From Stunted Vision to Aborted Mission: Critical Appraisal of Infrastructures and Due Process in Nigerian Educational System

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Abstract

Nigeria has been a signatory to United Nations (UN) convention on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development goals (SDGs) programmed to be achieved in the year 2030. Against the background of its failure to meet up with MDGs targets especially on Education in 2015, this paper seeks to appraise educational sector and due process which is the lynch-pin for the socio-economic advancement of any nation. Using functionalist theory to appraise the roles of three critical societal variables i.e family, government and environment who's functional, interrelated and integrated roles are important in achieving the vision, the paper argues that failure of socialization process of the families to their wards on the importance of hard work, lack of culture of due process and leadership failure to live up to expectations in educational sector, are responsible for the

collapse of the system. Recommendations are made among others that values of hard work and due process right from family level to the larger society should be encouraged in our national life and that merit rather than mediocrity should be rewarded and that political will on policy implementations in educational sector on the part of political leadership is vital rather than policy inconsistencies.

Key-words: Education. *Infrastructure. Due Process. System.*

Introduction

Mubarak and David are both undergraduate students in one of Nigeria tertiary institutions. Fate joined them together at the admission screening centre after getting late admissions to read the same course in the school.

They decided to rent one-room apartment outside the school as the few hostels available were already exhausted. On a fateful day, they wanted to read in-between lecture periods but to their disappointment, all the seats in the schools library were occupied and as all the lecture halls and classrooms were also being used, they decided to put their reading on hold till night.

They met with the same challenges at night and consequently decided to retire to their room to read in preparation for their continuous assessment (CA) test the next day. As they were walking down to their apartment, they heard "cat–call", and on looking towards the direction, saw one of their friends "hanging out" in one of the recreation centres along the road. They walked to join him there.

They discussed at length over some "bottles" into the better part of the night until they left the "joint". On reaching their apartment, Mubarak and David couldn't withstand the call of nature. They dozed off until cock-crow woke them suddenly to discover it was already 8am in the morning whereas, they were to have continuous assessment (CA) test by 9am that day.

They hurriedly took their bath and with apprehension of imminent failure in the Continuous Assess (CA) test, they opened their desk drawers and brought out their jotters which they use as lecture notes and tucked them into their trousers side pockets. To them, that is the only alternative as they could not read for the continuous assessment test.

This story is typical of some of our undergraduates in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The exceptions are those who because of their mental and psychological make-ups brace all odds to have quality education. Sadly, this is a country this is a country who having failed to meet MDGs targets in 2015, is hoping to join the league of developed countries in meeting up with the targets of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in 2030.

Theoretical Clarification

The behaviour of our hypothetical students, Mubarak and David can be explained with three societal variables that must have informed their behvaiour. That is; family, environment and government. Since the roles of these institutions are very important in educational in view of their functional pre-requisites for a stable educational system, we can find refuge in functionalist theory as a frame of analysis in educational development. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2008):

Functionalism views society as a system: that is, as a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. The basic unit of analysis is society, and its various parts are understood primarily in terms of their relationship to the whole (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008-856).

> *Functionalism in sociology school was developed by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and refined by Talcott Parson (1902-79) (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:856).*

The fact is that the functional roles of family, environment and government in the educational system cannot be over emphasized. These societal variables must work in harmonious relationship for educational

system to survive. Family is the primary socializing institution which is a subsystem in educational system. The same is government which exists within the environment. These societal variables if functional will translate to quality education and integrity on the part of individual and development of educational sector that can lead to attainment of millennium development goals (MDGs) an sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030.

Family and social values

Family: Family plays a primary role in the socialization process of a person. In fact, it is the first molder of the mind because through the family, a person learns the basic rudiments of societal values. According to Parson (quoted in Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:687) socialization is a vital process through which a Value consensus" is produced in society. Through socialization, the individual internalizes society's values; they become part of his or her personality. Through this process, individuals take on aspects of society's culture, making their behavior largely predictable and contributing to the maintenance of social order. Parson in (Harlambos and Holborn 2008: 463) argues that families are " factories" which produce human personalities. He believed they are essential for this purpose, since primary socialization requires a context which provides warmth, security and mutual support.

So families who endeavor to imbibe the culture of hard work and sincerity in their children by encouraging them in positive behaviors and telling them the stories of exploits of great men who have made it through dint of hard work, sincerity and resilience are likely to have good ambassadors in the educational institutions than the families who believe in over-indulging their wards by withholding the necessary harsh lessons of life from them.

Environment and integrity in Education

The role of environment in educational attainment cannot be de-emphasized. Experts are in consensus on the primacy of environment in behaviour. The behavior of people towards self- fulfillment in any Endeavour whether it has to do with career pursuit depends on the type of what experts called "social stratification" in the society. Social stratification according to Tuden and Plotricov 1970 (quoted in Charles: 2005:272) refers to a hierarchical arrangement of persons into known social layers such that some occupy low, middle, and upper strategy of these layers. 'Ones' social worth is judged by the layer occupied in the social grouping of individuals. In Nigeria, these categorizations are seriously distorted. The culture of due process in achievement is dead. Mediocrity aided and abetted by primordial sentiments like tribalism and ethnicity is the order of the day. Unmerited positions are promoted by the principles of Federal character which presuppose that every ethnic group must have representatives in every institution even if they are not qualified. Ethical values have collapsed. Cheating in exams in tertiary institutions is as a result of lack of due process in whatever we do.

Functionalist assumes that the parts of society form an integrated whole and thus; they examine the ways in which the social stratification system is integrated with other parts of society. They maintain that a certain degree of order and stability is essential for the operation of social system (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008: 20).

According to Betrand Russel, 1949 (quoted in Ejiogwu, 2001:13):

> *Without civil morality, Communities perish, without personal morality, they survival has no value.*

Social stratification system is a societal reward mechanism where hard work is rewarded to encourage steadfastness and enterprises so that society will not only benefit from it, but also make everybody to have sense of self-worth and dignity. In a situation where foul means are used

to get educational attainment, the society is not only going to suffer for it on the long run, it is surely going to discourage hard work on the parts of other students. For example, a student who graduated with first class through cheating and favoritism is not just going to slow down the development of the society, he is going to distort the concept of reward in hard studies thereby encouraging cheating and favoritism as a way of getting first class degree.

Nigerian environment does not believe in hard work to get to the top in social strata, therefore, cheating in exam is a reflection of lack of due process in achieving a high status in the society.

Government and Quality Education in Nigeria

What came to represent the first serious attempt at educational policy was Asby Commission of 1960 whose white paper, government consequently used as a basis for educational policy in the first National Development Plan (1962-1968) (Ujo, 2008:103).

Government also stated that, for the benefit of all citizens, the country's educational goals in terms of its relevance to the needs of the individuals as well as in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment and the realities of the modern world and rapid social changes should be clearly set out. These were the factors which led to the government summoning in 1973, a seminar of distinguished educational experts, under the chairmanship of Chief S.O. Adebo; former Permanent Representative of Nigeria at the United Nations (UN) and the then chairman of the National Universities Commission, to deliberate on all aspects of a National Policy on Education (Sani, 1994:2006).

These experts who were drawn from a wide range of interests including representatives of both Christian and Islamic religious organizations, the universities, National Universities Commission, interested external agencies, Ministries and organizations in private and public sectors who are interested in the end-products of education for purposes of employment, women's organization and other (Sani, 1994:206).

The five main national objectives of Nigeria as stated in the second National Development Plan and endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education, are the building of:

1. A free and democratic society
2. A just and egalitarian society
3. A United, strong and self-reliant nation.
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Nigeria philosophy of education therefore is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school systems (Sani, 1994:207).

In consequence, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals
2. Faith in mans ability to make rational decisions
3. Moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relation.
4. Shared responsibility for the common good of society
5. Respect for the dignity of labour and
6. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children. (Sani, 1994:208).

Apart from these, there are other provisions which in a nutshell aimed at promoting self-actualization in a developed and prosperous economy. Subsequent education policies of Nigeria either modified or elaborated these objectives but the letter and spirit remain the same.

There is no gainsaying the fact that without practical will on the part of political leadership, very little can be achieved. Nigeria has not been able to meet up with the standard of UNESCOs 26% of annual budget as education is poorly funded. On a comparative note, Nigeria spend less than 9% of her annual budget on education compared to Botswana's 19.0%; Swazilands 24.6% Lesotho's 17.0%; south Africa 25.8%; Cote

d'Ivoire's 30.0%; Burkina Faso's 16.%; Ghana's 31%; Kenya's 23.0%; Uganda's 27.0%; Tunisia's 17.0% and Morocco's 17.7% (Abayomi, Vanguard April 12:2012). (See table 1).

Annual Budget for Education in Selected African Countries

S/N	COUNTRY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Nigeria	Less than 9%
2.	Botswana	19.0%
3.	Swaziland	24.6%
4.	Lesotho	17.0%
5.	South Africa	25.8%
6.	Cote d'Ivoire	30.0%
7.	Burkina Faso	16.8%
8.	Ghana	31%
9.	Kenya	23.0%
10.	Uganda	27.0%
11.	Tunisia	17.0%
12.	Morocco	17.7%

*Source: Vanguard April 12, 2012***.**

In the Universal Basic Education (UBE) guidelines, every primary or junior secondary school in Nigeria is expected to have one general science laboratory for elementary science and domestic science, one ventilated improved toilet for a maximum of 40 pupils or students in a class. But these criteria are yet to be met due to scarcity of funds (Abayomi, 2012).
In some primary schools, pupils sit on the bare floor in a classroom. Most secondary schools lack classrooms, libraries, laboratories and equipment. In the universities, the scarcity of funds manifests itself everywhere on campus as there are no current books or journals, no laboratory equipment, limited number of lecture rooms, acute shortage of water, no basic chemicals, no specialized chemicals "no nothing" (Abayomi 2012).

From this litany of woes one can see the progressive deterioration of education sector from the basic education to the tertiart level. The genesis of this problem can be traced to Nigerian political leadership overtime. As rightly observed by Lawal (2007:92).

> *After political independence in 1960, the lifestyle of those Nigerian who were socialized into the political culture of service and sacrifice during the struggle for national independence changed dramatically when they occupied positions of power and privilege. There was a conspicuous hiatus between what they had professed and were practicing… In spite of the several reforms initiated, the colonial institution – political, economic, educational, legal etc continued to be nurtured and in some case even expanded and the new experimental institutions were allowed to languish for want of imaginative guideline and whole hearted support.*

In the 2018 league of top 200 universities in Africa, none of Nigeria's universities constitute the first 10. South Africa Universities constitute the first 8 in ranking. Yet, Nigeria presently has over 99 Universities (Both Federal and Private). This number is tentative in view of clamour for more Universities to meet up with admission requests every year but granting more licenses for Universities without adequate facilities to impart the necessary and required knowledge may not augur well for the development of the mental and vocational abilities of the citizens and the required human capital for the country at large. To quote former United State of Americas President Lyndon Johnson:

> *It is not enough to open gates of opportunity: All citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates… (Johnson cited in Kukah, 2007:1).*

TABLE II: 2018 LEAGUE TABLE OF THE TOP 200 UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA

RANK	UNIVERSTIES	COUNTRY
1.	University of Pretoria	South Africa
2.	University of cape town	South Africa
3.	University of the Witwatersand	South Africa
4.	University of Kwazulu-Natal	South Africa
5.	University of Johannesbrg	South Africa
6.	Universiteit Stellenbosch	South Africa
7.	North-West-West University	South Africa
8.	University of the Western Cape	South Africa
9.	University of Nairobi	Kenya
10.	The American University in Cairo	Egypt
11.	University of Lagos	Nigeria
12.	Ahmadu Bello University	Nigeria
13.	Rhodes University	South Africa
14.	Cairo University	Egypt
15.	University of Ibadan	Nigeria

Sources: http://www.4icu.org/top-universities-africa/
An abridged 2018 league table of the top 2008 universities in Africa.

Ranking Criteria:

- *Being accredited, licensed and /or chartered by the appropriate higher educated-related organization in each country.*
- *Offering at least four-year under graduate degrees or Post-Graduate Degrees.*
- *Delivering courses predominantly in a traditional face – to – face, none-distance education formats.*

The "great dream" project of African Americans represented by the popular speech of Martin Luther King (Jnr.) would not have been transformed to reality by Barrack Obama without the steadfastness,

resilience and perseverance of African Americans despite mounting odds to push them to the backburner of American politics. The key to this feat is integrity and quality education. According to Eleanor Roosevelt: "*The* future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams (cited in Dawaki: 2004)".

At times, policy and programmes in educations fail in Nigeria not for lack of noble objectives but because of lack of political will and policy inconsistencies. As rightly observed by Ibori and Igbolo:

> *Policy reversal, inconsistencies and discontinuities are also a major bane of… reform programmes in Nigeria. Well conceived policies by successive governments are clothed with populist posturing (Ibori and Igbolo, 2009:20).*

Nigeria leaders can dream big, but they don't believe in the beauty of those big dream. Juxtaposing these successive acts of negligence of educational sector by political leadership with another school of thought is the belief that the school tutors are not entirely blameless in the rot in education sector. Some believe that teachers are no longer patient to have their "rewards in heaven". Rather, they prefer compromising quality of education they give to students "in order to have their reward on earth".

Apart from personal failing which may be peculiar to individual, lack of necessary motivations on the part of government may be largely responsible for this behavior. Abraham Maslow in his theory of motivation says that human beings are driven by self desired needs which are arranged in hierarchy of needs and they are bound to take conscious action to satisfy these needs. But self-actualization takes place where lower, intermediate and higher level needs have been cumulatively satisfied. All the needs; psychological, safety, love, esteem and the highest point; self-actualization are indispensable to human existence but the most important is physiological needs which has to do with food, thirst, sleep, health, body need. Exercise and rest.

To satisfy these needs, the financial wherewithal must be there because without food to lubricate the brain and build the body, it will have a negative chain reaction on other needs. Where the legal and normal motivations from government in terms of financial and psychological motivations are absent, illegal and abnormal means may be the next resort to actualize them because these needs are indispensable to human existence.

As government fails to perform it functional roles to stabilize the education sector, by failing to give the necessary motivations to the tutors, the dysfunctional impacts are bound to tell on not only the quality of the tuition but also the quality of educational development generally.

Conclusion

Nigeria's effort at quality and sound education for the citizenry leading to policy initiations by successive government have not achieved the desired impacts owing to societal factors like family, environment and the government itself.

The family being the primary agent of socialization is responsible for the inculcation of social values like hard work and integrity in the minds of their wards, while environment is suppose to encourage the culture of due process in the minds of the citizenry.

Government is suppose to provide the missing link of sound and quality education which in combination with the aforementioned noble attributes will leads to the development of individuals and the country in general, therefore, leading us to join the league the league of countries that meet up with the MDGs and SDGs.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case due to the collapse of ethical values and culture of due process in our national life. Governments failure to live up to expectation in the provision of the required infrastructures for the educational advancement of the citizens has resulted into systematic decay of educational sector in the country.

The consequences are epitomized in the infrastructural decay in our tertiary institutions and culture of cheating to pass exams through foul means. It is regrettable that with this kind of weak foundation, the vision enunciated by the government for the Nigeria to join the rank of the countries that meet up with the MDGs and SDGs.

Recommendations

1. At the level of policy measures to address the rot in educational sector, successive governments have not been found wanting in coming out with policy framework but the problem is lack of political will on the parts of Nigerian leaders to make it work. Experts and various stakeholders in education have made government to see the sense in allocating the required percentage to education sector to take it out of the woods but misplacement of priorities by the government will not allow this. Therefore, Nigeria government should at least meet up with the United Nation (UN) 26% budget requirement for educational sector.
2. Families as the first socialization agency has a lot to do in ethical values. According to the maximum: "s*pare the rod and spoil the child*" thus, the families should endeavour to inculcate the necessary moral precepts on the gain of hard work and integrity on the part of their wards.
3. In Nigeria, achievement is celebrated without knowing the source. Status symbols have become the goals of materialism everybody worships. Achievements through foul means are never questioned by the societal laws and norms thereby encouraging criminality and short-cuts to achievements that are suppose to take hard work to achieve so that they can be sources of inspiration to others. Our penal system should be revitalized to place social achievements in appropriate social strata. Various institutions like EFCC and ICPC were set up to address these problems but there are still

untouchables and sacred-cows that cannot be touched. Our penal codes should not be selective when being implemented.

4. Promoting sense of belonging in Nigerian Federal has brought its adverse effects of encouraging mediocrity in our national life. Merits are sacrificed on the altar of Federal character. People that are not qualified to occupy certain positions are appointed there by the fiat of quota system thereby distorting the concept of hard work and merit. In the university, points are lowered to allowed certain groups to read highly demanding and professional courses that take high intelligent quotient (IQ) to read. This culture may be counter – productive on the nation's development on the long run. Efforts should be made by the government to introduce mechanism to detect where candidates can compete effectively in curricula that suit their intellects.
5. Nigeria wants to meet up with targets of MDGs and SDGs yet, the culture of research especially in science and technology is an anathema. Research grants that are supposed to be given to universities so as to take us away from the net consumers of imported goods are not there. Substitution industrialization strategy of 1980s could not produce the desired results because of the failure of Nigerian government to provide the necessary research back-up to see us to the promised land. The necessary funds needed must be made available for scientific and other auxiliary researches for our industrial growth.
6. Polices reversal and inconsistencies can only lead to waste of resources and time. Development efforts are cumulative, political will to implement laudable policies by the leadership is more important rather than discontinuing good policies of the previous administration.

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