

EDUCATION, INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper focuses on education and economic development in Nigeria. One of the essences of education is to produce human resources that are skillful and knowledgeable; positioning man to be a critical resource upon which national economies, especially that of a developing nation like Nigeria hinge upon. In this paper, an attempt was made to correlate Nigeria's investment in education since independence and economic development so far attained, analyze the issues and challenges of economic development, the current state of education in Nigeria and the way forward. The paper contended in the light of overwhelming literature that education is the greatest investment that the nation can make for quick development of its economic, political and sociological development. To attain economic development through education in Nigeria, there should be serious commitment of government at all levels to effective educational policies from pre-planning stage through planning stage to post-planning stage (implementation) in realization of the fact that Nigeria is a developing country and it cannot afford to neglect the educational sector that is most crucial in the provision of the needed manpower for growth and development. The need for such commitment has become so palpable given that education is a tool for human capital development, and how well and fast a nation develops is dependent on its literacy level. It was on this note that the paper was concluded.

Keywords: Education, Economic development, Investment, Challenges.

Introduction

Education policy issues continue to be a question of critical concern in developing countries in Africa as a tool for development (Imam, 2012). From time antiquity, the role of education in economic development has never been denied. Castle in Adeyinka (2012) defines development as "a situation wherein man himself becomes both the object and the subject of his own improvement, not merely an instrument in a process imposed from above and from within." The issue is that what role education plays has not been as clear and agreed upon-or so it seems, otherwise it bigger believe that countries especially the developed and developing nations allocate grossly disproportionate resources toward educating their citizens. While some countries see education as primary propeller of economic development, some others see it as luxury.

The relationship between education and development has been established, such that education is now internationally accepted as a key development index and it is in recognition of this importance that governments all over the world have made commitments in their countries' educational policies for their citizens to have access to education (Odukoya, 2009). In this paper, an attempt is made to correlate Nigeria's investment in education since independence and economic development so far attained

issues and challenges of economic development, the current state of education in Nigeria and the way forward.

Education is an age long phenomenon in all societies although it may take various forms from one society to another. In Nigeria two forms of education were in existence before the advent of colonialism. They were indigenous education and Islamic education. Traditional education as was practiced in the southern and some parts of the middle belt Nigeria, consisted essentially of general but informal training in character, norms, agriculture, fishing intellectual and other ways of life as approved by society. Islamic education on the other hand was practiced mainly in Northern part of Nigeria. It is based on the Quran. Both forms of education preceded the Western education which was introduced to Nigeria in the 19th century by the European Christian missionaries. The advent of colonialism brought about formal education in Nigeria. The colonialists had to organize the training of the indigenous people to understand the Queen's language. The Christian missionaries organized schools and trained Nigerians the art of reading and writing. The initial persons that were trained in the communities became the first indigenous persons to be employed by the colonial government as interpreters, clerks and teachers.

Education has been described as a mode through which an individual obtains the requisite physical and social abilities or competencies needed for the development of a society (Uwadia 2010). Education is a system by which the necessary knowledge and understanding are gained through the methods of teaching and learning (Ugbogbo, Akwemoh, & Omoregie, 2013). The role education plays in the national development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. It has been established that no country can develop beyond her educational level. The realization of the economic development, advancement or independence of any nation is a function of the educational capacity of the working class or the decision makers of that nation. Education has been recognized globally as a veritable and strategic venture pivotal to economic transformation of any nation (Odeleye, 2012).

The role of human capital formation in economic development has long been recognized in the literature. According to Harbison (1973), “human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to

develop anything else”. Several other theoretical and empirical studies have found a positive correlation between human capital development and economic growth (Lucas, 1958; Rome, 1990; Barro, 2001; Abbas and Foreman – Peckb 2007). Education – formal and informal, contributes to skill acquisition. Informal education begins at the household level where children are taught how to sweep, clean their environment, fish or farm. By participating in these activities they learn how to do things by themselves and contribute to family income growth. Although such incomes are not recorded in national income accounting, they nevertheless amount to substantial family income.

According to Schultz (1962), formal education is a kind of investment in human being that enables them to acquire skills. Such skills raise the marginal product of the worker itself and also help to raise the marginal product of the other co-operant factors. Thus human capital has a unique character – it enters the production function as a factor of production and also as a marginal product augmenting variable. The latter makes the marginal rate of return on capital and other inputs rise continuously so that the unexplained growth rate explains the Solow's surplus.

The significance of education is not only in the area of providing the much needed

human capital or resources but it also acts as an agent in developing the necessary technological tools and know-how for economic take-off. Many discoveries have been unrivalled which have tremendously contributed to a shift from manual to electronic enabled methods of processing in every sector of the economy – service, manufacturing or mining – through researches.

Education is regarded as the best legacy any parent can give to his children because it brings out the innate ability and skills in the child to apply in solving any problem in every human endeavor. It is therefore seen as an investment (Abubakar, 2014). This shows that for any nation to maximize the benefits of education for sustainable development, it must invest heavily in education. This is one of the reasons the importance of education will continue to receive the attention of all stakeholders both at the local, state and federal levels in Nigeria.

Nigeria got her independence from the British government in 1960 and since then there has not been any appreciable development as the economy is still in comatose stage despite huge financial resources that have accrued to her (Dauda, 2010). The standard of education has continuously been in downward trend due to underfunding whereas the enrolment at all level of education has been on the increase. The quality and standard of education in Nigeria cannot

be compared with what is obtainable in developed nations which is directly or indirectly undermining its development process.

Orji and Job (2013), are of the opinion that in order to position Nigerian economy for a more desirable and meaningful development, the challenges facing the Nigerian educational sector and its reforms should be approached in a more pragmatic manner that would ensure sustainability, soundness and healthy environment in the system. The government at all levels should desist from paying lip services to many problems facing the sector which is considered pivotal to economic transformation of any nation.

In Nigeria, one of the challenges in the education sector is the skewness nature in the trend of recurrent expenditure on education. In 2015 and 2016, the federal government budget for education was N392.4billion and N369.6 billion representing 15.05% and 9.32% respectively of the total budget. This shows the insensitivity of the government to educational development. This allocation is far below the 26% recommended by the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for developing countries. The underfunding has resulted to frequent and unabated clampdown on schools through strike actions usually embarked upon by teachers/lecturers,

paucity of instructional materials, poor infrastructural facilities thus making teaching and learning un-conducive. It is worrisome that virtually all tertiary institutions in Nigeria seems to lack basic facilities for teaching and learning such as well-equipped laboratories, residential and lecture halls, security and healthcare for both the students and lecturers.

While over ten million children are still out-of-school, underfunding is seriously affecting the quality of teaching and learning in 187 institutions which comprised of federal universities (40), federal polytechnics (21), federal colleges of education (22) and unity colleges (104) aside state educational institutions (NUC 2016). It has clearly been brought to fore that in order to revive the Nigerian economy, there is an urgent need to aggressively and purposefully fund education sector with a view to generating the needed human capital capacity. It would be absolutely impossible for Nigeria to realize her dream of being among the top 20 economies in the world by 2030 if the present status of her educational sector remains unchanged. The strategic sectors of the Nigerian economy like power, health, education, agriculture, manufacturing and ICT needs competent professionals to survive and upturn the current economic woes. This can only be realized if sufficient funds are invested in the education sector which is the

backbone of any economy.

Literature Review

This paper is focused on education and economic development in South west Nigeria. It is worthy of note that education provides the needed human resources for economic transformation of any nation. This assertion is supported by Afolabi and Loto (2012), when they emphasized that a developed economy is proud of ample human manpower capable of enhancing the growth of a nation. Ajayi and Afolabi (2009), remarked that education in Nigeria is to a large extent considered as essential tool which will bring about the actualization or receipt of the necessary skills, character, values agility that will not only foster national unity but national development and self-actualization. It is therefore crystal clear that education trains the minds of people of a particular society for the purpose of making them relevant, useful and adequately preparing them to immensely contribute to national development. It shows that the needed manpower for economic growth and advancement cannot be actualized outside education. The quality of the products of education such as teachers, engineers, medical personnel, economist, accountants, lawyers etc. are the determinants of the success or otherwise of any economy.

Edoren (2009), stated that the effort of the successive government in Nigeria to improve the quality of education has been commendable. The Nigerian

government commitment has been felt in the areas of the implementation of compulsory education, primary to junior secondary school, through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, the introduction of Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Act of 2008, the revision of the national policy on education, the monumental increase in the number of enrolment of students into primary and secondary education most especially Muslim girls and nomadic, the establishment and implementation of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the inauguration of presidential task force on education in 2011 and deepen relationship with international organizations such as Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Education in Nigeria: An Overview

The education sector in Nigeria has passed through two phases of development. There is the first phase of rapid expansion in the growth of the sector. This phase may be broadly located within the period 1950 – 1980. There is the second phase of rapid decline in the sector in terms of growth. This phase falls within the period 1981 – 2009. In the early 1950s when representative governance took its roots in Nigeria, the three regional governments had control of the educational development in their

respective regions. This first phase in educational development in Nigeria effectively marked the beginning of rapid expansion in terms of access. For example the number of pupils in primary schools was 626,000 in 1954, the figure rose to 2,912,619 in 1960. Similarly the number of post primary school rose from 161 in 1955 to 912 in 1960. The student population in post primary schools rose from 9,908 in 1947 to 140,401 in 1960 (Aigbokhan, 2005). The surge in access to schools was due largely to the policies and programmes of governments that built primary and post primary schools and also provided grant – in- aid to missionary schools. We must note here that the missionary churches dominated the provision of schools before the government take-over of primary and post primary schools in the early 1970s.

It must be noted also that at this initial phase of educational development no effort was made to select school curricula that would meet the long-run developmental needs of the Nigeria society. Rather emphasis was placed on numeracy and general intellectual capacity while technical and practical skills were neglected. The university college Ibadan which was the only university in Nigeria before 1960 had no facilities of engineering, law and technology.

Access to Tertiary education was more than doubled with the establishment of

the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), university of Lagos (1962), University of Ife, Ile – Ife (1961), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1962), University of Benin, Benin City (1970). These universities were established and funded by the post independence regional governments. In 1975, the federal government took over the regional universities and also extended grants – in – aid to state owned polytechnics. More universities and colleges of technology (polytechnics) were established between 1975 and 1980.

Awopegba and Adedeji (2000) noted that in establishing the new educational institutions, sound investment criteria were not followed; instead the need to have regional balance, ethnicity, nepotism and opportunity for personal gains were the determining factor.

One significant government policy to ensure unimpeded access to primary education was the introduction of the universal primary education (UPE) programme. This policy made primary education free to all Nigerian children.

The second phase of the educational development in Nigeria was a period characterized by a decline in educational inputs leading to deterioration of educational fixed assets, inadequate funding and declining standards. Aighokhan et al (2005) noted that the

period 1978 – 1999 was a crisis period in the education sector in Nigeria and the root cause of the crises was inadequate funding.

Nigeria's philosophy of education

Nigeria's philosophy since independence has been anything but static. At independence, Nigeria's foremost educational objective was to train its nationals to take over its civil service.

Nigeria educational policy at independence was most concerned with using schools to develop manpower for economic development and Africanisation of the civil service (Woolman, 2001). Due to the narrow and unsatisfactory scope of this policy, in 1969 the National Curriculum Conference was convened which reviewed the educational system and its goals, and identified new national goals for Nigeria which would determine the future and direction of education in the country (Nigerian Educational Research Council, 1972). In 1976, the Federal Government of Nigeria under General Olusegun Obasanjo, embarked on the very ambitious Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) programme that expanded access into tertiary education and increased the number of unity schools in the country. By 1976, when the states of the Federation were increased to nineteen, each state promulgated an edict for the regulation of education, and its provision and

management. Each state also amended the Federal education law when necessary, which resulted in all the states' edicts having common features, such as state takeover of schools from individuals and voluntary agencies, using similar curriculum and the establishment of school management boards as well as a unified teaching service (Fabunmi, 2005).

The most significant changes of the period was the takeover of schools from the missionaries by the government resulting in a unified educational system based on the 7-5-2-3 educational policy: 7 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary school, 2 years Higher School Certificate Levels, and 3 years of university education. This was in the stead of the 8-5-2-3 educational policy: 8 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary school, 2 years Higher School Certificate Levels, and 3 years of university education (Imam, 2012). In addition, the large-scale government financing of education included tuition free university education and the setting of the stage for a national policy on education that was relevant and suited to the needs of the people.

Viewing the educational policy in Nigeria during the first 13 years of independence, the following are pertinent:

a) The influence of political change on

the educational policy;

- b) The roles of the federal and states government in the regulation and control of education;
- c) The promotion of education to the level of a huge government enterprise by expanding education access to raise enrolments and presumably bridge the educational gap; and
- d) The overall policy approach of government which was geared towards the development of an educational policy blueprint that took into cognizance the hopes and aspirations of Nigerians (Imam, 2012).

Nigeria adopted its first National Policy on Education in 1977 and followed subsequently with revisions in 1981, 1985, 1998, 2004 which was Nigeria's first indigenous educational policy. The policy has the following peculiarities:

- 1) It set specific objectives for the nation and its education;
- 2) It addressed the problem of unity and laid foundation for national integration;
- 3) It aimed at realizing a self-reliant and self-sufficient nation to meet the country's developmental needs.
- 4) It gave a comprehensive structure of educational system and laid the foundation for the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria (i.e. six years primary schooling, three years junior secondary education, three years senior secondary school and four years university education);

- 5) It made education in Nigeria the government's responsibility in terms of centralized control and funding of education;
- 6) It had a broad curriculum which aimed at creating learning opportunity for all children, irrespective of their sex, peculiar background or ability; and
- 7) It also specified the functions of adult education, non-formal education, special education and open and distance learning. (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1977 Revised 1981, 1985, 1998 and 2004).

It is a fact that every government that came has brought with it an agenda that includes education, the most recent being presidents Olusegun Obasanjo's National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), Umar Musa Yar'Adua's 7-point Agenda and Goodluck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda. However, beyond sloganeering, each of these schemes has yielded poor results in terms of gains on social development indices as well as economic productivity (Abubakar 2014).

Economic development in Nigeria

Nigeria's economic outlook in the past decade, and more recently, under this present administration been painted rosy and blossoming. According to Wikipedia (2013),

Nigeria is a middle income, mixed economy and emerging market, with expanding financial, service, communications, and entertainment sectors. It is ranked 30th (40th in 2005, 52nd in 2000), in the world in terms of GDP (PPP) as of 2012, and 2nd largest within Africa (behind South Africa), on track to becoming one of the 20 largest economies in the world by 2020. Its re-emergent, though currently underperforming, manufacturing sector is the third-largest on the continent, and produces a large proportion of goods and services for the West African region. Previously hindered by years of mismanagement, economic reforms of the past decade have put Nigeria back on track towards achieving its full economic potential. Nigerian GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) has almost trebled from \$170 billion in 2000 to \$451 billion in 2012, although estimates of the size of the informal sector (which is not included in official figures) put the actual numbers closer to \$630 billion. Correspondingly, the GDP per capita doubled from \$1400 per person in 2000 to an estimated \$2,800 per person in 2012 (again, with the inclusion of the informal sector, it is estimated that GDP per capita hovers around \$3,900 per person). (Population increased from 120 million in 2000 to 160 million in 2010). These figures might be revised upwards by as much as 40% when the country completes the rebasing of its economy later in 2013.

Beyond the glossy picture above, the latest report of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) notes that Nigeria accounts for almost half the total number of out-of-school children in the world at about 7 million (UNESCO, 2012). Despite this, projections from the United Nations indicate that Nigeria's population could rise to 440 million by 2050. Such uncontrolled population growth of largely illiterate and ultimately idle people poses serious threat to our national survival. It would not be out of place to re-emphasize that if the economy is actually flourishing at growth rate of 6.5% as claimed by the then finance minister, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, and the same government is investing less than 5% of budgetary allocation to education, then one can conclude that they do not place much premium on education as one of the key drivers of the economy. According to El-Rufai (2012), at independence, Nigeria spent an average of 40 percent of her budget on education (compared to today's two percent). The Old Western Region under Chief Obafemi Awolowo's visionary leadership devoted 55% while the Northern Region under an equally committed leadership of Sir Ahmadu Bello spent 46% of its budget on education. Today's funding for education is a far cry from UNESCO's recommendation of public

spending on education of at least 26% of annual budget, in spite of our statistical prosperity in economic parlance.

According to Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE, 2009), education was to be used to rectify the developmental imbalances inter-state and intra-state wise. The same NPE asserts inter alia, that education "... is also the greatest investment that the nation can make for quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources and that education is the most important instrument of change as any fundamental change in the intellectual and sociological outlook of any society has to be proceeded by an educational revolution (NPE, 1977:5).

The national education goals which derive from the philosophy are:

- I. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- ii. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around
- iii. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society (NPE, 2009)

Issues and Challenges

1. Funding: The first and perhaps the greatest challenge facing Nigeria and making it difficult for good quality education that is capable of bringing about sustainable development is inadequate funding by Federal, State and Local Governments. In 1997 and 2000 statistics show that Federal Government expenditure on education was below 10% of overall expenditure. It is noticed that, the national expenditure on education cannot be computed because various states expenditure on education cannot be determined, in relation to the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of national budgets. However, since 2007, Nigeria spent an average of about 0.7% of GDP and about 3% of the budget on education - among the lowest five ranked countries in the world!(El-Rufai, 2012).

2. Responsibility and Control: There is a clash in the control structure of education in Nigeria. The conflict between the federal, state and local governments in the management of education at various levels is one of the prominent challenges of educational development in Nigeria. Under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), education is an item on the Concurrent Legislative list upon which both the federal and state governments can legislate upon. While it has been contended that

the federal government should have little or nothing to do with primary and secondary schools and the states everything to do with them, the reverse has been the case. Ironically federal government owned universities are nowhere to be found in the top 1000 universities in the world. State governments on the other hand routinely abandon primary and secondary schools to witness infrastructural decays, incessant industrial actions and gross underfunding, preferring instead to embark on white elephant projects like the establishment of universities they cannot fund in most cases. This is a great barrier for effective educational development at basic level.

3. The problem of relating the curricula to national manpower needs: The Nigerian National Policy on Education emphasizes the need to relate school curricula to national manpower needs. Nigerian education curricula have been criticized as being "too literary; ... not practical, not adapted to the needs of a developing agricultural nation..." and only "tends to produce proud, lazy people who dislike manual labour and prefer white-collar jobs." (Adeyinka, 2012). In many respects, the curricula need to be updated and tailored to the needs of the 21st century economy. For instance, Nigeria is placed 128th (WDI – 2009), 91st in Internet Access in Schools, 97th in Quality of Mathematics and Science

Education, 115th in overall Quality of Scientific research institutions, 90th in Networked Readiness Index, 102nd in percentage of Internet users, 117th in Broadband internet subscribers. (ITU – WTI, 2008 -2009).

Conclusion

To attain economic development through education in Nigeria, there should be serious commitment of government at all levels to effective educational policies from pre-planning stage through planning stage to post-planning stage (implementation) in realization of the fact that Nigeria is a developing country and it can not afford to neglect the educational sector that is most crucial in the provision of the needed manpower for growth and development. Given that education is a tool for human capital development, how well and fast a nation develops is dependent on its literacy level. The accumulation of intellectual capital can help a nation strengthen its technology and become prosperous. Even though oil, gold and diamond may generate wealth for some countries, it is evident that they are no longer determinants of wealth - intellectual capital and technology rule the world. It is easy to neglect education because the consequences are not immediately felt. The findings vividly showed that, the

current economic crisis has resulted to a drop in government allocation to educational sector and this has negatively affected the education curriculum delivery. The government and teachers should diversify their revenue base and also be judicious in spending their earnings and allocations in order to overcome this financial crisis. Based on the above, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for diversification of Nigeria revenue sources through improvement in, solid minerals, agriculture and tourism sectors to boost the economy
2. Teachers should be more innovative in the utilization of some teaching aid and equipment
3. Concerted efforts and good attempts should be made by education stake holders to maximize their allocated resources by the government.
4. Government should provide the necessary funds to reduce the effects of the crisis on educational development
5. Ensure teacher salaries are been regularly paid and up to date.

Recommendation

In order to raise the standard of education and economic development in Nigeria, the following suggestions should be considered.

1. Adequate budgetary provision to funding education sector is necessary in this dimension.
2. Government at all levels should by all means allocate appropriate fund to education sector.
3. Apart from reviewing spending levels on education, we must enhance supervision to ensure strict adherence to standards at all levels.
4. The states and local government areas must take up more responsibilities in educational development.
5. More private sector participation should be encouraged with the right incentives - access to free land, single interest-long tenor loans, subsidized teacher training, etc!
6. Political considerations should not be the yardstick in establishing tertiary institutions.
7. Teachers' education and welfare must be improved as priorities.
8. At personal levels, those of us that have had the benefit of affordable and quality public education should all offer to teach voluntarily at the Nigerian university and public secondary

school nearest to where we live.

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