Keywords: Functional Education, Insecurity, Bad governance, National dis-unity. Democracy,

Introduction

Functional education is the type of education that equips the recipient with knowledge and skills needed for the performance of productive task. It is one that helps the society to meet their developmental needs. To drive this meaning home, Elechi (2014) observed that functional education equips the learner with the potentials and capabilities for self-reliance. These achievements from education go a long way to reducing illiteracy and poverty which are the impediments to national development, unity and national security.

Through functional education, qualitative manpower is produced. The educational system of any nation determines its types, nature and calibers of manpower to be supplied. The educational system and the commitment

to human resource development have been attributed to their level of achievement and other breakthroughs experienced in these countries.

Kayode and Onah (2014) rightly noted that functional educational system in Nigeria is still inefficient due to many factors such as insecurity and inequality in national distribution of resources. Its functionality will bring about accelerated growth in the economy and national security. When graduates of the country's educational institution can independently practice what they learnt in school without waiting for office or government jobs, more jobs will be created and income enhanced. The eradication of poverty and unemployment that follows undoubtedly will enhance national security.

The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Recently, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, kidnapping and "boko haram" insurgency (Mutiullah cited in Abubakar, 2011). Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2013). These problems have posed severe threats to socio-economic development in the country in that it stifles business and economic activities and discourages local and foreign investors (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

The success of any organization depends on the availability and efficient management of both human and material resources. With the rapid development in the educational sector and the projected increase in sizes and demand for education, there is need to effectively channel managers' attention towards the function and usefulness of human resources in a given organization. Otherwise, the goal of the school which is aimed at instituting teaching and learning will be jeopardized. Within the school context, teachers' job performance is very important in determining the extent to which learners learn and it is their duty to ensure they raise good students in character.

Democracy and Education

The conduct of education in a democracy is guided by a number of acceptable principles (Smith, 2013). In a democracy, it is the people themselves who elect government and they should be educated to do so responsibly. Not only must they be trained to think clearly and to distinguish truth from falsehood, but they must also acquire knowledge of the issues on which they are to vote. He further said that man must be educated to be free and to acknowledge that freedom entails the acceptance of restraints. In a democracy according to (Young, 2012), education does not or should not mold people to a rigid pattern, it should be unique, seeking to draw out and develop the special blend of talents that each person possesses. Education should train the open mind which respects and understands the views of others. Education therefore, according to him should develop the habit of

productive cooperation as well as healthy cooperation (Carr & Hartnet, 2015). A child is encouraged to join students' associations which interests him from which he acquires the talent to give and take and working with others.

Bush (2010) and Rodney (2012), pointed out that democracy expects of its educational system and its leadership, the growth of the nations to be equipped to assume responsibilities in political settings. But in order to benefit fully from our political system, we must be aware of its weakness as well as its strengths. The teacher must not conceal the ugly facts of political corruption, moral turpitude, and hypocrisy in high places. At the same time, he must explain how much the system contributes to the realization of its good life. Nigeria has borrowed some important ideas from socialist ideologies. Although, the nation is not anxious to have a classless society, some states are now nevertheless making determined efforts to make education free at all levels.

In the opening paragraph of National Policy on Education (1977) chapter 5 section 8 it was stated that education in Nigeria is no more private enterprise as it was in the colonial era, but a huge government venture that has witnessed a serious progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic interaction and active participation. The federal government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effective national development.

Issues and Challenges for Leadership in Nigerian Schools

Several issues and challenges are being faced by leaders of public schools based on the influence and powers of government of that state (Maclaren, 2013). Appointment of school heads are done by the ministry or commission in charge of education in various states. The Minister or Commissioner for education is invariably a politician, who has the interest of his party in mind before doing any appointment. On this note, inappropriate person might be appointed, as such, such management might not be successful.

Religious issues are also being considered in most of the appointment of school heads (Lenshie, 2006). In a situation whereby the person in the ministry or commission in charge of the appointment of the school head, in most cases keep considering people of the same faith with him. These have made distinctiveness in the educational system. Distinctiveness is viewed as supporting both academic success and positive actions on teaching and learning. The available evidence does show that students in private schools do better academically. One tangible way the private schools demonstrate their distinctiveness is through the school curriculum (Toyo, 2009). On students' admission, a green biro signature from a member of house of assembly or upper houses has given unqualified students admission, displacing the chances of qualified students.

The issue of quota system equally affects the leadership position in the educational sector as well as admission of students. It was made as a policy in the country that a percentage of every state is reserved either for admission

or employment in every institution as one Nigeria. In this case, chances of better persons are being denied the non-indigenes based on the Nigerian quota system. On this note, it is evident that politics and educational leadership go hand in hand and stand to be inseparable in the country.

Functional Education and Insecurity in Nigeria

The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Recently, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and interethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, kidnapping and “boko haram” insurgency (Mutiullah cited in Abubakar, 2011). Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2013). These problems have posed severe threats to socio-economic development in the country in that it stifles business and economic activities and discourages local and foreign investors (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

In a bid to tackle these problems, the Federal Government has for some years now been allocating huge portion of the national budget to security, and in 2011 the Anti-Terrorism Act was equally enacted by the National Assembly (Ewetan, 2013). The Act seeks to provide for measures for the prevention, prohibition and combating of acts of terrorism, the financing of terrorism in Nigeria and prescribes penalties for violating any of its provisions (Malala, 2016). In addition, the federal government has embarked on fundamental surveillance, investigation of criminally related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (King, 2016).

Dambazau (2014) quoting Act 26 of 1948 on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, sees education as not only a public good, it is also a human right that is essential for the exercise of all other human rights, especially in promoting individual freedom and empowerment. Zukang cited in Dambazau (2014) links education acquisition of genuine wealth and happiness whereas lack of it exacerbates one’s level of ignorance and leads to blunders, poverty, unhappiness, and sometimes the commission of crimes. To him, the relationship between lack of education, poverty and poor health conditions diminishes opportunities to social and economic advancement which often leads to criminality. Education is also essential in the military and para-military organizations which include the police that is saddled with the security of the nation. Dambazau (2014) stresses that education is used more as a strategic tool for advancement of technology needed for nation’s economic and socio-cultural development. In the military, it helps the armed forces to appraise situations; to estimate the battlefield; to examine

the courses of action; to interpret the international environment; to project future warfare and design the battlefield; and requirement to analyze security threats. Education in the military is not all about warfare, it also contributes to national development, and at the same time enhances national security. Dike (2003) submits that the socio-political and economic development of a nation and or her health are in many ways determined by the quality and level of educational attainment of the population. He, however, laments that the state of education in Nigeria cannot produce the critical and creative minds Nigeria needs to guide and manage democratic system and survive as a viable nation. Lack of quality education and unemployment in Nigeria would contribute to many social ills, including crime, prostitution, and the breakdown of law and order. Functional Education acts as a catalyst for the actualization of educational goals and objectives. This is done to ensure that the pandemonium encountered during insecurity in Nigeria is closely monitored for the sake of the economy of the country.

Nexus between Functional Education and Security in Nigeria

In securing lives and property of every nation, education is an essential tool. Sadiq (2013) asserts that an educated population is an asset to a nation due to the fact that education promotes national security as it inculcates desirable human traits like honesty, sincerity, hardwork, punctuality, productivity, innovation, patriotism, selflessness, brotherhood, friendship, etc. It also empowers people by inculcating life-long skills and know-how thereby liberating the individual from poverty and want.

Jonathan (2016) stresses the relationship between education, poverty and security, as he pointed that top ten most literate nations in the world are at peace, while almost all of the top 10 least literate nations in the world are in a state of either outright war or general insecurity. Lower education levels are linked to poverty and poverty is one of the chief causative factors of crime whether it is terrorism or militancy or felonies. To Jonathan, counter insurgency strategies are short term tools for securing a nation from insecurity while education provides a long term solution.

Malala (2016) submits that eradicating global terrorism goes beyond proliferation and development of guns and drones, rather spreading quality education across the globe irrespective of regions and culture because “through wars and weapons we can only kill terrorists - but this ideology of terrorism can only be ended through education”, hence, swapping of textbooks and other educational materials for drones and guns (Malala cited in Jayalakshmi, 2014). Malala also submitted that education is key to global security, therefore, there is need for change in policies in every nation of the world to cater holistically for education of every citizen which in turn could enhance tolerance, patience, love for each other, friendship and harmony in society.

It can therefore be asserted that sustainable global security can only be achieved when education is made a priority by states and their institutions. When properly realized, education can be a global asset to fight poverty, inequality, insecurity, and disease (Al-Rodhan, 2007).

Education and National Unity in Nigeria

The theme “Education for Unity and Development” brings to focus the concept of relevance and balance in education. In examining this concept, some questions beg for some consideration as follows:

1. How relevant are the educational offerings in Nigeria to real life situations?
2. How balanced are the learning opportunities and experiences?
3. How do relevance and balance in education foster unity and engender development?

Relevance refers to the extent to which education meets the needs, interest, intellectual and physical abilities of learners, and the values and objectives of a given society.

By the recent innovations in the school curriculum, what could have been consolidated decades ago is being given a trial again, with functional/vocational subject areas added to the general school curriculum to make learners better equipped for the challenges in the environment. Of recent, entrepreneurial education has been given attention at all levels of education in the country. Adequate preparations might not have been made in terms of its proper integration into school curriculum but emphasis is currently being put on entrepreneurial studies. For instance, school-industry linkage which is a major ingredient for the success of entrepreneurial education is only tried briefly at the tertiary education level and almost absent at the lower levels of education. Even at that, there is still a big gap in operation. It is a vital key to development which has produced tremendous developmental benefits in a number of countries such as Britain, Malaysia and China, to mention a few (Ekpo, 2014).

Concerning relevance education in fostering unity, there are fundamental and structural educational measures already put in place by successive national governments to engender unity in Nigeria. They include: -

The introduction of values education either as distinct subject or part of subject in the school curriculum from primary to tertiary levels;

- Establishment of unity schools across the nation (Federal Government Colleges) and Federal Universities and Colleges of Education/Technology;

- Application of Federal Character principles in school admissions and staffing at these secondary and tertiary institutions; and

- A wide range of national educational programmes and projects that cut across ethnic and state boundaries.

All these are aimed at instilling a sense of unity and collaboration in the citizenry. The problem of effectiveness is another issue.

However lofty the national policy on education is, if the political class who are the decision makers cannot divorce educational development matters from political gains and personal interest, the issue of ensuring relevance in education may continue to be an exercise in futility. So, one major challenge in ensuring relevance in education is the personal and political interest of the political leaders and civil service collaborators. Will they allow the system to run smoothly, employing the right caliber of teachers and not their unqualified kinsmen? Will they allow teachers' salaries and other entitlement to be paid timely and adequately devoid of political gimmicks and supply the necessary resources adequately and timely? These and related issues beg for attention and appropriate action for purposes of national development. Beyond education, if human beings who are the basic building blocks of a world society are at odds with themselves and others, there can be no unity and lasting peace. It is the development of the full potentialities of every individual (i.e. spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical) that will usher in peace, unity and development.

Functional Education and National Development in Nigeria

Afolabi and Loto (2012:330) asserted that a developed or educated polity is the one that has enough manpower and each person occupies his or her rightful position to enhance the growth of the society. To support this, Ajayi and Afolabi (2009:34-36) have also remarked that education is largely perceived in Nigeria as an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization. From the definition of education given earlier, it is clear that education trains an individual to be useful in the society and to meet up the need of the society for national development. Therefore, it should be clear that without education, a nation cannot get the needed manpower for material advancement and enlightenment of the citizenry. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors, inter alia are all the products of education. This explains why it is argued also that the quality of a nation's education determines the level of its national development.

Education promotes the culture of productivity by enabling individuals to discover the creative potentials in them thereby increasing the efficiency of their personal and societal efforts (Obasanjo 2012:3). Education teaches or trains people to be useful to themselves and the society they live. By this, they have to be productive and discover their creative abilities and use this to perform specific tasks to attain self-actualization.

Education also develops in individuals those values which make for good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work and personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which

good leadership potential is groomed. As already noted, education trains an individual to be responsible in the society. From this, it is clear that education gives moral training. Consequently, if the Boko Haram Islamic sect had received quality and sound education, they would have abstained from violence and it follows that if our elected representatives in the Rivers State House of Assembly had been well trained educationally, there wouldn't have been ugly incident as that of July, 9, 2013 in Rivers State. This, therefore, shows that Nigerian leaders are morally bankrupt and have nothing to offer in terms of national development from their leadership style. This therefore demonstrates that education has not fully impacted positively on Nigerian leaders (Orji and Maekae, 2013).

From the above, it is clear that education has a critical function in national development. But in the Nigerian context, education has not fully played its roles in this regard. This is as a result of certain inherent problems in the Nigerian education system. First among these problems is inadequate funding. Education is no doubt, directly linked with the processes of nation building and development. Education in Nigeria has not been properly funded and this leads to poor infrastructure developed in the universities, secondary and primary schools. This poor infrastructure makes the environment very hostile. This explains why highly placed Nigerians like senators and state legislators are cruel to each other to the point of fighting in their legislative houses.

Another point to be considered here is unsteady political environment. From independence till date, there have been several administrations in Nigeria. The successive political leaders either military or civilian often suspend the existing educational policies and replace them with the newly fashioned ones which typify their own political agenda. By this, the educational policy planners are compelled to jettison a plan still on the drawing board and take up new policies which must be geared towards meeting the current political demands. This has become a serious bottleneck to education in terms of achieving national development.

Incessant change of educational policies also impacts negatively on national development. A policy requires sufficient time to mature from planning phase to implementation phase and finally to review phase. For instance, a policy that affects the secondary level of Nigerian educational system would definitely require twelve years to have just two complete cycles that is Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). This is the reverse in the Nigerian context as the usual practice is to jettison such policy, drastically modify or completely abandon it for reasons obvious to the policy makers who are political leaders in power (Afolabi and Loto 2012: 339). Particular examples here include the phasing out of Teachers' Grade II programme in the late 1980s and the establishment of National Teachers' Institute (NTI), replacement of Modern Mathematics in schools with General Mathematics and incessant changes in school calander for flimsy excuses.

Also important to be mentioned is corruption. In most cases, budgetary allocation to the sector is always embezzled. At the same time, politicians use their offices to accumulate more money. For example, Nigeria has spent over N2 trillion on national assembly for the past seven years. With this, much will not be spent on education and it cannot contribute more to national development.

The Challenges Confronting Education that have effect on sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria.

These challenges are:

(1) Inadequate knowledge about the concept of education: Inadequate knowledge about the concept of education as well as its aims and objectives by both the educational stakeholders, policy makers, members of the general public and government. In other words, there is limited expertise and capacity in the field of educational management available in most parts of the country. Fumis (2018) support that educational policy makers are most effective when the skills and knowledge of peace and conflict resolution are learned and known by the planners as well as the implementers.

(2) Poor Power and Infrastructures: The place of adequate power and workable infrastructure in educational administration cannot be glossed over. Most tertiary institutions of higher learning lack the basic infrastructure to study in Nigeria. The absence of regular and stable power supply has made the use of few equipment where available in the laboratories and workshops impossible. The rudiment of educational administration can only be actualised with functional laboratories/workshops. The absence of basic infrastructure has made the set goals of education not to be achieved. The resultant effect of this is lack of good governance. Taofiq (2019) added that the lack of these formidable and essential facilities discourages teaching and learning of educational management and thus slows the pace of self-reliance based on good governance and national development.

(3) Poor Funding and Mismanagement: Educational administration which is at the Centre stage in the field of humanity and have in no small way in Nigeria schools been faced with inadequate funding. The funding of schools in Nigeria especially the tertiary institutions has traditionally been from grants, by the government and international agencies which are usually tied to specific projects (Oyeshola, 2018). High level of mismanagement and corruption in the utilization of the supposedly poor fund provided by the government and other stake holders are also basic issues. This has largely hindered functional libraries, laboratories, workshops, equipment and tools

from being put in place. For this, there can be no meaningful self-reliance and national development through educational administration.

(4) Inadequate Manpower: A significant problem faced with educational administration in Nigeria today is the issue of inadequate manpower. It is doubtful if Nigeria has sufficient and qualified number of indigenous administrators. This has in no small way hindered the growth of effective administration and by extension affected good governance and national development.

(5) Defective Curriculum: School curriculum in the pre-independent Nigeria was not for all-round development of the child as the aspects of science and technology which would have created entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance were ignored. It rather kept on producing subservient Nigerians who were tied to the apron string of white collar jobs viz: gardeners, stewards, interpreters, catechists, clerks and house-keepers (Etuk, 2018). All these made the people parasitic consumers rather than creative and efficient producers. There is an obvious relationship between development and the type of educational structures available in any country.

Conclusion

As the analysis above has clearly demonstrated the functionality of education, functional educational system in Nigeria is still inefficient due to many factors such as insecurity and inequality in national distribution of resources. Its functionality will bring about accelerated growth in the economy and national security. When graduates of the country's educational institution can independently practice what they learnt in school without waiting for office or government jobs, more jobs will be created and income enhanced. The eradication of poverty and unemployment that follows undoubtedly will enhance national security. Functional education is the process through which educational goals and objectives are achieved through collective and collaborative human efforts in suitable environment for sustainable democracy, peace and unity.

Recommendations

To ensure functional education which will enhance eradication of insecurity in Nigeria, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education should be given priority in the nation's budget.
Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching and learning facilities to enhance transfer of adequate knowledge.
2. The various supervisory agencies of the educational institutions and the ministry of education should be more committed to playing their role as a watch-dog in ensuring that all educational institutions from primary to tertiary operate within and abide by laid down standards.

3. There should be an ethical reorientation that aims at raising the consciousness of the citizenry and politicians in particular to see the sacred nature of education.

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