
Restructuring Secondary Educational Goals and Objectives for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

¹Prof. V.A. Asuru & ²IKPA Augustine Ikechukwu (Ph.D.)

^{1&2}Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt | asuruv@gmail.com | ikpaikechukwu@gmail.com

Abstract: Education is of functional value to the point that it enable individuals perform desired activities in a given society. This is premised on the fact that, education provides the background for sustainable national development and creates improved citizens and helps to upgrade the general standard of living in a society, hence positive social change is likely to be associated with the production of qualitative citizenry. However, the koan accompanying this belief is that, irrespective of the large input in education, there is no evidence of growth-promoting externalities of education in Nigeria. An investigation of the Nigerian education sector reveals the challenges of incoherence in policy formulation and implementation, such as the selection and organization of curriculum content, curriculum evaluation, the development, distribution and use of teaching materials, and the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of society. Therefore, the need for transformation in curriculum for all the educational levels becomes necessary. One possible way of achieving this is to redefine or restructure the curriculum, if not in all areas, core areas that have direct effects on labour. In advocating for the restructuring of secondary educational goals and objectives, Human resources for regional research and development ICT centers focusing on entrepreneurial education strategies, curriculum integration at all levels of education and the needed facilities that will encourage mastery and competence should be made available and funded, and that UNICEF recommendation of 26% of annual budget to be devoted to education should be strictly adhered to, among others.

Key words: Restructuring, Secondary Educational Goals and Objectives, Sustainable National Development.

Introduction

The basic role of education in ensuring effective attainment of educational goals and objectives for sustainable national development need not be overemphasized. This is because education is of functional value to the point that it enable individuals perform desired activities in a given society. In the view of Okafor (1984), education must be functional otherwise be regarded as impaired and elusive. Many developed and under-developed countries all over the world seemed to accept the numerous and prevalent contention to make education the basis of national development in Nigeria as a way of restructuring our educational system. This is premised on the fact that, education provides the background for sustainable national development. Education is not only a powerful instrument for the growth and development of man and the society, but also the key to increasing efficiency and social consistency of our great economy. Hence by increasing the essence and efficiency of their labour, it helps to raise the poor from poverty. It increases the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the labour force; ensures that a country is competitive in world markets now characterized by changing technologies and production methods.

In the words of Ayara (2007), education creates improved citizens and helps to upgrade the general standard of living in a society. Therefore, positive social change is likely to be associated with the production of qualitative citizenry. It would seem to follow naturally that if more individuals are educated, the wealth of nation would rise, since more education attracts higher wages and aggregatively higher national income. And if there are positive externalities of education, national income should increase by even more than the sum of the individual benefits. This increasing faith in education as an agent of change in many developing countries including Nigeria has led to a heavy investment in it, and thus the delegation of manpower development to the schools. As such, no country can achieve sustainable economic and national development without substantial investment in human capital, as it raises peoples' productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances (Ebong, 1996).

In addition it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution. The primary aim of education is to prepare learners for effective life in the society. The wake of this millennium has witnessed a mismatch between the education children receive in Nigerian schools and the life activities they are expected to engage in. It is imperative therefore to establish that it is painful to observe young graduates roaming the streets unsuccessfully looking for jobs while employers spend their time looking for competent workers. It is a problem of putting a square peg in a round hole. This is the era of technology revolution, the information age. Yet, it appears that the Nigerian education system has been overtaken by events. Since education lags behind technology advancement and it is education that prepares man for life, a change is urgently required. Perelman (1990) asserted that learning has become the strategically central enterprise for national competitiveness that steelwork was in the Industrial Age. As a result, the first nation not to 'reform' its education and training institutions but to replace them with a brand-new high tech. electronic – schools learning system will be the dominant world economic leader in the 21st century.

But however, the koan accompanying this belief is that, irrespective of the large input in education, there is no evidence of growth-promoting externalities of education in Nigeria, instead, education expansion further deepens social inequality and inculcate negative social changes such as cultism, rent seeking, sexual harassment, sorting, result racketeering, industrial disputes, brain drain among other social vices in the Nigerian school system and the society at large (Ayara, 2007). The increasing trend of unemployment, resulting from poor and incompetent labour force, even among the so called graduates makes the situation worse. Emphasizes on university certificate has led to the turnout of unbaked and half-baked graduates who cannot meet job requirement even when they find opportunity. The few who make their way into the public sector, remain there and slow the workforce, hence contributing to poor performance in the Nigeria educational sector.

An investigation of the Nigerian education sector reveals the challenges of incoherence in policy formulation and implementation. The selection and organization of curriculum content, curriculum implementation and evaluation, the development, distribution and use of teaching materials, and the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of society are defined. Therefore, the need for transformation in curriculum for all the educational levels becomes necessary. Sometimes it appears as if solutions are on the way, at other times one feels that the education system is back in the doldrums. Unless, the educational curriculum especially at the tertiary level is reviewed to meet

manpower need, the quest for national productivity may remain elusive. One possible way of achieving this is to redefine or restructure the curriculum, if not in all areas, core areas that have direct effects on labour.

In advocating for the restructuring of secondary educational goals and objectives, Perelman opined for appropriate Information Age in our system of education in Nigeria. Sequel to the above, Vaille (1999) stated that restructuring of secondary educational goals and objectives for Information Age is the process of exploiting technology to redesign and improve the total process of education. There is urgent need for education restructuring to ensure that education continues to produce effective citizens. Furthermore, Vaille asserted that educators are in the process of changing the what, where and how well of teaching and learning, and technology is at the heart of the change process. Mecklenburger (1990) had earlier called for a technology revolution in education. For education restructuring to be effective and efficient, it is fundamental for the education system to address what Winslow (1990) calls the “three Rs” of educational reform – first research, then redesign and finally reform. The implication is that the availability of computers in the classroom is not enough to support the ongoing learning revolution, which is the reason why Pearlman in Bruder (1990) insisted that changing the way teachers teach and the way students learn is the ultimate goal for restructuring secondary education.

In restructuring secondary educational goals and objectives, teachers should be assigned new roles. Teachers should not depend solely on the traditional tools such as chalk, textbooks, overhead video projectors and other types of traditional instructional materials to teach students the skills required. They have to use technologies of the day such as computers, interactive video, CD-ROM, Satellite communications and develop new teacher roles. The development and use of these Information and Communications Technology (ICT) devices and ideas to promote human learning is the hallmark of the restructuring system for sustainable national development. Sustainable implementation of this type of curriculum requires new teacher roles regarding the, what and how of instruction. The era when teachers were traditionally considered as directors, lecturers and disseminators of information is over. The new roles of teachers include managers and leaders of instruction. In other words, teachers should assume the roles of seekers, long-range planners, collaborators, researchers and mentors/mentees. However a teacher cannot assume these roles unless he/she is at home with ICT.

Restructuring Secondary Education System in Nigeria in the 21st Century

Consequent upon the increasing level of unemployment in the country our educational system and curriculum does not balance the theoretical training with skill acquisition for self-reliance among citizens. Thus it is incumbent on educators, policy formulators and the likes to effectively ensure that the general scheme of work and curriculum especially at all the levels of secondary education should be developed to converge our needs as a developing nation. In other words, all levels of education in the context of prevalent sustainable national development in Nigeria should provide learners with functional skills and knowledge to improve their productive life and to contribute to national development (Ogakwu, 2011). Nigeria has shown promises of beginning the process of re-structuring its educational system and it is important to note that the stakeholders have contributed significantly in the reform process. Especially important to note is the report by the Federal Ministry of Education at the International Conference of Education (FME, 2008) in

Geneva where a member of the writing team outlined in the Executive report the restructuring process going in the education system. In reviewing the process of reform outline in this report and comparing it to other developed and developing nations, it is critical to point to the need for a clear starting point, one that takes into consideration that education reform take many paths and must reflect an understanding of what our students will be able to do upon leaving each curricula level – elementary, secondary and tertiary. In addition, we must also ask ourselves, how these expectations aligned to the need of the 21st century workforce. Are there skills that foster entrepreneurial qualities reflected in our content or discipline, curriculum design and development? How globally aware are our Federal, State and Local policy leaders in selecting and allocating funding for curriculum support and training model? In line with these questions posed, one would suggest that change in the educational process in Nigeria, or any other school system for that matter can take multiple paths. Research points out that it can take the form of new curriculum inclusion, new assessment methods, change in leadership, teacher training, language policy, co-curricular emphasis or even matters of management and administration (Ogakwu, 2011).

The Nigerian Educational Sector

So much importance has been attached to education in Nigeria between 1950's and 90's, to the point that education was seen in some quarters as an end in itself. This is because education is viewed as a means of understanding, controlling, altering and redesigning human environment with a view to achieving and sustaining a better quality of life (CBN, 2000). The huge capital outlay and heavy recurrent expenditure requirement on education is often justified as an investment for the future. It was widely accepted that the key to socio-economic and political transformation which the Nigerian public desired lies in education. In the view of Taiwo (1996), it is the greatest instrument for the achievement of freedom for all and life more abundant. Therefore, it is evident for Nigeria propose for an educated electorate and citizenry to realize her goals and objectives of freedom and prosperity. With the concern, prior to and after independence, a lot of efforts have been made by the government to promote education in the country (at the federal, state and local level). One of such giant strides in the Nigeria education policy thrust was public takeover of grant-in-aids schools in states and the launching of the national scheme for Universal Primary Education (UPE), hut was not sustained due to frequent change in the socioeconomic and political conditions in the nation. However, the ruling government has also ensured the revival of the policy of universal education enshrined in the 1976 education policy with a different nomenclature - Universal Basic Education (UBE). It is imperative therefore to establish that UBE resulted to increased enrollment but the commitment of the government could not sustain the policy drive because of the re-introduction of school fees even though some states layed it off.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2003) agreed that the 1978-1999 period was an ill period for educational system in Nigeria due to resurgence of instability and financial inadequacies in the management, and was affected by the general economic down turn of the 1980s. Consequently, expansion in primary school education after 1986 was forestalled followed by the ills of regular occurrence of unpaid teachers' salaries, the degeneration of educational facilities and infrastructure at all levels and the attendant common place strikes across all tiers of Nigeria education system till date. The root cause of the problems of education sector in Nigeria can be traced to poor financial investment. This was confirmed in the work of Central Bank of Nigeria (2000), which posited that

inadequate funding has been the bane of educational system to the extent that budgeting allocations had been very low compared with others. Furthermore, that the Federal Government allocation to education ranged between 0.6 and 9.0 percent for recurrent and 1.0 to 2.8 percent for capital expenditure of the federal government budget for the period of 1992-1996. The government of Nigeria in the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) Programme recognize that one of the main challenges facing the educational institutions in the country was inadequate funding, and as such the issue of educational expenditures is quite obvious.

Under-funding of education is another factor that has militated against the educational programmes of the 21st century. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), education should consume about 26% of country's annual budget. This is because education is the hub on which every development revolves. The highest education was in 2008 when it was given 8% of the National Budget. Fund is required to pay staff, provide and maintain equipment or facilities. The best brains the country has produced are constantly lost to the advanced countries of the world where education is properly funded (Ogakwu, 2011).

By the mid-1960s, educators and educational planners were rethinking Nigeria's education system and in particular, the curriculum being taught in the schools. The question is has Nigeria educational policy been capable of providing the needed manpower development to stir the nation's socio-economic exigencies left by the colonial masters? The non-directional policy issue has been the main bane of the educational system particular with reference to the curriculum structure. So far, we have had more than three different systems borne out of incessant changes in policies. It has become a tradition to abandon policy in mid-stream. The effect of this policy somersault cannot be over-stressed. Science Teachers' Association of Nigeria (STAN) are bodies that have worked hard to translate national and educational goals and objectives into curricula and teaching objectives through the development of curricula designed to help individuals attain cognition, acquire process skills and develop scientific attitudes which will enable them to think critically, manage and use available resources, to effectively adapt to their environment, assume responsibilities and fulfill domestic, economic, social, and political roles. STAN has continued to give a critical appraisal of the science education curriculum with a view to identifying defects and devising original solutions. To this effect, STAN has devoted its efforts to science curriculum innovation and renewal particularly at the primary and secondary education levels (Ajibola, 2008). With societal changes, there have been a lot of innovations in the Nigerian educational philosophy and policies to meet changing needs. The provision for a core curriculum (or core subjects) and optional curriculum (or elective subjects) is also a significant change. The aims of these changes are to guarantee an all-round education for learners, and to bring some degree of diversity into curriculum development. In this, the tertiary institutions seem to share.

Education for the attainment National Development

Education, as the key to attaining national development and economic efficiency, may not achieve its goals and objectives if; there is no correlating relevance between the school curriculum, especially at the tertiary level and labour need. It will be difficult for a country to achieve improved productivity through education, if a high percentage of the school graduates do not have required skills that meet job needs. The major role of education is manpower development; the manpower developed must be able to help solve major issues our country faces. As a result education must

be relevant in courses and content. This is applicable to all academic discipline. A policy framework designed to achieve is founded on the need to institute a one year ATTACHMENT SCHEME to every university degree awarding programme. Majority of our youths with university degrees are unemployed. There is lack of vertical or horizontal job mobility for many persons, city and rural depressed areas and the lack of relevance of much education in terms of a work role. The policy is informed by the need to develop practical skills in educational disciplines before graduating to face the labour market. The policy framework is further strengthened by the four cardinal objectives as:

1. To understand, appreciate and promote organizational objective. The process is strategic to the extent that organizational goals are well defined goals and targets whose attainments are time-bound. It is dynamic, responsive and result oriented; continually evolving to address emerging challenges as well as proactive. It is further an effective monitoring system to that necessary improvements in the process. In it all, the objective of capacity building is achieved in the mind of the young school graduate to be.
2. It will help the students acquire specific training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour after graduation, especially within the discipline of choice
3. From, the above objective, a sense of self-reliance, competence and the ability to become self-employed is developed. Instead of hang out for employment opportunities were there are none, within this skill developed, an individual can get on something and become self-employed.
4. Finally, to help create an appropriate balance and critical mass of human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to be fully engaged and contribute, to national development efforts. It involves providing opportunities for all citizens to develop to their fullest potentials through education, training and motivation as well as creating the enabling environment for everyone to participate fully in rational development.

Delays in restructuring secondary education systems to keep pace with economic structures are most common in the transition economies of the Nigerian labour force. Undermining this can hinder growth; conversely, timely reform can pay off in terms of improving productivity both in the public and private sector and economic growth. Sophistication of this nature is a reflection of the quality and emphasis on education within this share concern, hence while Ajibola (2008) recommended for an urgent need for curriculum renovation that is realistic and child-centered, quick in rejuvenating and revitalizing hope and for acquisition of broad-based knowledge that is worthwhile in a learner to be the focus of the structure. Equally, changes and innovations of a school system of our globalized environment must involve the emergence of elastic curricula models and educational policies which emphasize interdisciplinary courses, open-ended systems, inter-generational and inter-professional relationships, multi-culturalism and sustainability. The need for a paradigm shift from theoretical and paper certification to a practical application of knowledge necessary for future employment and skills development for self-employment should be the cardinal objectives of Nigerian secondary education. Curriculum developers should also adopt the interdisciplinary approach to curriculum especially at the primary and junior secondary school levels. Emphasis should be on the changing needs of the society through reliance on the understanding and application of new technologies.

Conclusion

It is a viable option to entrench quality education regime in our education system as to make our national and economic development to be indispensable. This is because as no national development is realistic in the bridge of good education. A balanced education system promotes not only national development, but productivity, and generates individual income per capita. Its influence is noticeable at the micro level of an individual family. Much as Nigeria and other developing nations depend upon education to provide solutions to her problems, especially national and economic problems, a good educational framework with functional curriculum must be developed in other for this goal to be achieved. In restructuring secondary educational goals and objective for sustainable national development and to meet with the 21st century demand, the Nigerian government through its various education stakeholders must be involved in the process of increasing the demand for primary, secondary and higher education in terms of attracting the best in the field of research and teaching, internationalizing Nigeria's education. The involvement of the private sector in restructuring will also increase competition, collaboration and mentoring opportunities that will lead to innovation similar to emerging economies of the world. Currently, in the 21st century these days, there is great increase in student's enrolment in our educational institutions without corresponding increase in facilities to march the population. Most of the educational institutions are admitting far beyond their carrying capacities. This Pluto pressure on the existing human and material resources. It is against this background that the author feels that Nigeria secondary educational goals and objectives needs to be restructured for sustainable national development.

Recommendation

In order to restructure Nigeria's 21st century Nigeria secondary educational goals and objectives for sustainable national development, the following recommendations were made:

- Human resources for regional research and development centers focusing on entrepreneurial education strategies, curriculum integration at all levels of education and the needed facilities that will encourage mastery and competence should be made available and funded.
- Provision of resources and technological infrastructure for sustainable research and creation of centres of excellence that encourage interdisciplinary research for best practices.
- In the interim the Federal Ministry of Education should select and prepare some teachers as Advance Skills Teachers (AST) in ICT and to ensure the availability of one AST in each secondary school in Nigeria.
- The Federal Ministry of Education and State Ministries of Education should ensure that schools are equipped with ICT facilities especially with basic ones such as computers.
- The Federal Government should set up a National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) to provide grant programmes for primary and secondary school teachers for projects that improve professional development.
- UNICEF recommendation of 26% of annual budget to be devoted to education should be strictly adhered to.

References

- Ajibola, G.M. (2008). *Manpower strategies for the 1980s in economic community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) development planning and strategies in ECOWAS*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria.
- Akudolu, L.R. (2002). Restructuring Nigerian secondary education system through information and communications technology (Ict) – driven curriculum. *Journal of the World council for Curriculum and Instruction*, 3(1), 7-17.
- Ayara, N. N. (2007). A dynamic analysis of education and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Developing Areas*, 4(2), 12-16
- Ebong, F. (1996). Higher-Level manpower development: An assessment of the growth and academic performance of Nigerian Universitie. *Ph.D Thesis, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos*.
- Mecklenburger, J.A. (1990). The new revolution. *Technology Comes Into Education* 22 ED-26ED.
- Ogakwu, V.N. (2011). *Refocusing Education in Nigeria in the 21st century*. Lagos: West and Solomon Publishing Coy Limited.
- Okafor, F.C. (1984). *Philosophy of education and third world perspective*. Enugu: Star Publishing Company.
- Perelman, L.J. (1990). Teachers on the firing line. *Technology Revolution Comes To Education* 12ED – 20ED.
- Taiwo, F.H. (1996). The strategy of human resource development in modernizing economies. *A policy conference paper on economic growth and investment in education (Paris OECD, 1961) Pp. 9-33*.
- Vaille, J. (1999). Join us in welcoming ISTE New CEO. *Learning and Leading with Technology*, 5(1), 27-29.
- Winslow, C.D. (1990). The Three RS: Research, Redesign and Reform *Technology Revolution Comes to Education* 40ED – 41ED.