

## **The Impact of Education on National Development: A Philosophical Inquiry**

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### **Abstract**

Education is a potent tool for national development. The quality of education in a nation is a primary coefficient for determining the level of development of the nation. This is because education impacts directly on the citizens who are the subject of national development. If the citizens are ill-prepared and lacking in knowledge, skills and aptitude, the nation will wallow in underdevelopment. The article seeks to tackle the problem surrounding the obvious inability of the system of education in place in Nigeria to drive the growth and development of the country. How well has education contributed to the development of Nigeria? Is there something amiss in the system of education in vogue in Nigeria? Can the system be improved in such wise that it can catalyse more efficiently the development needs of Nigeria? The article therefore studies the impact of education on the development of Nigeria. It finds out that education has not made the needed impact on Nigeria's development because the system of education

in the country is not purposive and productive. The article suggests that poor curricula development is the major challenge to qualitative education in Nigeria; a factor that hinders education from imparting the required competence on the citizens necessary to spur the nation to greater heights. The article concludes that for education to catalyse Nigeria's development, attention must be given to local content attribution in curricula development. In this regard there is great need to adapt Nigeria education to the Nigerian culture and national need since education is basically a tool for transmission of culture and enhancing national development. The article is certain that until Nigeria system of education mirrors the Nigerian culture, it will continue to fall shy of the standard needed to drive Nigeria forward politically, economically and otherwise.

## **Introduction**

Education develops a country's economy therefore; it is an index of a nation's development. It provides knowledge and skills to the population and shapes the personality of the youth of a nation. Education is very important for an individual's success in life. It is generally seen as the foundation of society which ensures economic prosperity, social and political stability. Economic and social status depends on education obtained by the individual since education determines individual capability in choosing and managing his quality of life. It can help the individual to avoid poverty, build harmony within a society and foster the principles of democracy in a society. Education is also capable of providing power to citizens to voice out

their views, expose to them their real potential, lead them to become better persons and widen their views on global issues.

Education is the best investment for the people because well educated people have more opportunities to get a job or even create one that gives them satisfaction. Educated individuals enjoy respect among their colleagues and they can effectively contribute to the development of their society by inventing new devices and discoveries. The purpose of education is to enlighten individuals within a society, to prepare and qualify them to work for the development of the society as well as to integrate people into society and teach them the values and morals of the society.

Has the system of education in Nigeria met the above objectives of education? Has education shaped the youth's national identity? Has education cultivated the person's identity or sense of belonging to the nation? The answers are definitely not in the affirmative. What then are the forces that undermine good education as a tool for national development in Nigeria? This article seeks answers to this problem by evaluating the impact of education on national development. It exposes the viewpoints of some philosophers on education, with emphasis on the right method and ideal content (curriculum) of education. It concludes that for Nigeria's education to attain the goals of national development, the curricula at various levels must be revisited to ensure that they are both purposive and productive.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

### **Education**

Education refers to the process of knowledge acquisition for the self-development of the beneficiary. Education means a change in man's way of conduct due to the introduction of a new attitude to life under the influence of learning. Technically, "Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and morals, beliefs and habits."<sup>i</sup> Fazila Idris et al describe it as "... the upgrading of a man's ability to choose the best alternative available in any circumstance he faces."<sup>ii</sup> It means the development of the person to prepare him to adopt the best approach to a problem at any given time.<sup>iii</sup> Seen from this radar, education can therefore be described as "... adjustment ability to a changing situation and environment."<sup>iv</sup> Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators. Nevertheless, learners can also educate themselves. Education can be formal (within the school system) or informal (outside the organized school system). Thus, any experience that has formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts, whether in the formal or informal setting, may be considered educational.

Education is more than an economic investment; it is an essential input upon which life, development and the survival of man depend. We all know that it is the responsibility of everyone in a country to educate; whether we are parents, adults, children, or teachers, in the public or private sector, education is the

responsibility of everyone. However, we see the needs and problems, most of us would agree that the role of education is to help provide the opportunity for all people to develop as fully as possible. Education should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies. Learning should also focus on the values, attitudes and behaviours which enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterized by diversity and pluralism. Education therefore has a crucial long-term role in developing a knowledge and understanding of human rights, the value system they represent and the skills required to strengthen a democratic culture.

## **Development**

The concept of development is almost as old as civilization. Its extensive use in Western societies from Greco-Roman civilizations to the late 19th century as a generic construct that designates the most varied aspects related to humanity's well-being, however, made the concept come closer to that of a doctrine. Soares and Quintella observe that "At the end of the 17th century, the predominant idea of development was dependent on natural and positive phenomena, with its expansion only contained by conscience of limit."<sup>vi</sup> Note that they used the term "conscience of limit" in reference to "An inflection point on the growth curve for adaptation to natural laws or God's plan."<sup>vi</sup>

Following a long dispute between those called the Modern and Ancient, ending with victory by the Modern, Leibniz (1646-1716) inaugurated the concept of infinite progress. Other modern thinkers such as Condorcet, Kant, Hegel and Marx in turn conceived and interpreted progress in a distinct manner from that resulting from the idea of ‘conscience of limit’ or in other words are aligned with the potentially infinite concept of progress. In these authors’ works, it is also possible to note a certain proximity with Augustinian thinking, of conceiving history as a totality, a firm march of civilization, a continual, albeit inconstant and non-linear process, in the direction of a common well-being. Rist’s rightly describes this as “a constant evolution, based on the belief of human perfectibility and motivated by the incessant search for well-being.”<sup>vii</sup>

Rostow’s seminal work reclaims Social Darwinism to explain development as a process of evolutionary succession in stages, where human societies leave a rudimentary model until they arrive at a western industrialized civilization consumption model, which is considered unique and universal.<sup>viii</sup> We see this notion of development in the works of Francis Fukuyama in contemporary times. Ribeiro suggests that the sense of the word development in various areas of knowledge converges to “... a state, process, well-being, progress, economic and human growth or ecological balance.”<sup>ix</sup> Development has also been defined as “... a maturing and development process of self that frees the population from fear and exploitation.”<sup>x</sup> The United Nations Development Programme, UNDP describes development as “... expanding the range of choices for the population

that allows governance to become more democratic and participative, ... access to income... participation in decisions and enjoyment of human, economic and political liberties.”<sup>xi</sup>

## **Education and Development: Establishing the Nexus**

The link between education and economic development in the field of development studies centres on the question of whether formal education brings about economic development or the other way round. The aim in this study is not to prove either. What is paramount here is that there is a profound correlation between the situations of a high incidence of school enrolments and rapid economic growth of a country. It can also be argued that the degree to which a country is economically developed determines the State's capability to supply education. That is why it is said that no nation can grow taller than her education. As a matter of fact, even that which is obviously not a result of formal education, is in fact an indirect effect of formal education.

It should also be pointed out that while the argument here is the impact formal education has on development, all forms of development have a lot to do with the type of formal education being offered. Quality education, the education that is responsive to the economic needs of the country, should be able to enhance that country's economic development. Massive provision of education may not necessarily lead to economic development. Providing education for a

certain minimum number of years (quantity) is different from, for example, expenditure on education (quality). Quantity is measured in terms of the number of people receiving schooling.<sup>xii</sup> Quality education on the other hand is determined by a number of factors. Among these are:

- expenditure per child
- standard of educational facilities available, e.g., libraries, laboratories
- sizes of classes
- quality of teachers in terms of salaries and qualifications
- learning material, e.g., textbooks, audio-visual aids
- nature of the curriculum
- school buildings which, among other things, ensure safe custody of learning materials
- availability of other learning modes at home, in the media and in the community and
- the way learners spend their time both in and out of school.<sup>xiii</sup>

According to Johnson and Stafford, expenditure per learner affects years of schooling to be attained. This means that, for example, without public policy to support education, acquiring education may become very expensive for people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Poor parents may be forced to withdraw their children from school. However, these authors also argue that it is more beneficial to allocate resources to improve school quality than to expand years of education (quantity).<sup>xiv</sup> Added to the question of quantity and quality are the levels and types of education being



offered. Gillis et al point out that of the three levels of education - primary, secondary and higher education - primary and secondary levels can be better suited to poor countries. Success in these levels of education will, in turn, highly depend on the type of education offered.<sup>xv</sup> The types of education are academic, vocational, non-formal and on-the-job education. Here again vocational education at school is highly recommended. By offering vocational education, the school system will be equipping learners with skills which are needed by the labour market. This is why philosophers of education like John Dewey and Paulo Freire condemned traditional system of education because it is neither experiential nor practical. Regrettably, Nigeria's system of education at all levels is still very theoretical.

Combining the preferred level and type of education should also remove the unemployable educated labour problem. One crucial factor which needs to be emphasized is that formal education should not be offered only to enable people to better sell their labour power, but to enable people to be creators of employment themselves. Failing this, formal education becomes a problem, as Themabela puts it:

Unemployment exists and increases in spite of more schooling. At the same time there is a great shortage of skilled manpower. Too often, pupils are taught what they could find out elsewhere, do without, or work out for themselves. Too often, the school is made responsible for attaining objectives that could be better

acquired through other subsystems of society.<sup>xvi</sup>

Themabela's position addressed a serious issue in his home country- South Africa. The same issue is very evident in the Nigerian system. It is as if in Nigeria unemployment and the volume of unskilled manpower increases with increase in the number of schools at all levels, private and public, across the federation. The more the number of schools, the more the number of graduates, the higher the unemployment rate, and most unfortunately, the higher the volume of unskilled manpower thrust into the labour market. What this suggests is simple: education in Nigeria is empty, almost a waste of scarce resources because it fails to meet with the demands for national development. Quantity is emphasized over quality leading to duplicity of schools without the necessary resources, human and material, needed to chisel minds that will steer the nation to greater heights.

Clearly the educational provisions within any given country represent one of the main determinants of the composition and growth of that country's output and exports and constitute an important ingredient in a system's capacity to borrow foreign technology effectively. For example: health and nutrition, and primary and secondary education all raise the productivity of workers, rural and urban; secondary education, including vocational, facilitates the acquisition of skills and managerial capacity; tertiary education supports the development of basic science, the appropriate selection of technology imports and the

domestic adaptation and development of technologies; secondary and tertiary education also represent critical elements in the development of key institutions, of government, the law, and the financial system, among others, all essential for economic growth. Empirical evidence at both micro and macro levels further illuminates these relationships. At a micro level, numerous studies indicate that increases in earnings are associated with additional years of education, with the rate of return varying with high level of education.<sup>xvii</sup>

In Agriculture, evidence suggests positive effects of education on productivity among farmers using modern technologies, but less impact, as might be expected, among those using traditional methods. In Thailand, farmers with four or more years of schooling were three times more likely to adopt fertilizer and other modern inputs than less educated farmers.<sup>xviii</sup> Similarly, in Nepal, the completion of at least seven years of schooling increased productivity in wheat by over a quarter, and in rice by 13%.<sup>xix</sup> It is difficult to say the same of Nigeria due to the lukewarm attitude of the government to support peasant farmers, let alone facilitate mechanized farming. Of course, it is common knowledge that the Central Government abandoned agriculture for decades since the discovery of crude oil. This has impacted negatively on the nation's development due to poor generation of internal revenue from exports.

Education is also an important contributor to technological capability and technical change in industry. Statistical analysis of the clothing and engineering industries in Sri Lanka, to cite just one example, showed

that the skill and education levels of workers and entrepreneurs were positively related to the rate of technical change of firms. Education alone, of course cannot transform an economy. The quantity and quality of investment, domestic and foreign, together with the overall policy environment, form the other important determinants of economic performance. Yet the level of human development has a bearing on these factors too. The quality of policy making and of investment decisions are bound to be influenced by the education of both policy makers and managers; moreover, the volume of both domestic and foreign investment is likely to be larger when a system's human capital supply is more plentiful.

### **Some Philosophical Viewpoints on Education**

There are innumerable philosophers who have given thought to the relation between education and development. Ideas have mostly centred on the right method of education that would ensure complete development of the student, and by so doing, prepare the student adequately to contribute to the development of the society. All the philosophers of education, from Ancient to contemporary times, such as Socrates, Plato, Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, Martin Buber, Paulo Freire, etc agree that education is the handmaid of development. They all posit that education should be applied in such ways that it would help prepare the citizens of a country to contribute enviably to the growth and development of their country. All of these scholars are very critical of the traditional method of education that seeks to impose ideals on the pupil without

considering the personal experience and predispositions of the pupil. In fact, as early as the Later Greek period of philosophy, Socrates fought against this tendency by introducing his method of dialectics (also called intellectual midwifery), a method that introduces the learner to new knowledge by first evaluating the learner's previous knowledge. This Socratic Method became the foundation, the paradigm for the formation of most, if not all, contemporary child-centred pedagogies.

The viewpoints of all philosophers on education cannot be exposed here given the limitation of this work. Therefore, effort is made to present the views of two prominent scholars of the modern and contemporary era. John Dewey and Paulo Freire share very close affinity in their viewpoints on education and development. They made striking emphasis on the need for education to be dialogical, experimental, particular or peculiar to the local needs of the State and the citizens. Nigeria Education planners can borrow a lot from Dewey and Freire's thought on education.

### **Overview of John Dewey's Thought on Education**

Dewey discusses traditional and progressive education in his masterpiece *Experience and Education*. Note that Traditional education could also be called back-to-basics, conventional or customary education. It is an age-long procedure that societies usually applied in schools to transfer knowledge to the young. Traditional education is teacher-centred. Reformers in education prefer what is now described as progressive education which is child or student-centred. John Dewey condemns

the traditional method of education. He views it as the direct opposite of progressive education. He affirms that for traditional education, learning is the "... acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders."<sup>xx</sup> The child is simply the immature being who is to be matured; he is the superficial being who is to be deepened; his is narrow experience which is to be widened. It is his to receive, to accept. His part is fulfilled when he is ductile and docile.<sup>xxi</sup>

Dewey argues that in traditional schools everything is done according to the 'imposed' will of the educator(s). This, therefore, Dewey asserts, limits "the intellectual and moral development of the young."<sup>xxii</sup> He condemns the traditional system of education for emphasizing the study of "... facts and ideas [...] bound up with the past."<sup>xxiii</sup> This undermines the student's capacity "in dealing with issues of present and future."<sup>xxiv</sup> Dewey acknowledges that although the "knowledge of the past and its heritage is of greater significance,"<sup>xxv</sup> the past should "... be seen as the past *of* the present, and not as another and disconnected world."<sup>xxvi</sup> For Dewey, learning should be communicated indirectly through the environment. He describes the environment as consisting of those conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit, the *characteristic* activities of a living being."<sup>xxvii</sup> Dewey views education as a social function.<sup>xxviii</sup> Hence, for him "... a being connected with other beings cannot perform his own activities without taking the activities of others into account."<sup>xxix</sup> According to him, the ignorance of this is a critical failing of the traditional system of education.

Dewey avers that traditional education does not contribute to student's growth because it sees the teacher as the 'Jack of all trade' and the student as the 'master of none'. The system, thus, creates room for the teacher to impose her experiences on the students. Experience is an important factor in Dewey's philosophy of education. This explains his advocacy for experiential education which is also described as 'progressive'. He suggests that progressive education offers students the opportunity to grow by offering them the "... expression and cultivation of individuality," "free activity" and "... learning through experience."<sup>xxx</sup> According to him, progressive education also builds on their experiences and as a result forms "... later experience of a deeper and more expansive quality."<sup>xxxi</sup> In doing so the school guides the pupils toward a better future. Dewey affirms that it is important to connect the curriculum to pupils' "... everyday life experience [for] all genuine education comes about through experience."<sup>xxxii</sup> Only through such an education can students grow and contribute to the development of their immediate community and the society at large.

### **Overview of Paulo Freire's Thought on Education**

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire states that traditionally education is framed as "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor."<sup>xxxiii</sup> The task of the teacher, in traditional education, Freire argues, is to "fill the students with the content of his narration- content which is detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them

significance.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> This type of education, he believes, is “... suffering from narration sickness”<sup>xxxv</sup> He suggests that in such schools the task of the student is to “... receive, memorize, and repeat.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> This, he believes, turns them into “... receptacles to be filled by the teacher.”<sup>xxxvii</sup> In such an environment, teachers are active while students are passive members of the classroom community. Freire argues that the interests of the two are different in such relationship; teachers promote the goal of the oppressors by depositing information into the students: the oppressed.<sup>xxxviii</sup> It is this manner of education that he describes as the ‘banking system of education’. Of course, by the expression ‘banking system of education,’ Freire was directly criticizing traditional system of education.

Paulo Freire is widely known for his radical educational ideas called “critical pedagogy” or “critical theory.” Arguing against the banking concept of education, Freire posits: “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously or at the same time teachers and students.”<sup>xxxix</sup> It is necessary, for Freire, that the “... educational goal of deposit-making [is replaced] with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world.”<sup>xl</sup> Education based on problem-posing ensures active teachers and active students within the classroom and the global community. The interests of both the teachers and the students, then, within the problem-posing classroom, become the same. In fact, Freire maintains that problem-posing education aims at the emancipation of those who have been “... subjected



to domination.”<sup>xli</sup> Freire claims that “to that end, [problem-posing education] enables teachers and students to become subjects of the education process by overcoming authoritarianism and alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality.”<sup>xlii</sup> This overcoming of the false perception of reality is considered the true measurement of growth.

### **The Role of Education in National Development**

The role of education is inevitable in producing new generations capable of solving the real problems in our society. Today’s ever-growing population are not satisfied with their basic education and try to get secondary or tertiary education in order to meet the demands of contemporary society. They sacrifice their time and money and sometimes even their health to improve on their educational level because they realize that education is their passport to the future.

The school plays a critical role toward promoting national integration by engendering programmes that enable youths realize the good in other people’s cultures, and hence, respect the cultural diversity in Nigeria. youths’ development toward a positive sense of ethnic identity. By implementing these programmes, students come to know the strengths and uniqueness of ethnic identity in Nigeria. When the students have full understanding of their ethnic identity and those of others in Nigeria, they become more tolerant and respectful of others ethnic group. Education thus can contribute to helping Nigeria harness the forces of her ethnic and

cultural diversity; and hence quicken the pace of national development.

Community service is another area of the education curriculum of Nigeria that can help in cultivating and instilling the sense of national identity. It can be an important part of civic education, provided it is properly conceived as being more than just doing good deeds. It can contribute to the effort to instil the value of solidarity among races especially the teenagers. This should include the activities that stress tolerance and harmony among Nigerians regardless of differences in religion and ethnicity. Hence, the purpose of the community programme should be to inculcate a sense of citizenship, whereby students learn the importance of contributing to their own community, the society at large and to the nation. By doing community service, students will also develop a sense of civic duty and commitment to the nation.

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is supposed to be a programme that fosters national integration through community service across the length and breadth of the Federation. This is why those engaged in the programme are sent to serve in areas away from their ethnicity and most times, far from their geographical zone. Unfortunately, the aim of the programme has been largely defeated. The perennial problem of corruption in the country has not allowed the programme to thrive. Today, shortlisted candidates for NYSC do everything possible to be posted to areas of their choices, most times, areas within their ethnicities or geographical zones. This has impinged on the success of the programme.

Education can also contribute to stabilizing Nigeria's democracy. This is because it has the capacity to expose ignorance and defeat illiteracy and poverty which are the weaknesses politicians capitalize on to bamboozle unsuspecting citizens to exchange their ballots for material benefits. Education helps the citizens to know their rights and stand by it at all times. It enables the citizens to demand for responsible and accountable governance from those occupying leadership positions. This has a way of improving on the quality of leadership and eschewing the penchant for abuse of political power prevalent in underdeveloped (developing) countries. Education engenders political participation. The citizens become very interested in the actions and inactions of State forces, ensuring that their rights as citizens are not neglected or abused. It can therefore be said that education reinforces legitimacy in governance.

### **Culture and Education in Nigeria**

Culture is the way of life of a social group and it includes actions, values and beliefs that can be communicated with necessary modifications from one generation to the succeeding one. Education is the process by which society deliberately transmit its cultural heritage through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions.<sup>xliii</sup> This means that the content of the curriculum in schools must be loaded with cultural elements of the society. Education should be cultural; it should be used as a tool to further explore and promote the positive aspects of a given culture. Consequently, knowledge, which is produced in the school system of a

particular nation, should be firmly grounded in the culture of the given society. This means that no two societies can have identical educational system. Since educational system is supposed to be a reflection of the society's culture, needs and aspirations, the nature of the knowledge available in any given society should be sought in the nature of a society's institutions and culture. This is because knowledge is disseminated and acquired so that members of the society can improve themselves and operate the social institutions of the society. This implies that the culture of a given society reflects the types of knowledge produced in the society.

This suggests that since European types of education are based on European philosophies of education which reflect different national philosophies about German, French, British, Russian or Spanish character, Africans too (Nigeria specifically) should secure their cultural identity by fashioning their own philosophies of education. The structure, content and methods of education differ from nation to nation in the advanced world because national educational policies are formulated in line with the philosophies, values and history of a people.<sup>xliv</sup> Katoke rightly asserts that it is essential that any kind of educational policy and planning which is a key to development or an eye opener to the learner's self-awareness and that of his surroundings makes culture its base.<sup>xlv</sup> This means that areas of emphasis in stipulated curricula course outlines and contents must necessarily reflect or relate to the learner's cultural heritage.

The general perception is that the major cause of the failure of colonial/missionary education in most parts

of Africa is the failure of the missionaries/colonialists to adapt the system to the socio-cultural milieu in which it operated. Colonial education never incorporated valued aspects of the culture as its base and this is why colonial education has been regarded as inadequate for Africans in general and Nigerians in particular. Regrettably, it appears that even till date, Nigeria system of education is yet to be freed from the vestiges of the colonial system.

Culture has been described as a way of life of a people. There is no culture that is static. Since education is also largely understood as “cultural transmission,” it plays an important part in achieving cultural change. This is because a good education system should have conservative, transitive and innovative functions as society is not static but dynamic. Okeke asserts that aspects of society’s culture which are not found adequate for the survival and progress of society at any point in time could either be modified or changed through the process of education.<sup>xlvi</sup>

Therefore, knowledge in every society is relative to time and place. It therefore means that any good educational system should imbibe the culture of the people. It is thus the culture of the society that should determine the content of the school curriculum. Similarly, the knowledge that is produced and transmitted through the process of education is in fact the cultural elements of the given society.

### **Curriculum Deficiency in Nigerian Education: a Setback to National Development**

It is an obvious fact that the curricula in use in all levels of education in Nigeria are inadequate.

Unfortunately, the federal ministry of education and almost all other stakeholders in the educational sector in Nigeria continue to employ and implement with tenacity these odious curricula as the standard for mass education. Other countries of the world, including Britain and the United States from whom Nigeria copied, have since improved upon their curricula with the addition of current and practical contents which have ensured the churning of innovative, skilled and highly creative graduates from their institutions. The situation in Nigeria is almost hopeless. There is an over-reliance on paper qualification as opposed to the development of skills and technicality or what may be described as the ‘can-do’ attitude of the individual. The goal of a qualitative, functional and *ad rem* curriculum should not be restricted to the offer of merely theoretical knowledge and certificate; it should rather be targeted at offering the individual competent practical and technical ability to solve problems in the society. With this, at graduation, the individual can be self-employed; he can generate ideas on his own and apply to solve personal and national needs. The system of education in Nigeria founded on a poor structure and impotent curricula with poor syllabic contents greatly falls short of this. The implication, then, is that the knowledge passed across to students is a mere waste of time and resources, because knowledge attained through an obsolete curriculum is neither valuable in the current dispensation of organizational development, nor capable of preparing learners for future challenges or tasks.

The role of education to nation building is pivotal, indispensable. This is because education has the

potential of helping individuals to understand themselves and the world around them. Quality education helps to improve social interactions and interpersonal relationships, quality of life and patriotic tendencies. These have been found to be related to a galvanized national development. It is evident that a developed economy or nation is only a reflection of the human capital development which can only be achieved through proper levels of education measured in qualitative terms. Regrettably, the core of the Nigerian education stakeholders ensures that all institutions of learning strictly comply and teach grossly moribund curricula contents, thereby suppressing the cognitive development of the nation's future leaders. A greater emphasis is laid on the acquisition of abstract terms and certificate, and not on the significant impacts of the content on students' ability to apply the terms in problem-solving.

The moribund curricula have made it difficult for Nigerian graduates to be gainfully employed; most times, even after committed years of learning and resources invested, the graduates require retraining in order to fit into various organizations. Unfortunately, most of these graduates feel they are best trained and well poised to occupy or handle any position in any organization. They end up seeking for white collar jobs endlessly. They are programmed by virtue of their 'certificate education' to become 'job seekers' instead of 'job creators'. The average Nigerian graduate expects to be spoon-fed by the government, even in this era of grave dearth in employment opportunity. More are churned out from the university as empty certified graduates annually. They join the band of the unemployed; they can hardly create

anything or offer anything to the society because the society has bequeathed nothing unto them curtesy of the poor curricula with which they were trained throughout their academic journey.

It is important to review the current academic curricula in Nigeria in order to improve and synthesize the content in both public and private schools. It is also necessary to evaluate the curriculum in terms of its standards and outcomes when compared with those used in advanced countries. Current events in the global arena, especially the shift in technological paradigms to new constructs such as artificial intelligence, robotics engineering, etc are factors to be considered in designing pragmatic and rewarding new curricula for Nigerian institutions. It is important to consider societal trends to ensure that the relevance of knowledge acquired in institutions are equated with real and practical applications, as there is need to showcase the applications of the acquired theory in the industries when students graduate and are conferred with degrees. This, no doubt, will help to de-emphasize the deleterious desire for certificate acquisition without proportionate acquisition of practical knowledge; a practice that has almost assumed a normative position within the Nigerian system.

### **Poor Funding: As a Setback to Education for National Development**

The quality of education offered in Nigeria today is not without myriad of problems. The problem with education in Nigeria is not only



anchored on poor curricular development or policy making. Poor budgetary allocation is also a fundamental issue. This is because even when and where the policy or curriculum is seen to be objective and tailored to serve the local needs of Nigeria, the major obstacle has always been the failure of the government to provide adequate resource to help apply such policies concretely. One major issue bedeviling the effective implementation of educational policies and consequently, national development in Nigeria is therefore inadequate funding. Therefore, such good policies collapse due to inadequate budgetary figures allocated to this crucial sector.

The issue of poor financing of education remains unchanged even in recent times and justifies one of the reasons why the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) specified that, for educational systems of developing nations to witness stability, at least 26 percent of such nations' budget must be channeled to the education sector.<sup>xlvi</sup>

On the contrary, the allocation usually made in Nigeria to this pivotal sector is not mouth-watering and can hardly convince anyone that such a country of Nigeria's repute will forego a benchmark forecasted by a world-known organization.

A critical look into 1999, 2000 and 2010 budgetary provisions for education in Nigeria

showed that 16.77%, 4.08%, and 10.24% went to the sector respectively while in 2011 and 2013, it got 10.24% and 8 percent respectively, a far cry from the year 1999 and 2010 appropriation.<sup>xlvi</sup> Relying on the benchmark advocated by UNESCO, it is implicit that the Nigerian education sector still faces the problem of inadequate funding. No public policy or programme will reach a successful end without a supporting means. The bastardization of education in Nigeria can also be held accountable for poor economic growth and development-related issues. A look at the Human Development Index released by UNESCO in 2018 shows that Nigeria is sitting in 24th position out of 54 African countries, and 157<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of educational development, and lagging behind several West African countries like Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya. Nigeria is also characterized by low human development when countries like Seychelles, Mauritius, Algeria, Tunisia, Botswana, Libya, and Gabon are cruising at the top with high human development figures.<sup>xlix</sup>

One of the core reasons why Nigeria is lagging behind compared to other African countries is due to poor financing and insufficient funding of education. Thus, it is common to see in Nigeria that many schools lack buildings, facilities, shortage of human resources to drive planned policies, poor supervision, monitoring, amongst others. All these issues are tied to finance in one way or the other. Classrooms are highly unequipped in many Nigerian schools, especially public schools. It is also common to see

children learn under tree shades as classrooms, and under other poor learning environments. Progressive education based on the principles of experimentation, dialogue and problem-solving procedures cannot apply within the Nigerian context given the paucity of fund needed to provide the required resources. Education in Nigeria has therefore been largely reduced to “book” education with little or no emphasis on experimentation. Even the theoretical aspect is sometimes not properly attended to due to inadequacy of resources.

### **Conclusion**

Education is the totality of the activities that enable the self-development of the individual through learning which directly or even indirectly lead to the development of the individual’s immediate society and the nation at large. No nation, it is said, can rise above the level or quality of her education. There is therefore a close connection between education and development. Notice that one of the major factors that separate underdeveloped and developing countries from developed countries is the quality of education. Poor standard of education is an obvious deficit in developing countries. This, in turn, has contributed to a high level of illiteracy, poverty and abuse of political power resulting to poor governance in such climes. Same cannot be said of countries with high standards of education where the citizens are abreast with the requirements of good citizenship. Good governance is the norm leading to rapid national development.

Based on the research conducted here, we can conclude that some types of education contribute more than others to national development. After all, Nigeria has an educational system yet she is rated very lowly on the scale of development. The education that brings development is qualitative education. By the term qualitative education, we refer to a system of education that is purposive and productive similar to that proposed by John Dewey and Paulo Freire. Education is purposive when it is structured to help the learners acquire skills and aptitudes that would help take the individual and the larger society to greater heights economically and otherwise. Purpose education therefore pays critical attention to local content development, ensuring that the curricula at various levels of education are tailored to the particular needs of the people. Education is said to be productive when those who pass through the walls of educational institutions actually graduate into individuals with the requisite aptitude, skills and competence to proffer solutions to societal problems, and hence contribute to national development. Therefore, ‘purposive’ points at the actual goal of education while ‘productive’ pertains to the ability of education to achieve the set goals.

The problem of education in Nigeria is that the Nigerian system is shy of ‘purposiveness’ and ‘productivity’ because the curricula does not pay strict attention to local content development. Consequently, educational institutions churn out graduates that are largely incompetent and unable to contribute to national development.

## Endnotes

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xxxviii Note that, Freire seems to assume that anyone who contributes to the unfair *silencing* of an individual could be considered an oppressor. These could include political institutions within a government, the educational system, bureaucrats and religious institutions and so on.

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