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MANAGING SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR THE ACTUALIZATION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIAN YOUTHS

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Abstract

Education is universally acknowledged as an effective instrument for national development which can be brought about through transformation. It is in line with this, that the paper examined the management of secondary education for national transformation and the implications for Nigerian youths. The concept and objectives of secondary education are discussed while the roles of Teaching Service Commission as a body responsible for the management of secondary education are equally highlighted. The paper goes further to juxtapose the concept of national transformation with secondary education while the challenges militating against secondary education in achieving national transformation are examined stressing the implication on national transformation for Nigerian youths. The paper concludes that Nigerian youths should be fully integrated in the transformation agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria while some recommendations are also proffered.

Keywords: *Secondary Education, National Transformation, Nigerian Youths*

Introduction

Education has been held by many countries as the biggest industry, especially as it is in many cases the single establishment that employs the greatest number of the work force. Education is responsible for bringing up the youth and providing the workforce in the society, there is always the need for effective management to actualize its goals at different levels of the educational system. As a result, educational managers must be capable of managing the education system, especially secondary education to meet the national transformation which is the yearning of every nation. These days, Nigeria is faced with many challenges ranging from socio-economic, political, security and the

greatest of all, educational challenges. All these require urgent attention to save the country from the verge of collapse. In fact, education is the only instrument through which any nation can attain greatness; hence, its proper management is essential for it to achieve its purpose. Secondary education therefore becomes vital as it prepares the youths with the knowledge, skills and competences required to transform the nation and overcome its numerous challenges. The crucial role of secondary education in both personal and national development informed the introduction of various educational programmes aimed at enhancing secondary education in Nigeria.

Secondary education is a powerful instrument for social progress while its roles in the life of the nation and the individual cannot be emphasized. Its affairs should not be left to chance. According to Angela (2000), the agency responsible for managing secondary education should always conform with the guidelines and conditions stated in the National Policy on Education in order for the intended national development and transformation.

Concept of Secondary Education

United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1999) defined secondary education as all types of education generally grammar, technical, vocational, teacher training or others provided for young people between the ages of approximately 12 and 18 years. The technical meaning of secondary education is simply post-primary education, that form of education which children receive automatically after primary education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004) described secondary education as a form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. This level is thus, an acknowledged bridge between primary and tertiary levels of education. Secondary education, therefore, builds on the basic literacy, numeracy and functional knowledge acquired at the primary level. The World Bank (2005) described secondary education as the crucial link between primary schooling, tertiary education, and the labour market. The World Bank (2005) further noted that the task confronting education policymakers in Africa is to transform secondary education institutions and current schooling practices to align them with the fast growing demands of globalization and the technology-driven world. In addition, it offers students through its diversified curriculum the opportunity to acquire more advanced and specialized knowledge and skills which are required for further education, for the labour market and for living.

Nwosu (2000) observed that secondary education level has the dual responsibilities of providing candidates for other levels of education and labour market as well as absorbing most of the products of primary education. It is therefore, obvious that the quality and quantity of products of this level would have significant impact on higher education and the potential to transform the national economy of the country.

Objectives of Secondary Education in Nigeria

Secondary education occupies a unique position in the education system of Nigeria owing to the fact that this level of education determines the academic and professional career of students. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004), the broad aims of secondary education within our overall objective should be:

1. Preparation for useful living within the society; and
 2. Preparation for higher education
- Section 4(18) of the National Policy on Education states that, in specific terms the secondary school should:
- i. provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality. Irrespective of sex, or social, religious and ethnic background;
 - ii. diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunity and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course;
 - iii. equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology;
 - iv. develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage;
 - v. raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feeling of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizens.
 - vi. foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
 - vii. inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life.

Thus, it is expected that the youth would be exposed to basic fundamental education for living at the secondary school level. To achieve these, there are agencies to manage secondary education in Nigeria. Principal among these is the Teaching Service Commission.

Roles of the Teaching Service Commission in the Management of Secondary Education.

Teaching Service Commission is the body responsible for the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. This body, according to Ojibara and Lawal (2009), is an organ of the State Ministry of Education which is saddled with many responsibilities as regard the administration of secondary schools. The Commission is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and has powers to sue and be sued in its corporate name, for the purpose of its functions under the laws. The aim of setting up the Teaching Service Commission is to provide an institutional framework for the effective administration of public secondary schools in Nigeria.

The objectives and aspirations of the Teaching Service Commission include:

1. Appointments, promotions, discipline and general welfare of teaching and non-teaching staff in the employment of the State Teaching Service Commission.
2. Maintenance of comprehensive and up-to date personnel records of teaching and non-teaching staff of the commission.
3. Ensuring that staff welfare and training responsibilities are shared between the State Ministry of Education and the Commission.
4. Preparation of testimonials and certificate of service for teaching and non-teaching staff, if and when necessary;
5. Performing such other functions as may be conferred upon it from time to time by the Governor-in-council in relation to teaching and non-teaching staff of public secondary schools

The roles of the Teaching Service Commission are therefore embedded in its objectives. These include:

1. Appointment of qualified teachers and non-teaching staff to teach the relevant subjects and administer the State secondary school system
2. Rendering of Annual Performance Evaluation Reports on all Heads as well as the teaching and non-teaching staff.
3. Maintaining discipline, standard and ethical behaviour among the students as well as the teaching and non-teaching staff.
4. Rendering necessary assistance to stakeholders in the Education industry such as Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, Nigeria Union of Teachers, etc.
5. Organizing training, seminar, and workshops for the teaching and non-teaching personnel of secondary schools.
6. Maintaining industrial harmony in the education industry as it affects the State public secondary schools.

Concept of National Transformation

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (8th Ed) simply defined transformation as a complete change in something or somebody. Suleiman (2011) defined transformation as a complete change from one situation to another and total departure from the old order to a new one. This does not come accidentally but requires deliberate effort. To change from a failure to a successful person calls for performance of some activities that will facilitate the actualization of such dreams. Transformation calls for practical action and goes beyond mere expression of verbal pronouncement; but requires a number of tasks to be performed. So it is logical to say it takes a performer to be a transformer. Thus, transformation connotes the fact a thing or things is/are not in good order and that the effort to put them right could be regarded as transformation. Hence, transformation becomes necessary in Nigeria as the country is being bedeviled with many challenges which requires urgent attention to prevent the situation from further aggravation. It is of no doubt that Nigeria is currently being faced with many challenges ranging from

insecurity, corruption, unemployment, poverty to mention but a few, and these challenges call for transformation as the country.

Secondary Education and National Transformation

It is a known fact that education is core to national development as no nation could make progress without improving its educational system. Education is regarded as instrument for national development. Secondary education, however, occupies a core position in national development. Nigeria is a nation aspiring to be among 20 leading developed nations in the world in the year 2020, therefore, education and secondary education in particular has a great role to play in actualizing the Nigerian vision and to transform the nation into better place for all Nigerians. Secondary education is of strategic importance to Nigeria's development and capacity building, particularly because students of secondary school age and young people in general make up more than 60 percent of the population of Nigeria (Bregman, & Stallmeister, 2002; Lewin, 2004). This view is in line with Colin Power's statement: "We in UNESCO have put much emphasis into basic and higher education, and have neglected the young people in the middle" (Chavez et al, 1996, cited in UNESCO, 1999). Secondary education becomes instrumental to Nigeria's transformational agenda as the recipients are mostly youths, who are likely to be the leaders of tomorrow and who are mostly affected with all these challenges. Hence, for the Nigerian secondary education to be instrumental to the national transformation there is need to:

1. Re-strategize the nation's secondary education curriculum to fully cater for vocational education such that will equip the youths as the recipients of that level of education with skills, knowledge and competency to be self-reliant and be a job creator rather than be a job seeker. This will go a long way to solve unemployment as one of the Nigerian challenges.
2. Moral training should be emphasised more at this formation stage of students in secondary schools. They should be made to be more patriotic and be ready to serve their fatherland and avoid being selfish which is the root cause of being corrupt. Corruption has been the bane of Nigerian economy; hence, moral training with incentives for deserving students at secondary school level should be emphasized. Most importantly secondary school teachers should always be role models.
3. Also, there should be less emphasis on certificate or paper qualification.

Challenges Militating against Secondary Education in Achieving National Transformation in Nigeria

Secondary education in Nigeria is bedeviled with many challenges that have made it difficult to transform the country for better. One of these challenges is that of the frequent changes in educational policies which has made it difficult to fully implement and reap the benefits of any educational policy. Each administration coming on board

usually nullifies the existing policy on education by introducing new one, and this has been a challenge in realizing the objectives of secondary education and consequently the inability to transform the nation.

Also, secondary school curriculum has not been well tailored towards meeting the societal needs and overcoming the people's challenges. A good number of students who have completed their secondary education but failed to secure admission into institutions of higher learning are in dilemma. This is because they are not equipped with the requisite skills for self or paid employment (Igwe 2007). There is serious need to channel the nation's secondary school curriculum towards overcoming the impending challenges in order to transform the Nigerian Commonwealth as a nation. The curriculum should be embedded with vocational training such that will curb the challenges of unemployment. Adekoya (1999) claimed that for the Nigerian youth to be empowered economically they should be given the necessary skill acquisition and for this to be done the curriculum should be effectively implemented.

Corruption is another major challenge militating against the transformation of the country through secondary education. The fact that funds allocated to education are usually misappropriated causing shortage of funds to secondary education which make our dream of transforming the country for better a mirage. The recent economic meltdown that has become a global problem has made it impossible for the government to give adequate attention to secondary education in order to serve the purpose it is meant to serve. The shortage of funds has been crippling the implementation of the Nigerian secondary education policies which should have been instrumental to the transformation of the country.

Poor administrative technique of those saddled with the administration of secondary education could also been seen as another challenge militating the transformation of Nigeria through secondary education. There is lack of visionary secondary school administrators that can come up with programmes that will facilitate the national transformation through secondary education. Nigerian education has been highly politicized (Ijaiya, 2012). In this way technicalities are taken for granted all in the name of politics.

Secondary Education and National Transformation: Implications for Nigerian Youths

Youth in Nigeria should consider themselves as Nigerians who have no other country than Nigeria. They should demonstrate this by being patriotic and also love their fatherland by shunning all social vices which have been contributing to the nation's backwardness. Social vices like drug baron, internet fraudsters, cultism and others which have been portraying the nation in bad light are mostly committed by youths. Nigerian youths who are mostly secondary school students should have attitudinal change and develop good habit that will bring about desired national transformation in the country. Nigerian youths should as well consider themselves as future leaders and be ready to contribute their quota towards transforming the country. Transforming the country should

be seen as task which every Nigerian youth should be ready to carryout in order to leave their footprint in the sand of the country as been done by the Nigerian founding fathers. Nigerian political leaders should always lay good examples by being a role model in their character and dealings in public offices. This becomes necessary in order not to jeopardise the future of the country through laying bad example for the youths who may eventually become bad future leaders. Secondary school students who are mostly youths should be trained in trade and vocation such that the skills acquired will enable them not to rely solely on white collar job but to make them stand on their own and be job creators rather than be job seekers. Offorma (2005) lamented the growing dependence of the Nigerian youth on white-collar jobs which are difficult to come by these days. Job employers, according to Offorma, do not emphasize certificates but what one can do and urged youth to seek self-reliance through self employment. Vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education, which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed (Oni, 2007). According to Dike (2009), vocational and technical education is designed to develop occupational skills to give individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society. Oni (2007) further argued that vocational and technical education holds the key to national development. To Aina (2009), it is an education for skill building and skill identity, which ultimately becomes a means of livelihood. According to Obanya (2007), vocational and technical education is part of integral development of the 'three Hs' - the head, the heart, and the hands which must not be neglected, as doing that will amount to a denial of an individual's integrated personality development.

Oli (2000) believed that to ensure a positive future for Nigeria, the youth who are believed to be the future leaders of the country ought to be well equipped with basic skills to drive the economy. Omotosho, Idowu, Esere and Arewah (2009), citing Ipaye (1988), posited that one of the developmental tasks of the youth is the attainment of economic independence which invariably arises from the youth becoming gainfully employed. Consequently, youth unemployment tends to have negative psychological effect on the youth themselves. Thus, if secondary school students are exposed to vocational and technical education, unemployment, which is one of the major challenges facing Nigeria, will be drastically reduced and Nigeria will forge ahead and be transformed to be a better country.

One of the broad objectives of secondary education is to prepare the youth for useful living within the society (FRN, 2004). An individual is said to be useful in the society only if such person is contributing to the lives of the people in the society. Secondary education is designed in such a way that the recipient will be academically and morally trained to live a useful life and contribute to the betterment of the society. Secondary education therefore, stands to transform Nigeria as a nation, as it prepares the recipients to live positive life by not being a nuisance to the society. Goldman (2004) identified Nigeria as one of the countries that have the potential for attaining global

competitiveness based on their economic and demographic setting. For this potentiality to be explored to move the country forward, the youths must be fully involved and this could easily be achieved by giving a kind of responsibilities to the Nigerian youth such that will make them feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as partners in progress in transforming the country into greatness.

Conclusion

The fact that Nigeria, as a developing nation, aspiring to become one of the 20 leading nations of the world by the year 2020, coupled with the fact that Nigeria is yearning to transform from various challenges facing the country in order to better the lot of her citizenry and move the country forward calls for developing the Nigerian youths who are majorly secondary school goers, in the government transformation agenda in the country.

This becomes necessary because Nigerian youth constitute a significant percentage of the country's population and have the greater potential to reposition the country. The potentialities in Nigerian youths should be channelled towards positive direction such that will make them contribute their quota to the development of the country.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby proffered:

1. Nigerian secondary education curriculum should be re-visited to ensure that vocational training is given priority in order to equip the recipients with skills that will make them self-reliant. As this will go a long way to solve the challenges of unemployment.
2. More emphasis should be laid on moral training in secondary schools while incentives should be given to those with outstanding behaviours.
3. Nigerian youths should be involved in the Federal Government transformation agenda as this will make them feel a sense of belonging and be committed to the agenda.
4. Nigerian political leaders should be role model in words and deeds for youths to emulate.
5. Government should be more committed to the plight of the youths by being responsive to their needs.

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