

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA THROUGH EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the government's efforts towards the development of its manpower through education and also acknowledges the fact that there can be no meaningful development of any country without education. The paper pointed out that inspite of government effort towards manpower development through education certain challenges exist in our educational system which hinders education from achieving its proper objectives. Manpower development as a term was examined, revealing that it has to do with the process of improving and developing the skills and potentials of the individual who in turn develop the organization or country where they operate. It focused on the use of education as a yardstick for the development of its citizenry. The paper concluded that with educated manpower, the nation will adequately harness her natural endowed resources for overall development. Recommendations for solving such problems were also made.

Keywords: Issues and Challenges, Manpower Development, Education.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, education has been recognized as a generic medium by which people born into a given society acquire a social identity to enable them perform certain basic human functions. The functions could be socio-economic and political development, social reproduction and intergenerational continuity. Again, the dynamic society is regularly shaped by socio-economic and political factors made possible by education. To large extent, educational policies and their implementations determine how the needs of the contemporary society are met. For any organization, institution or even a nation to function effectively, there must be

human and material resources. But among these resources, human resources are the most paramount, since other resources cannot be utilized without human beings.

For this reason, these human beings who constitute the manpower resources in an organization, institution or nation must be well-trained, informed and groomed (Asodike & Obasi, 2007). The act of training, educating and grooming human resources connotes manpower development. In the task of manpower development, tertiary education through its institutions is very vital. The essence of establishing tertiary institutions in the nation is among other things, to provide manpower needs of the society by the training of professionals in various fields of endeavours, all for the overall development of the nation. In this paper, we shall discuss what constitute education, manpower, development and manpower development as a term. The role of education in achieving manpower development will be examined, challenges of manpower development will be highlighted and at the end, possible solutions or way to mitigate them shall be x-rayed.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Education as a Tool for Manpower Development

Education is indeed the bedrock of development of any society and this can only be achieved when the needed manpower are produced, trained and made available. In order to x-ray the issues and challenges affecting education and its manpower development in Nigeria in the past two decades, it becomes necessary to examine the various conceptualizations of education and adopt an operational definition. However, an insight shall be given on what constitute education for manpower development. The importance of education for any National Development cannot be over emphasized neither would it be an over statement to state unmistakably that education remains the only heady instrument as well as the prerequisite for the harmonious functioning of the citizens of any society which translates to economic, social and political growth and development of the society that is committed to it globally in this 21st century. Driving home the essence of education in this direction, Olaniyounu and Gbenu (2016), saw education as the process of training and developing the knowledge, skill, mind and character of people. It can as well be seen as the process by which latent abilities of individuals are developed so that they can be useful to themselves and the society at large.

Ajonuma (2010) saw education as the process of developing human capacity, skills, abilities, behaviours, and encompasses the social process of achieving competence, growth and development in an institutional or organizational setting. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) has described education as an instrument 'per excellence' for effecting national development. It affirmed that education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because it is the most important instrument of change. It is the transmission of a body of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes among others acquired over the years and treasured for the next generation (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2007)

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world conference on Higher Education in 1998, rightly declared that education is a fundamental pillar of human rights, democracy, sustainable development and peace. The emphasis here is that education is a catalyst for all development processes in human life. Education empowers the individual, institutions and the government to meet the needs arising from the complex nature of the society. An Indian scholar Swami Kananda simply described education as a man making process (Ololube, 2009, 2011). Education is therefore seen as

being essential for all round development of the child. Education has always been linked with the society, the personal and social dimension as both sides of the coin of education.

To this end, Ololube (2017) opined that education is set as a social service that depends on the current demand for the education at different levels and projections. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) clearly stated that education is oriented towards inculcating certain values in meeting the societal demands. They include among others acquisition of competences necessary for self-reliance, respect for the worth and dignity of individuals, shared responsibility for the common good of the society, etc. It further explains that education will ensure quality output, hence, skilled teachers that are equipped enough to contribute to the development of the society.

Fafunwa (1974) opined that education is the processes by which a young child or adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour, which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. After reviewing the chronology of various definitions by the earliest philosophers, psychologists and sociologists, Ukeje (1986) concluded that education is power; it is a process of acquiring knowledge and ideas that shape and condition man's attitudes, actions and achievements. It is a process of developing the child's moral, physical, emotional and intellectual powers for his contribution in social reform; it is the process of mastering the laws of nature and for utilizing them effectively for the welfare of the individual and for social reconstruction; it is the art of the utilization of knowledge for complete living.

Education equips individuals with adequate skills and knowledge to contribute towards the sustainability and improvement of the human conditions in their environment. Okoh (2003) stated that education is a systematic and organized knowledge. Education can be seen as a process, product and discipline. Okoh (2003) maintained that education develops the individual continuously for a functional adult life in the society. As a product, education refers to the change, overt or covert, implicit or explicit which the individual exhibits as a result of education. Ololube (2013, 2017) observed that the theme of education should be able to bring about desirable changes in behaviour as well as acquisition of skills and competences. This implies that education either formal, informal in any given society is expected to help an individual acquire the necessary knowledge, build the right attitude and skills that will enable him/her fit properly into the society. Education is a universal social phenomenon which exists in every society.

Manpower as a Tool in National Goal Attainment

Manpower is a vital tool for achieving organizational or national goal. Manpower is human resource, Ololube (2019) and Omemu (2020) defined human resources as the stock of those persons whose behaviours have been changed through learning readily available for use to achieve target goals. According to DenCenzo and Robbins (1999), human resources are people, not buildings, equipment or brand names that make the institutions or organizations. In the word of Murphy (2004), resources are all the assets which may be used to attain organizational or educational goals. Blair (2005) saw manpower as all people who perform the activities of an organization. George and John (2004) saw manpower as those acquired functional knowledge and skills which individuals can supply and gainfully utilize for purpose of achieving productivity.

According to Onah (2000), Manpower/Human resources exist within people and consist of a person's potential abilities as knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, physical and mental traits needed to perform job. Osaat (2006) asserted that human resources are relevant for qualitative education. Development involves the activity or task of improving upon an already existing phenomenon. According to Olisa and Obiukwu (1992), development

involves strategy designed to improve economic and social lives of the people. Development therefore constitutes the process of planned change for which one approach or the other is adopted for the improvement and or transformation of the lots of the people. Development involves change, change for better. The fourth National Development Plan (1981) described development to be the true development of man, the unfolding and realization of his creative potential, enabling him improve his material conditions of living through the use of resources available to them (Asodike & Obasi, 2007; Ololube, 2017).

Manpower Development

Manpower development can be said to mean a system by which the management of an organization help each staff or individual of the organization to realize his/her potential, develop it and bring it to bear the growth for the organization (Cannel, 2004). It Involves activities such as indoctrination and training programmes, which could be conducted at various points, systematically performed in physical location and in the individual supervisor's performance appraisal, apprenticeship systematic coaching, sponsorship and other comparable activities in which a selected and group of young employees are groomed systematically for high level jobs. Also, Manpower development according to Nedler (2007), involves other specific educational devices such as participation in conference and training programmes and the likes. It also covers a range of elaborate schemes of selection approval and placement. The goal of any organization or nation cannot be achieved without human resource development.

According to Dencenzo and Robbins (1999), it is people, not buildings, equipment or brand names that make the institutions or organizations. To Murphy (2004), resources includes manpower in terms of human are all the assets which may be used to attain organizational or educational goals. Manpower/Human resources according to Blair (2005) are all people who perform the activities of an organization. Manpower is the labour force or work force of a country. In its broad concept, it includes all who are potentially employable, ranging from unskilled to the most highly skilled workers (Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 6). Thus, in this paper, manpower development is described as all the processes involved in making individuals acquire knowledge, skills and capabilities which dispose them to be engaged in or for readiness for productive activities. '

Manpower development involves quantitative and qualitative training of persons to carry out jobs in the society. It is an important factor in the economy of every nation and no serious nation can afford to ignore it (Asodike & Obasi, 2007). In Nigeria, it has been a major concern of the government since independence. It was clear to the government that political independence without economic self-reliance would bring about no meaningful development. In this regard the government has emphasized and encouraged in many ways manpower development in various educational and socio-economic programmes. For instance, the government has established many educational institutions including schools of science and technology all over the country for the development of middle level and high level manpower for our economy. Also, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through Decree No. 47 established Industrial Training Fund (ITF) for the purpose of training students, on-the-job training, and retraining of both students and staff of various training institutions. The government still assists students of vocational and technical education in higher institutions of learning through the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES).'

All these efforts notwithstanding, is still in doubt as to whether Nigeria is fully achieving her objectives of manpower development. Are there not factors/issues in our education system that militates against high quality manpower development in our country? Nigeria education is deficient in terms of manpower development, because a symbiotic

relationship exists between our education and its manpower development, whence one is deficient, the other is in efficient. Making one efficient and effective also impacts positively on the both. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development's (UNCSD) human development index ranked Nigeria 136 (out of 162) under least developed countries in 2002 and as 158 out of 177 nations in 2005 (Agabi & Egbezor, 2005).

According to the Magazine Earth Watch (May/June, 2003) the indicators of underdevelopment are poor health, low productivity, high rate of unemployment, high mortality rate, low school enrolment, high level of crimes (corruption) and lack of patriotism (Agabi & Egbezor, 2005). These vices are fallouts of the educational crisis arising from the lack of manpower development. Today, Nigeria is very far away from the attainment of goal No. 4 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) which is quality education. The reason being that there cannot be quality education in the midst of manpower development, and there are multifarious issues and critical challenges plaguing manpower development in Nigeria.

Rationale for Manpower Development

Pitfield (2009) is of the opinion that the objectives of manpower development is to provide the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary to undertake required job, and efficiently develop the workers so that if they have the potentials, they would make progress, increase efficiency by reducing spoilt work, misusing of machines and lessening physical risks. Olabisi (2007) submited that manpower development aimed at developing competences such as technical expertise to lead others; the need to perform one's job efficiently and the desire to meet organizational objectives of higher productivity and profitability. According to her, the main objective of setting up a company is to make profit and to achieve organizational goals; adequate manpower and development programmes should be put in place to enhance workers' performance. It is obvious from these definitions by these and many other scholars that one thing is deductible and that is the fact that manpower also known as human resources of an organization are people who perform activities in the organization.

Influence of Education on Manpower Development in Nigeria

Education influence manpower development in Nigeria through the country's tertiary education which is the apex of the sub-system of higher education in any nation. Tertiary education has the role of ensuring manpower development for adequate resources needs of the society and institutions thereof. The goals of tertiary education as stipulated in the Nigeria Education Policy document are among other things to:

- Contribute to national development through high level manpower training.
- Develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enables individual to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.

Looking at these goals as stated, one may agree that the major role of tertiary education through its institutions is that of manpower development, which involves the task of inculcating the skills, aptitude, attitude, knowledge, morals, values, creative ability, etc.

Ogunu (2000) saw manpower or human resource development as cited above to give insight on the role of tertiary education in manpower development. This definition indicated that the tertiary education through its institutions has the role of improving those who are committed to it in all ramifications. First, it has the role of developing the skills of the learner through well packaged educational programmes and entrepreneurial training. Again, it has the duty to develop the creative ability of the individual learner which can only be achieved according to John Dewey, by giving the learner challenging tasks. Tertiary education has the statutory role of imparting worthwhile knowledge in the learner so as to equip him to contribute meaningfully to the nation's growth and development. It equally has the role of instilling in the learner, the spirit of commitment, good morals and values. This way, individual learners would be intellectually, morally, physically, mentally and psychologically sound, suitable for organizational, institutional and societal use.

In achieving all these encompassing roles, there is need for effective teaching and learning, research development culture, effective staff development programmes, unending generation and dissemination of knowledge, adequate and functional students industrial work experience scheme, maintenance of minimum educational standard through appropriate agencies, inter- institutional cooperation, dedicated services to the community through extramural and extension services, adequate and frequent training and re-training of the teaching staff of the tertiary institutions to enhance techniques and methodology in teaching.

Furthermore, the overall emphasis of tertiary education in the development of the learner's skills and competence. The administration of tertiary education should be second to none in terms of personnel management, policy implementation, student-staff relationship, maintenance culture among other things. This way, the tertiary education would have assumed its proper position in the development of human resources. In achieving these lofty goals of manpower development by the tertiary institutions, it is obvious that some impediments are always there to be confronted, which the tertiary institutions and its management must as a matter of necessity take cognizance of and be ready to address. However, the highlights of these challenge become necessary so that the pit falls are identified for possible avoidance.

Challenges of Manpower Development in Nigeria

Challenges facing education and manpower development in Nigeria are hereunder identified.

Challenge of economic underdevelopment: poor economy begets poor education. The National Bureau of Statistics in 2013 gave a shameful statistical data of Nigeria on some key areas as inflation rate -9%, unemployment rate -23%, foreign debt - \$5.9bn, GDP is 7.5%, domestic debt - \$5.6trillion (Izuagba, 2017). Today the situation has gone worse than this.

Challenge of poverty: The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) places our poverty rate at 71% (Izuagba, 2017). Currently more than 50% of our estimated 200,000,000 population live below poverty line.

Challenge of leadership: Leadership is a political superstructure which affects other sectors of the nation. Nigeria is plagued by bad, ignorant and heartless leaders who are indifferent to the development of the country.

Challenge of funding or budgetary allocation to Nigeria Tertiary Institution: According to UNESCO, every country is to allocate 26% of its budget to education (Oweh, 2013). In Nigeria, this is a mirage as education takes 0.5%. This poor funding results in poor

infrastructure, understaffing, poor personnel, administration, etc. This unfavourably affects the institution's drive for manpower development.

Challenge of poor management of available resources: Leaders and those in position of authority are very carefree and lack prudent management skills and knowledge.

Lack of statistical data for planning and implementation: 62 years after political independence Nigeria cannot boost of managing its data very well. No data bank of the number of people, male, female, youths, children etc.

Lack of training opportunities: No training opportunities for the teachers who provide, train and groom the manpower for the country. Our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions are mere transit camps. The dynamism associated with globalization call for more work on the tertiary institutions. Under this situation, how possible will our universities and other higher institutions of learning be able to come up with new strategies, techniques and methods that will enable them to implement ICT in education in as to boast development expected of higher institution in Nigeria.

Challenge of brain drain: The best brains migrate to foreign land because of poor working environment and remuneration of the manpower.

Challenge of education tourism: The elite otherwise called political class prefer to send their children and wards to foreign land for studies. This leads to capital flight thereby affecting the country's economy. According to the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), over nine billion dollars was spent by Nigerians in 2021 in foreign land on education (Vanguard Newspaper March 20, 2022).

Challenge of corruption: Nigeria is battling with the problem of widespread corruption in all the sectors. Education is worst hit as money meant for educational development are being looted unchallenged by those in authority.

The challenge of examination malpractice: Exam malpractice is the order of the day in Nigeria. From the school certificate level to the university, even up to post graduate level. The question is, what kind of graduates and manpower do we expect at the end of the day?

The challenge of cultism in our schools: Our institutions—secondary and tertiary have suddenly become safe havens for cultists and criminal elements. What do we get as products?

Challenge of strikes: The issue of incessant strikes in our educational system especially the university is a critical challenge. This affects our manpower development. Very often, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) embarks on strike to drive home their points. The spontaneous effect is that generations of doctors, engineers and other professions from public schools will be lost.

Issues in Nigeria Education

Issue of inadequate Funding: It is true that the government has been making visible efforts in ensuring that adequate and qualified manpower is developed for the economy of this nation. As already stated, many manpower training institutions are established. Some candidates are sent abroad for technical training. Students of vocational and technical

courses in the country are assisted. However, it is also very true than Nigerian education is beset with financial problems. The government is finding it extremely difficult! to implement the National Policy on Education. Some projects are partially executed while others are entirely abandoned. Hardly can any school boast of adequate teaching and learning materials. Teachers do not have job satisfaction and that is why we experience brain drain at all levels on education. This lack of job satisfaction' also encourages teachers' misconduct of extorting learners to enhance teacher's means of living.

If there are inadequate teaching and learning materials in schools, how can learners be adequately trained? It will result in producing half-baked manpower for our economy. If high intelligent and talented teachers should continue to abandon their jobs for greener pastures then our education system will be left with mediocre and since no nation can rise above the quality of its educated citizens (Ajayi, 1997), we will continue to have low and middle level manpower while high - level manpower will be scarce. So, no matter how good our education plans and policies are, the stated objectives can hardly be achieved without adequate funds to execute them.

Issue of Examination Malpractice: Examination malpractice could be regarded as any irregular behaviour premeditated and exhibited by candidates or people charged with the conduct of examination (Aliyu, 1996). It includes any activities or actions of people planned or carried out to make candidates gain undue advantage in an examination. In the 1970s examination malpractice was something that could be hardly imagined. Today, in Nigeria it has become a culture such that greater percentage of candidates can hardly write their examinations without one form of malpractice or the other. This evil has spread to all levels of education in the country. Apart from these effects, examination malpractice has contributed much in lowering the standard of education and according to Shonekan (1996), it makes examination results unreliable. That is why now, many secondary school leavers would possess nice certificates with Alpha and Credit grades yet majority can hardly write informal letters or essays with correct spellings and good sentences.

This situation affects manpower development in the country negatively. The greater the rate of examination fraud the lower the quality of manpower produced.

Quota System of Admission into Schools: For a long time the admission of students into federal higher institutions of learning has followed quota system formula. This is a formula based on Federal character which offers candidates chances of admission because they come from certain states whether they are qualified or not. Meanwhile, admission of candidates into Federal Colleges of Education is by 45% merit, 35% locality, and 20% educationally disadvantaged states. In other words, all candidates in schools were not admitted by merit. Somebody who might have scored very low marks could be offered admission into a school because he comes from certain disadvantaged states. While others who might have obtained higher scores are rejected.

The application of quota system, according to Onwuka (1997), destroys the primary purpose of instituting our educational institutions as a means of forging national unity and fostering quality in educational opportunity. Again, the issue of using education as an instrument per excellence for building a just and egalitarian society (FRN, 2014) becomes a dream that cannot be realised. This quota system of admission does not encourage realistic manpower development. It is necessary that people should be given the opportunity to develop their capabilities and potentialities to the maximum, but in doing that, quality should not be sacrificed on the altar of quantity. America is known for recruiting and developing for themselves best brains from different parts of the world.

We can encourage our own people by offering everybody the opportunity to develop irrespective of state, tribe or belief.

Issues of Population Explosion: Though we are awaiting a national census by 2023, but currently there is explosion in the number of children inclusive who need education and the government is not meeting up. The present facilities cannot serve the teaming population.

Issue of Education as an Economic Activity: Education has all it takes to be called an economic activity using its potentials of developing the resources into human capital for efficient productivity (Izuagba, 2017). Agabi (2005) stated that education has production function just as an industry which is a specialized economic activity and should be treated as such. According to him, every production system has four basic characteristics consisting of input, process, output and feedback (Izuagba, 2017).

Issue of Recruitment, Training and Remuneration of the Teaching and Non-teaching Staff: The teachers as the employees of government. How are they recruited? In Nigeria, employment is still influenced by ethnic, religious and political factors. Training opportunities are absent and the welfare is nothing to write home about. In this case, the education is adversely affected.

Issue of Motivation: The teachers which are the foot soldiers of the educational system are not motivated hence the system suffers setback.

Issue of Changing Values: The society is dynamic and always changing. If our education must be relevant it has to be changing with time. There is rapid social and economic changes in our society which education must comply with.

CONCLUSION

The importance of education to any nation's development (politics, economy, socio-cultural or technological) cannot be over emphasized. It is therefore pertinent that every possible effort should be geared towards providing qualitative and quantitative education to the citizenry of every nation. This is important because, educationally developed nation is invariably a developed nation. With educated manpower, the nation will adequately harness her natural endowed resources for an overall development. To achieve this, tertiary education institutions is important machinery that provides solid foundation through articulated educational programmes aiming at Manpower Development.

Suggestions

Having examined the influence of education on manpower development, development and the challenges associated with manpower development, the following strategies are recommended to mitigate the challenges of manpower development in Nigeria.

- The government and non-governmental bodies should ensure adequate funding of the tertiary institutions to enable it meet the financial requirement for adequate manpower training.
- Having underscored the importance of education as a yardstick for human and societal development, which the ancient philosopher, Plato referred to as "one great thing", the government should as much as possible ensure access and equality in

- educational opportunities to all her citizenry. School administrators should accord greater priority to merit in admitting candidates into schools.
- There should be a cordial relationship between the tertiary education institutions and the other sectors of the nation's economy especially in the areas of staff training and overall personnel management.
- Intensified efforts should be made by the universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and other corresponding institutions to facilitate the implementation of science and technology in education such as the e-library and ICT in education in order to upgrade the intellectual capacity of the graduates produced by these institutions so as to make them relevant in the secular society.
- Efforts should be made to provide adequate training and re-training of teachers who are the primary implementers of the school curriculum because any effort in education that fails to recognize the importance of the teachers in its implementations are bound to fail.
- The government, education bodies, teachers and parents should call it an important duty to fight corruption including examination fraud in our nation.
- Curriculum materials and books should be revised to ensure that they do not downgrade the educational standards but rather be in tune with the present educational realities.

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