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Conceptualizing Legal Education for Sustainable Development: The Nigeria Perspective

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Abstract

Sustainable development programmes must be considered within three spheres of sustainability that is the environment, society, economy and the underlying dimension of culture. Imperatively, the ideas such as equity among generations, peace, poverty reduction, and environmental preservation are very importance when considering these three spheres. Instructively therefore, since sustainable development addresses the local contexts of these three spheres, it takes different connotations when considering its various implications. However, scholars have expressed serious concern that the legal education syllabus has not given sustainable development a tokenistic place on the curriculum of law faculties in Nigeria. In view of this, the paper which is essentially doctrinal and library based addresses the challenges identified above and how legal education can be deployed for sustainable development. It further explores the value of legal education as a basis for sustainable development. The paper focuses on the conceptualizing and repositioning legal education for sustainable development as against mere acquisition of literacy or other skills. It argues that the integration of sustainable development in law curriculum in Nigeria is limited. The paper concludes by highlighting the opportunities available in the market if legal education is properly positioned and the law curriculum tailored alongside lifelong learning and training for sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Legal education, Curriculum, Sustainability

I. Introduction

Legal education is seen globally, as the bedrock of an egalitarian society and mechanism for ensuring good governance, rule of law and nation building. Legal education is therefore an instrument that can facilitate economic, social, political development within the sphere of individual rights as members of the society. Nigerian government may have appear to be pursuing this principle in its policy on legal education through the Universities system and the Law schools, by making law qualify as an instrument for achieving sustainable development and for effecting governance based on law. But in practical term, this has not been the case. One thing that need be emphasized is that legal education is capable of bringing about substantial and meaningful change to the world over. The modern view on the link between legal education and sustainable development, even where only lip service is being paid to it, is that qualitative legal education is the right of every citizen, not a privileged that the Nigerian government must grant.

Legal profession is pervasive one, straddling the political, economic as well as social life of the society, therefore, a proper conception and repositioning of legal education within the context of sustainable development becomes imperative. This can be argued from the perspective that legal education should ordinarily prepare lawyers to be instrument of change and development in whatever situations a country like Nigeria might find itself. Lawyers, as judges, in private or corporate practice, in the academics or in government, shape the society and the lives fellow human beings. This preposition has found credence in the observation of Newton that: "One of my deepest convictions is that so far as the institutional progress of a people is concerned, its salvation lies in the hands of the profession of the

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Bar. Notwithstanding, a lawyer can only be as good as the system of legal education that produced him. This is achievable if only legal education is taught both as academic as well as vocational which is a vital tool that can affect the quality of our justice system and the role of lawyers in the political, economic and social development of our country.¹

It has however been observed that graduates of the law in modern era are lacking in quality, low in perception, unfit in skills and are poorly prepared to take up the challenges of the modern world.² The University legal educational curricula did not help matter because it lay more emphasizes on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge at the expense of legal education capable of fostering self-reliance and sustainable development, which can be achieved through embedding of technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial in the teaching of courses in law.³ The need for a system of legal education that can be guaranteed for production of such lawyers with necessary skills and capacity to meet the evolving needs of the society has always been felt as far back as 1933, when Lord Sankey, observed that:

The courts are becoming more and more concerned with great social experiment. Law joins hands as never before with problems in economics, problems in political science, and problems in techniques of administration. It is important that the curricular of our law schools should send out lawyers trained to appreciate the meaning of these relationships. They must shape the mind to a critical understanding of the foundation of jurisprudence. Unless the training we give, supplies these perspectives, there is a grave danger that the lawyer will not prove adequate to the big problems, he has to help in solving Our educational methods have to breed a race of lawyers able to utilize the spirit of law reform for 22 highest uses. They have to teach at once the importance of stability and change ... we must also turn out lawyers with courage to criticize what is accepted, to construct what is necessary for new situations and new duties both at home and abroad.⁴

This paper argues that legal education must focus on adaptability of the current legal education curriculum within the context of sustainable development and sustainability. The paper dwells briefly on the historical evolution of legal education in Nigeria, embedding the concept of sustainable development in the legal education courses and legal education for sustainable developmental opportunities and the need to amend the present curriculum to reflect the concept and suggestions offered. The paper further considers the concept of sustainable development and linkage with law. Thus, it is contended that a proper legal training in the Universities that adequately impacts in the students the liberal and vocation skills is a significant key to sustainable development in any society.⁵

II. Conceptual Exposition of Sustainable Development and Sustainability

When discussing the concept of sustainable development and sustainability within the purview of legal education, legal education and the knowledge of law, both professional and general, are extremely desirable for sustainable development. Legal education ought to create opportunities for self sustenance as it is relevant for rule of law, social demand, and environmental rights protection and human need, which are imperative for sustainability.

Although, the essence of the concept of sustainable development is clear enough, incidentally however, its exact interpretation and definition has caused strong discussions.⁶ Heinen indicated that there is no single unanimous approach to "sustainable development" due to a variety of scopes or characteristic of different protection programs and different types of communities and institutions.⁷ A similar position was expressed by Radermacher and Spedding who expressed the view that this was

¹ D Newton D. Baker in an address delivered at the Columbia University 1933: Cited by Ojo, O., Chairman's in a 'Welcome Address, delivered at 5th Distinguished Jurist Lecture (National Association of Democratic Lawyers NADL, 2003) 3.

² A. A. Oba 'Toward Regaining Learning and Correcting Learning in Legal Profession in Nigeria' (2007) 1(1) Review of the Nigerian Law and Practice, 1, 11.

³ See generally, RA Wokocha 'The Challenges of Legal Education in Nigeria: the Way Forward' (2008) Web JCL.

⁴ Lord Sankey cited by F. Oditah op cit (quoting from L.C.B Gower, English Legal Training (1950) 13 MLR 137 at 161)

⁵ See generally, E Ojukwu 'Political Challenges of Introduction of Clinical Legal Education (CLE)' (2004) a paper presented at the Francophone West Africa Clinical Legal Education Colloquium, Dakar Senegal.

⁶ R Ciegis & R Ciegis 'Laws of Thermodynamics and Sustainability of Economics' (2008) Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics 2, 15-22

⁷ W Radermacher 'Indicators, Green Accounting and Environment Statistics-Information Requirements for Sustainable Development' (1999) 67 International Statistics Review 339-354

probably the reason for the emergence of a significant number of books, chapters, and articles containing words "sustainable" and "sustainability" in their titles yet providing no definitions of the concept.⁸ It is possible that the terminology problem occurs in the dual nature of the sustainable development concept, covering development as well as sustainability.⁹ Economic literature however, offers different definitions on sustainable development, mostly oriented towards separate sectors e.g. environmental, economic, civilization or emphasizing managerial, technical or philosophical/political decisions, and thus expressing rather different concepts of sustainable development.¹⁰

Instructively, it was the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report that described sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Thus, sustainability is viewed as a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, social and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. These three spheres of society, environment and economy are intertwined.¹¹ For example, a prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens.¹² Furthermore Goodland and Ledec has described sustainable development as the transformation (development) of economics, optimizing the economic and social benefit obtained at present without jeopardizing the possibilities for obtaining such benefit in the future.¹³ Pirages stated that sustainable growth means economic growth that is supported by the physical and social environment. Thus, sustainable development may be understood as the process of economic development and structural changes helping to broaden human possibilities.¹⁴

The above propositions do not contemplate the incorporation of law as relevant to sustainable development. Notwithstanding, sustainability paradigm remain a major change from the previous paradigm of economic development with its damaging social and environmental consequences corrected.¹⁵ Until recently these consequences have been seen as inevitable and acceptable.¹⁶ It might then be asked, what is then the difference between sustainable development and sustainability? Sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world), while sustainable development refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it (e.g. sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable production and consumption, good government, research and technology transfer, education and training, etc.).¹⁷ The ideals and principles that underlie sustainability include broad concepts such as equity among generations, gender equity, peace, tolerance, poverty reduction, environmental preservation and restoration, natural resource conservation, and social justice.¹⁸

These accompanying principles are perspectives that have become part of the global sustainability dialogue.¹⁹ Thus, a system of legal education approach, which focuses on teaching and learning the concept rather than an approach that looks at problems in isolation, should be encouraged in the Nigerian Law programme.²⁰ Within this context this paper argued that legal education therefore becomes imperative in the sense that all the principles are indirectly linked or embedded within the various law courses taught in the Nigerian Universities Faculties of Law. What is required is to direct legal education curriculum toward imparting the knowledge and skill for sustainable development and sustainability in the students. Although, legal education curriculum as approved by Council of Legal

⁸ CRW Spedding, *Agriculture and the Citizen* (Chapman & Hall, 1996) 149, 150

⁹ D Helm 'The Assessment: Environmental Policy - Objectives, Instruments and Institutions' (1998) 14, 4. *Oxford Review Policy* 15-22.

¹⁰ M Jacobs, 'Sustainable Development - From Broad Rhetoric to local Reality' (1995), Conference Proceedings from Agenda 21 in Cheshire, Cheshire County Council, Document No. 49.

¹¹ N Rotheroe, M. Keenlyside and L. Coates 'Local agenda 21: Articulating the Meaning of Sustainable Development at the Level of the Individual Enterprise' (2003) 11, 5 *Journal of Cleaner Production* 537-548

¹² R Goodland, & G Ledec, 'Neoclassical Economics and Principles of Sustainable Development, Ecological Modeling' (1987) 38 *JSD* 19-46.

¹³ As above 16

¹⁴ DC Pirages, 'A Social Design for Sustainable Growth, In: The Sustainable Society - Implications for Limited Growth' (1997) *JSD New York*

¹⁵ A Ross, 'Is the Environment Getting Squeezed Out of Sustainable Development' (2003) *Public Law Journal* 249-259.

¹⁶ See generally, M. A. Schreurs, and EC Economy, *The Internationalization of Environmental Protection*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

¹⁷ M Qizilbash, 'Sustainable Development: Concepts and Rankings', (2001) 37, 3, *Journal of Development Studies*, 134-161, see also J Burgess, 'Sustainable Consumption: is it really Achievable?', (2003) 13, 3, *Consumption policy Review* 78-84.

¹⁸ A Ross, 'The U.K. Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development in Government: a Case Study in Joined up Working' (2004), 17, 1, *Journal of Environmental Law* 27-49 see also s Boron, and K Murray, *Bridging the Un-sustainability Gap: A Framework for Sustainable Development* (2004) *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 65-73

¹⁹ E Adiele, 'Reflection on the Philosophical Basis of the Nigerian Education and the Attainment of Equality of Access to primary Education (2006) *International Journal of African-American Studies* 22-28

²⁰ Ibid

Education in Nigeria is yet to be tailored or directed at teaching the concept of sustainability as integral part of the law causes offered in the universities, however it is contended that law teachers can take up the challenge by teaching the concept sustainable development and sustainability within the context of law courses offered in the University.²¹

Therefore, considering the fact that sustainable development confronts economic, social and cultural restrictions, legal education in its paradigm, affords an ethical ideal and normative ethical principle for further development of the society that speaks not about the way it is but the way it should be and that foresees the need for criticism of the persistent human relationship and action algorithms.²²

III. History of the Nigeria Education

Understanding the historical evolution, nature and character of legal education in Nigeria is one useful way to apprehend its essential within realm of sustainable development and sustainability. History of legal profession and legal education dates back to the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, then there was no legal education because there was no need for same.²³ The coming of the Colonial with it enormous socio-economic and political changes to the Nigerian communities witnessed the emergence of society in the urban centres in which contracts, rather than status, governed interpersonal relationship. Because disputes and their resolution were becoming complex and were less amenable to traditional methods of resolution, the colonial administration had to establish native and English-type courts for adjudication of disputes.²⁴

Throughout the colonial period, there was no institution for the formal training of lawyers in Nigeria. To fill the vacuum, the Chief Justice was empowered²⁵ to appoint fit and proper persons with basic education and some knowledge of English law and practice as attorneys.²⁶ These were people who went overseas, mostly Great Britain, to acquire legal education.²⁷ From 1913 till 1963, Legal Practitioners in Nigeria received their training overseas and were qualified as Barristers or Solicitors and thereafter enrolled at the Supreme Court. However, lawyers trained in Britain before 1945 had no law degrees because no British University was offering a law degree at the time. The University College, London was the first to offer a law degree and this was in 1945.²⁸

Deficiencies were later identified in the foreign training of Nigerian lawyers. For one, a lawyer may be trained in England to become either a Barrister or Solicitor and after qualification; he only practices in England as such.²⁹ However, once a lawyer is enrolled at the Supreme Court in Nigeria, he is entitled to practice as Barrister and Solicitor regardless of the fact that his training was limited to only one branch of the Profession.³⁰ Also, certain peculiarities of the Nigerian legal system were not taken into account in the training of these lawyers.³¹ They were trained based on the English legislations and case law without regard to the local circumstances in Nigeria.³² They had no knowledge of some important aspects of Nigerian law like Customary and Islamic Laws. In 1959, the Government of the Federation tried to correct these anomalies by setting up the Unsworth Committee to consider and make recommendations for the future of legal profession in Nigeria with particular reference to legal education, admission to practice and the right of audience before the Courts.

The outcome of the commission led to the establishment of the Nigeria system of legal education, the first law faculty was established at the University College, Ibadan and subsequently many

²¹ Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education (4th edition) Lagos, Federal Ministry of Education Press

²² K Parker, 'Economics, Sustainable Growth, and Community, Environmental Values' (1993) 3, Journal of Sustainable Development 233-245.

²³ MA Olong, A Mariam, and I Stella, 'Legal Education in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges, Curriculum, Staffing and Management in Focus' Allswell (ed.), Legal Education in the 21st Century, (Afe Balalola University Press, 2010) 63-69.

²⁴ O Doherty, Legal Practitioner and Management in Nigeria, (Cavendish Publishing Ltd, London, 1998) 4-5

²⁵ See The Supreme Court Ordinance section 74, Ordinance No.4 of 1876; The Supreme Court (Civil Procedure) Rules Order xvi r. 1, 1948, Nigeria

²⁶ Court clerks who had acquired knowledge of the rudiments of English law were appointed attorneys and granted licence to practice for six months renewable at the expiration of six months, provided they were of good behaviour.

²⁷ O Adewoye, The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria 1854-1954 (Nigeria: Longman, 1997) 52.

²⁸ O Elias, Makers of Nigerian Law, (Sweet and Maxwell, London, 1965) 30.

²⁹ As above, 21

³⁰ As above

³¹ Courses like, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Nigerian Legal System, Nigerian Law of Evidence, in the context of Nigeria were not taken by students trained abroad. This account for the introduction of Bar Part I programme for students trained in the Commonwealth countries for the purpose of taking these core courses before proceeding to Bar Part II of the Nigerian Law School programme and before they can qualify as barristers and solicitors of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

³² Ibid. see also, JO Olatoké, et al 'Constant Diminishing in the Standard of Nigerian Legal Education: the Actual but Unaddressed Cause' (2012) 2, Web JCLI

other Universities established in Nigeria established law faculty in their institutions.³³ The Nigerian Law School was established in Lagos³⁴ to provide vocational training of legal practitioners to qualify as Barrister and Solicitor. Since then the qualification for admission to legal practice has been on holding of a degree in law from any University in Nigeria whose course for the degree is recognised by the Council of Legal Education, and the vocational course prescribed by the Council.³⁵ The Nigerian Universities Commission is vested with power to design uniform curriculum for law programme taught in all the Nigerian Universities and approval must be given by the Council of Legal Education to maintain minimum academic standard. Following the NUC report on the minimum standard of academic legal education from 1990/1991, period of academic legal education has been put at five years for those possessing Senior Secondary School Certificates and four years for direct entry students with a Higher National Diploma or a First Degree in other disciplines. Most of the 1st year and some part of the 2nd year are devoted to studying the non-law subjects while the remaining three and half years are spent on the law courses.³⁶

The professional and vocation aspects of legal education which focus mainly on procedures are undertaken at the Nigerian Law School established and run by the Council of Legal Education in accordance with the Legal Education Act.³⁷ The vocational course is designed to meet the particular needs of a fused profession. Therefore, procedural courses that would equip prospective practitioners to enable them practice as barristers and solicitors are taught in the school. However a cursory examination of the courses taught in the Nigeria Laws will reveal that the concept of sustainability is not integrated into the curriculum.³⁸ The time is now ripe and urgent need has arisen for our Law faculties in the Nigeria Universities to move away from a culture of teaching and learning dominated by the lecturers, who are looked upon as fountains of knowledge, with the students passively absorbing whatever information the lecturer passes across lock, stock and barrel.³⁹ The focus of learning and teaching should be directed at provision of knowledge resource that can prepare the legal minds of students to create an environment in which sustainable development will be achieved.

IV. Conceptualizing an Embedment of Legal Education for Sustainable Development

The organization of schools and further education has long been associated with the idea of curriculum which simply means all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in group or individuals, inside or outside the school.⁴⁰ Traditionally therefore, school curriculum provides a plan of instruction that indicates structure of learning experience and outcome for student.⁴¹

Thus, conceptualizing the embedment of legal education curriculum in Nigeria presupposes a positive step towards addressing sustainable development and sustainability that can be achieved through the classrooms teaching and learning as well as outside the universities environment.⁴² At the classroom level, teachers/lecturers can begin by explicitly stating the link between the topics in the law syllabus on sustainable development and sustainability.⁴³ Sustainable development without doubt is an increasingly important facet of the educational agenda and now educationists are presently actively

³³ See Ojukwu E., (2003), Trends in Legal Education: A Comparative Analyses of Nigeria, U.S.A, U.K and South Africa, in Nigerian Law School, Four Decades Service to the Legal profession 1963-2003, The Council of Legal Education, 133

³⁴ Though, now Nigeria has campuses spread across the country, Law school campus is now at Yengoa, Bayelsa State, Enugu in Enugu State, Adamawa, Kano, Abuja and Lagos States

³⁵ See Legal Education Act Cap L10 LFN and Legal Practitioners Act Cap LFN L11 2004, see, National University Commission Minimum Academic Standard for Law, May 1989, para.1.1

³⁶ As above

³⁷ Legal Education Council Act, Cap L10 LFN 2004, the Nigerian Law School was established in 1962, it now has campuses cut across all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria

³⁸ The courses offered in the Nigerian Law school are: Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure, Law of Evidence, Company Law and Commercial Practice, Legal Drafting and Convincing and General Paper consisting of Professional Ethics, Law Office Management, Legal Practitioners Account and Legal Skills

³⁹ In this area kudos must be giving to the Network of Nigeria University Legal Aid Institution's effort through training and retraining of law teachers in Nigeria to create new orientation in the area of methods of teaching. Clinical Legal Education as a household name is well recognized as a method of teaching law, ethics and professional development. See G Frances, Community Engagement in Action: Creating Successful University Clinical Legal Internship, (2012), 1, AF Journal of Clinical Legal Education Access to Justice 1-12.

⁴⁰ A Felicia, I Akaka, and N Osyka, Appropriate Curriculum for Training 21st Century Lawyers, in OM Allwell (ed.) Legal Education in 21st Century, (Afe Babalola University Press, 2010) 124-127.

⁴¹ As above, 125

⁴² UA Elizabeth, (2003), Promoting Nigeria for Development in an Era of Globalization: Challenges and Strategies, OM Michael, and O Victoria, (eds.) Globalization and National Development in Nigeria, (Fulbright Alumni Association, 2003)

⁴³ *ibid*

seeking to embed the concept of sustainability within all academic disciplines in order that learners are exposed to the concept and may begin to reflect about their subjects in a way which is inclusive of the conceptual framework of sustainability and in this paradigm legal education is not an exception.⁴⁴

This is important to target a more spring point for incremental opportunities to achieve sustainable perspective in law modules.⁴⁵ It may be significant to demonstrate how sustainable development and sustainability concept can be embedded in the topics taught in the Nigeria Universities Law Faculties and Law School.

1. **International Law:** Globally students study international law and topics like war crime and peace are usually taught. It is beyond dispute that, terrorism and genocide (i.e. Boko Haram, militia, ethnic, and tribal and religion violence being experienced in Nigeria) are considered unsustainable in society which human lives are lost and resources wasted. Incidentally one of the principles of sustainability is that terrorism and genocide are inherently destructive to sustainable development. Therefore in teaching international law these factors which prevent countries from making progress towards sustainability and have been focused internationally can be embedded in contents of the subject.
2. **Environment Law:** Environmental issue is also an area of focus internationally and topic like right to peaceful environment, effect of climate change on the environment is significant within context of sustainability. Instructively, environmental impact and climate change resulting from non-natural use of the land and depletion of Ozone layer due to emission of greenhouse gas are adversely affecting the environment. Thus the principles of sustainability in these areas are inherent in discourse on waste management and contaminated land, water pollution, noise pollution, Light pollution, environmental crime, human rights climate change, nuclear energy, regulatory enforcement and sanction act, framing environmental law, or environmental assessments within international environmental law.
3. **Health Care Law:** in similar paradigm, healthcare law and risks related to HIV, maternal mortality that affects human existence are significant to the study of health care law. This is because access to medical care is now viewed a human right, and human rights are fundamental in creating sustainable development. This evidence the significant of embedding sustainable development in topics under health care law
4. **International Arbitration Law:** Today we are talking about international trade. Consider impact of trade dispute in realm of economic development. From simple statements such as these, students will build their conceptions of sustainability and their knowledge of how disputes can affect the economy of a nation.
5. **Criminal Law:** Crime in the Nigerian society has grown significantly, armed robbery, drug trafficking, child trafficking, money laundering, cyber and computer crime and corruption pervade every aspect of government today, the implication of these phenomenon to political and socio-economic development cannot be over emphasized especially within the context of sustainable development. The principle of sustainability can be embedded in the criminal law topics because of their unsuitability to physical, economic and human development which are incidental to the principle of sustainability.

The inference that can be distilled from the above is that elements of sustainable development and sustainability are directly or indirectly embedded in many law courses taught in the Nigerian Universities. What is required is to employ necessary teaching methods and adopting curriculum that incorporates the principles of sustainability in all courses being taken in the Faculty of Laws in Nigerian Universities. Significantly, it may be necessary to make sustainable development concept more explicit

⁴⁴ UNESCO, the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000) www.unesco.org/world-edu/forum

⁴⁵ See E Ojukwu, 'Revisiting Legal Training in Nigeria: Wanted and Mandatory Continue Legal Education Programme' (1998) Journal of Commercial, Private and Property Law

in law courses by reorienting and integrating the concept into the Nigerian Universities Law Curriculum. It is the belief of the author of this paper that this will provide a way for analyzing the extent to which Nigeria Legal Education for Sustainability (NLES) can be achieved at all level of legal education in Nigeria (Law Faculties in the Nigerian Universities and the Nigerian Law School.

It is argued that since sustainable development and sustainability issues should be analyzed and solved on the system levels where they develop and manifest themselves, one can consistently formulate respective aims of the sustainable development policy from legal education dimensions within economic, ecological, social, and institutional perspectives of sustainable development on each of these levels of economic development policy, thus obtaining the matrix of the aims of legal education for sustainability policy.⁴⁶ Though, not all relations identified in a sustainability analysis have the same relevance and the same meaning for the strategic instruments of legal education for sustainable development. Relations among some subjects identified should be relocated in a logical structure, based on the intention of the cognitive legal education tool being built. In order to attain this, a hierarchical legal education framework with coherent sustainability logic is needed.

In summary, what legal education curriculum experts need to do is to understand that people need to be acquainted with adequate understanding of sustainable development, the causes, the impact and way forward. The knowledge needed include understanding the role play by man, the rights of citizens, the laws regulating aspects of sustainability, and also the students need to be understood. Therefore, legal education curriculum experts need to find way of exploiting the various law courses taught in Universities to incorporate the concept of sustainable development within their content. This will go a long way in reorienting, enhancing attitudinal change and awareness of the concept of sustainable development linkage with legal profession.

Embedding sustainable development and sustainability concept can only start to manifest first at the levels of the Faculty of Laws in Nigeria, Council of Legal Education (CLE) and National University Commission (NUC) responsible for designing Law curricula in Nigeria. It is the writer's opinion that the process should be conducted in a systematical and thorough manner than a reorienting process carried out by a law teachers working in isolation or by a small team of law teachers working in a University. Thus, there may be need to extend invitation to stakeholders and encourage public participation process to gather impute (e.g. statements of needs and desires as well as opinions) related to the embedding the concept of sustainability in the law curriculum. In this way, we will be modelling public participation and transparency, which are essential elements of sustainability.

V. Legal Education and Sustainability Opportunities in Nigeria

The authors viewed that Legal Education should prepare people for sustainable development through guaranteeing self-reliant and caution against dependency syndrome on the government as the monopoly of employment. Legal education for self-reliance should enrich peoples' understanding of themselves, the opportunities as well as the world around. This will improves the quality of professionals' lives and leads individual and the society at large to broad social benefits i.e. Economics benefits in ICT, Oil and Gas cannot be overemphasized.⁴⁷ The projection of legal education for sustainable development in this perspective is that which seeks to equip law students toward creating a sustainable future, and enhanced life, socially, physically, mentally and health-wise could be regarded as education for sustainable development.

UNESCO⁴⁸ affirms that the way each nation, cultural group and individual views sustainable development will depend on its own values. In the developed nations, Universities and technical colleges trained students of science, economics and business management in skills that helps to build more sustainable societies.⁴⁹ Programmes, such as Peace Education, Human Right Education, and Environmental Education and Youth Entrepreneur schemes ought to be carried out in many schools.

⁴⁶ See the abstract in C Remigijus, R Jolita, and M Bronislovas, the Concept of Sustainable Development and its Use for Sustainability Scenarios (Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics, 2009) 2-3.

⁴⁷ See generally, BB Arogundade, 'Entrepreneurship education: an imperative for sustainable development in Nigeria' (2011) 2, 1, Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies 26-29.

⁴⁸ UNESCO (2000) The World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000), www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000_index.shtml accessed on 10 August 2013

⁴⁹ CC Nwosu, & KO Ayodele, 'Repositioning Nigeria University Education Beyond Certification but Towards Sustainable Development: A Veritable Tool for Poverty Eradication' (2013) Open Journal of Education, 37-42

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Public Interest Organizations

Another area that provides self-reliance opportunity for lawyers is in the realm of public interest organization. Legal opportunities in public service can be found in a variety of legal settings and practice areas. There are two general types of public interest employers, those that are issue-oriented and those that are client-oriented. Each has a different focus and conduct business accordingly.⁶⁸ Issue-oriented groups take on cases with the intention of creating legal policy and precedents that will affect large numbers of people. Related legal employment areas that may come into play include: lobbying, grassroots organizing, and community-based education. Client-oriented organizations focus on providing direct legal aid to those that belong to under-represented groups or do not have the financial means to hire a private attorney. Some typical practice areas may include: family law, housing law, consumer law, and public health.⁶⁹

Business Organisations

Corporations, banks, accounting firms, insurance companies, publishing companies, and consulting groups are all businesses that employ lawyers. In addition, libraries, hospitals, colleges, school systems, and a host of other entities rely on attorneys as well. Recently, business organisations have been increasing the size of their in-house staff, but it remains rare for entry-level attorneys to be hired for an in-house position. Unlike law firm attorneys, in-house attorneys work with only one client and generally cover a variety of areas for that one client. Universities and other educational employers, both public and private, hire attorneys to represent them and manage their corporate affairs. Management Consulting is another area where being an attorney can help you. Firms that specialize in management consulting help top management business, government and other organizations in solving management problems.⁷⁰

Legal Secretary/Personal Assistance

Legal secretaries give administrative support to lawyers and assist in the day-to-day tasks involved in running a legal firm. In a smaller firm, you would develop experience in a wide range of legal matters, whilst in larger firms you would normally specialised in just one or two areas of law. A legal secretary may progress to a personal assistant (PA) role, giving responsibility for a range of senior administrative matters and client liaison, and requiring greater use of technology and a wide range of skills. In some firms it may also be possible to progress into paralegal or legal executive work, or even into a training contract.⁷¹

Graduate employers in all kinds of career areas value the skills that law graduates have gained through studying law, even when knowledge of law as such may not be directly relevant to the job. These skills are likely to include: Communication, both written and verbal, Analysing and problem solving, using information from different sources, time management, researching, presentation, negotiation, attention to detail, or logical reasoning. Therefore, it is suggested that our policy maker should make legal education more functional in meeting individual's needs and yearnings, which must be in line with the national development.

Incidentally, today it is manifestly clear that law is a big business that demands effective and efficient management. Global competition has put extra pressure on law employees and the need to be able to participate effectively in multidisciplinary market is astronomically increasing. Sustainability of legal profession for sustainable development thus demands a new approach in the teaching, learning and practice of law to meet the global challenges as rightly observe by Ben Heineman that:

We are seeking lawyers who are not strong team members but who can lead and build organizations, create vision, the values, the proprieties, the strategies, the people, the system, the processes, the checks and balances, the resources and the motivation.⁷²

The recent development in the proposal for the adoption of new approach to teaching and

⁶⁸ As above

⁶⁹ As above

⁷⁰ As above

⁷¹ As above

⁷² See RB Smith, and MP Bennett, 'The Changing Nature of Leadership in Law Firm' (2008), the New York State Bar Journal 35-36.

These initiatives would assist students and teachers to gain an understanding of the inter-linkages of legal education for sustainable development.⁵⁰ In the developed countries colleges and universities are another driver for sustainability in law schools, in no small part because of rapidly growing activities at the college and university level.⁵¹ For example colleges and universities across the United States are increasingly practicing sustainability across the entire range of their activities. Despite the continuing drive to specialize within traditional academic disciplines, courses that incorporate sustainability concepts are being developed in a variety of disciplines. Sustainability-oriented research is increasingly funded in the sciences, and initiatives are also under way to bring the social sciences and humanities into the research dimension. Initiatives to make campus operations more sustainable are now standard practice, and some universities and colleges are actively promoting sustainable development in their surrounding communities and beyond.⁵²

Premised on the above background, emphasis that ought to be placed on the Nigeria legal education should be the type that provides life and occupational skills, enhance the potentials of individual, reinforcing self-sufficiency and improving quality of life. In order to achieve viable legal education that will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria and reduce poverty to the barest minimum, the following are view to be relevant in the country legal education curriculum formulation⁵³:

A. Trends towards Legal Education for Sustainable Development in Self-reliance

The role of legal education cannot be overemphasis when considering the pursuit of sustainable development such that would ensure economic self-reliance and sustainable environment as earlier noted.⁵⁴ In this paradigm self-reliance is employ to be the ability to use law in making decisions about the society, the environment and citizen thereto for the enjoyment of peaceful environment, individuals and oneself, rather than depending on government or other people to accomplish that same purpose. Thus economic self-reliance, within the spectrum of legal education should be regarded as a process, which guarantee the attainment economic independent; economic stability and self-sufficiency such that one do not need to depend upon anyone for help.⁵⁵

B. Trends towards Legal Education for Sustainability in Entrepreneurial Skill

Entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals pursue opportunities, fulfilling needs and wants through creativity and innovation, without regard to the resources they currently have.⁵⁶ The concepts of legal education for sustainable development here should be the type that involves risk-taking; innovation and creation of wealth that constitute the web around which legal education entrepreneurship skill is applicable.⁵⁷ Accordingly, entrepreneurial legal education strategy should focus on developing law graduates with the passion and multiple skills. Legal education entrepreneurial should be designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunity, organize and start new business venture.⁵⁸

The experience in developing countries has proved legal education to be potentially good in achieving sustainable development.⁵⁹ It has been established that legal education is a veritable tool in stamping out economic dependency, protecting violation of the environment and individual right to peaceful environment, control incidences of climatic change, good governance, corruption to the barest minimum there achieving sustainability in government policy. It may be argued therefore, that legal education is potentially good for income generation and improvement of person's self-esteem. This is evident in the lots of employment opportunity that abound in legal profession.

⁵⁰ Odia, L & Omofonmwan, S. I. (2007). Educational System in Nigeria Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 14(1), 81-86

⁵¹ J Feldman, *Business and Industry: Transitioning to Sustainability*, CD John, (ed.), *Agenda for a Sustainable America*, Progress Toward Sustainability, (2009) 15, 18. A Report Card, *Envtl. L. Inst.* 71, 71-72. RW Blackburn, *The Sustainability Handbook* (Environmental Law Institute, 2010) 647-85

⁵² As above

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ J Huckle, and S Sterling, eds. *Education for Sustainability*, (Earthscan Publications, London, 2001) 56

⁵⁵ CC Nwosu, 'The Role of Christian Educational Institutions in Improving Economic Self-Reliance' (2012), *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 24 45

⁵⁶ S Amuseghan, & O Tayo-Olajubutu, 'Spinning off an entrepreneurship culture among Nigenan University Students: Prospects and challenges' (2009), 3, 3, *African Journal of Business Management* 80-88

⁵⁷ CG Salami, 'Entrepreneurial interventionism and challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria' *Global* (2011) 11, 7, *Journal of Management and Business Research*, 16-24

⁵⁸ Above, note 49

⁵⁹ The protection of citizens' rights to peaceful environment and series acts of pollution and causing climate change can be properly pursued where law graduates are well grounded in law relevant to achieving sustainable development.

Legal education can therefore be said to provide ample opportunity for sustainable development especially in one area of the three pillar of the concept that is economic empowerment. A law degree is highly valued and is the ticket to any number of successful career paths even for non-legal experts. Today, there are countless opportunities for legal professional to use the skills they have gained in law in even non-traditional legal career settings. Finding a fulfilling alternative legal career requires a lot of time, hard work, perseverance, and commitment. Students looking for non-traditional work must be willing to work hard and to prove themselves even if it means taking an entry level position with their desired employer and working the way up to a "dream job."⁶⁰

One of the most important things to do before leaving law school is to learn about the wide variety of employment opportunities available to law school graduates. This area describes several practice settings for attorneys, and the countless ways to use your legal education degree.⁶¹ It may be relevant here to look at such areas.

C. Public and Private Sectors of the economy

Lawyers work in the private sector of the economy and can be found in numerous settings, the most common of the private sectors' settings being the law firm, judiciary and corporate institutions. Some firms have multiple locations and even international offices. So also are courts. According to information from the Nigerian Bar Association on lawyer demographics, approximately 761, 000 lawyers were employed nationwide in 2006 and a relatively small number worked at the law schools as faculty.⁶² Apparently a properly oriented legal curriculum must be developed to achieve this.

D. The Judiciary and Judicial Officers

Lawyers work as judges in law courts from the lowest web of hierarchy of courts to the highest court, Supreme Court Nigeria as well as Tribunals.⁶³ Many lawyers working in this prestigious arm of government signify the increases of employment opportunities in legal profession.⁶⁴

E. Government Establishments

Opportunities for employment are also available at every level of government from state, local to national. As the size of the government continues to grow, so do the likelihood of those positions for lawyers to work with and represent governmental entities such as school districts, cities, counties, states, legislative assemblies, administrative services, and the federal government itself will continue to be available.⁶⁵

Federal Government hires lawyers for a variety of tasks for its numerous agencies and departments and offers career opportunities in a broad range of specialty fields.⁶⁶ The Ministry of justice for instance is the largest federal employer of attorneys. Though recruitment for this job is extremely competitive, yet it occurs regularly. States and Local Governments opportunities vary. Each of the thirty six states maintains a staff under its Attorney General to litigate suits for and against the state; this is often the largest legal office at the state level. Local government units do have attorney office or a department instead of just one attorney to take on all its legal work. Public defenders and prosecutor offices are often good places for new law school graduates to find employment. Public defenders offices and legal aid council provide representation to accused persons in criminal cases who are financially unable to retain their own lawyer.⁶⁷ So also institutions such as the NFDAC, NSDC, designate a legal department that employ lawyer to handle cases on their behalf. This demonstrates the significance of legal education in realm of providing self-reliance opportunity for the lawyers in the Nigerian society.

⁶⁰ Careers for Law Graduates outside the Legal Profession: An introduction to alternative careers for law graduates not planning to qualify as a solicitor or barrister Careers and Employability Service University of Kent 4th edition, July 2013

⁶¹ Hopkinson et al, 'Sustainable Graduates: Linking Formal, Informal and Campus Curricula to Embed Education for Sustainable Development in the Student Learning Experience' (2008) 14, 4, Environmental Education Research 435 – 454.

⁶² Detailed information on large and medium firm employers is available through the Bureau of Labour Statistics, www.collegegrad.com assessed on 2 January, 2014

⁶³ Magistrate Court, Area/Customary Court, High Courts (Federal State), Sharia/Customary Court of Appeal, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court of Nigeria

⁶⁴ As above

⁶⁵ As above

⁶⁶ For instance, private legal practitioners are employed to represent INEC in election petition cases.

⁶⁷ Detailed information on large and medium firm employers is available through the NALP Directory www.nalpdirectory.com

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learning legal education in Nigeria with the introduction of practical oriented approach curriculum support the significant of the above postulation. The new approach accounted for the introduction of Clinical Legal Education (CLE) in Nigeria. The fundamental of the clinical legal education is skill training and social justice system,⁷³ which ordinarily cannot be divorced from concept of sustainable development and sustainability. These are traits that correlate and consequential to sustainable development, legal education thus must be reoriented within the paradigm shift. Aside from this, every law teachers must assist the regulators of legal education in Nigeria by initiating curriculum to embed the concept of sustainable development and sustainability in line with global practice.

Suggestions

It is the author of this paper's postulation that, law students and prospective law students would show a growing interest in sustainability, although this is hard to measure quantitatively. The growth in sustainability programs at the law faculty courses is portent to provide some of the evidence. And the popularity of legal education for sustainable development and sustainability programs if established will rank higher in educational system in the country. Thus it is suggested that:

- The Legal education for sustainable development (LESD) should contain exercises for reorienting a curriculum that address sustainability and this should be pursued by the stakeholders of legal education in Nigeria (CLE, NUC, NLS). There may be need for forums to gather public opinion as related to curricular change in Nigeria.
- A gradual paradigm shift in the teaching of law courses is necessary through the, introduction one or a few new items related to sustainability in each lesson. Thus, over the course of a law school programme at the undergraduate and Law school, the aggregate amount of sustainability taught and time on task (i.e. learning about sustainability) can be substantial.

Conclusion

To reorient a curriculum to address sustainability, legal educational stakeholders need to identify the knowledge, issues, perspectives, skills and values central to sustainable development in each of the three components of sustainability, that is the environment, society, and economy and integrate them into the curriculum. The Council of Legal Education and stakeholder also need to decide which of the many existing sustainability issues (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, equity, and poverty) will be part of the curriculum. Ideally, efforts to embed and reorient legal education will be based on peculiar nature of the Nigeria national or local sustainability goals. A properly reoriented curriculum will address local environmental, social, and economic contexts to ensure that it is locally relevant and culturally appropriate.

In an effort to save time or resources, governments can import curricula from other jurisdictions regionally and internationally. In the case of LESD, this must only serve as guide, so that local and national sustainability goals and local contexts will not be well targeted. In so doing, law students and prospective law students would show a growing interest in sustainability, although this is hard to measure quantitatively. The growth in sustainability programs at the law faculty courses is portent to provide some of the evidence. And the popularity of legal education for sustainable development and sustainability programs if established will rank higher in educational system in the country.

It is the contention of the author that the responsibilities of law graduates should not stop at merely carrying out their professional functions at the bar, bench or elsewhere. Legal education should entitle and endow the law graduates, with the skill significant to pursue whatever professions they may be find themselves and with solemn duty to take law to the people. They should apply their knowledge to create awareness in the people on their rights; to aid people to seek remedies through courts and alternative dispute resolution (ADR), facilitate access to justice, understand the intrinsic value of law in improving governance in public and private sectors, and for overall socio-economic development of the country.

⁷³ E Ojukwu, (2004). Political for the Introduction of Clinical Legal Education, paper presented at Francophone West Africa CLE Colloquium Dakar Senegal. CLE was introduced in Nigeria after the first colloquium of 2004