

# NIGERIA'S VISION 20:2020 AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*Education is both a basic human right and a critical element for human development. Therefore, human capacity building, facilitated by strong learning systems is central to the attainment of Nigeria's vision 20-2020 (rating among the 20 developed economies of the World by the year 2020). The aim of this vision towards education is to ensure that all Nigerians of school age, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, or disability, attain basic education. This paper examines the concept of education, qualitative education, national stability and sustainable development. The paper further outlines the problems contributing to the decline in qualitative education in Nigeria and also the need for qualitative education. The paper concluded that the Nigerian vision to re-invigorate the education sector and re-instate the standard of education in the country is in line with the Transformation Agenda and the Vision 20-2020 of the Federal Republic. The Vision 15- 2050 advocated by Jim O'Neil is yet a personal opinion but significant, very reasonable and thought-provoking. The paper suggested some measures among others that can be adopted in order to ensure qualitative education for sustainable development such as: the noble policies of the Transformation Agenda and the Vision 20-2020/Vision 15-2050, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which should be religiously followed and implemented. Moreover, issues that enhance quality assurance in the education sector e.g. improving the inspectorate Divisions of the Ministries of Education, upgrading and equipping the NEMIS and EMIS of the Federal and State governments, improving the budgeting and implementation capacities of State and Federal governments among others should be given adequate attention.*

**Keywords:** Education, Qualitative Education, National Stability and Sustainable Development

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## **Introduction**

Education is a strategic investment in national development. It is so strategic that even nations that are known to have advanced in most developmental agenda seem to be concerned about re-investment in education. Any nation therefore that leaves the bulk of her citizens uneducated can be said to be ill-prepared in various fronts:- economic growth and competitiveness, physical safety, intellectual capacity, global awareness, national unity and cohesion. Such a situation leaves many young people unemployable in an increasingly high-skilled technology and global economy. The human capital is quite strategic in development as it (human capital) will determine power in the current century and failure to produce that capital will undermine the nation's stability.

Of the many recent national calls for improvement in the management and administration of the Nigerian state, the Visio 20:2020 stands out as one of the most topical issues in the nation's post-independence life of well over half a century now. The vision is a concept of national development, which aims at moving Nigeria's economy into the league of the world's 20 largest economies by the year 2020. Among other things, it was the thinking of Soludo (2007) that with an average GDP growth rate of 7% recorded since 2003 as against 2.8% in the 1990s and the average GDP growth rate of 8% for the non-oil sector as strongly led by agriculture, Nigeria could attain the vision 20:2020 if this average GDP growth rate is sustained; more so as external reserves grew from 4 billion US Dollars in 1999 Lo 43.5 billion US Dollars in December, 2014. The Vision seeks to ensure collateral development of Nigeria and put her economy on a fast track to self reliance, with the main thrust of modernizing the country and raising the standard of living of the people.

Nigerians have a deep hunger for education. The quality of facilities in many primary schools, secondary schools, polytechnics and Universities is not commensurate with budgetary allocations, a fact which strongly suggests the invasion of the education space by corruption and misappropriation of education funds. The high cost of quality education places it well beyond the reach of the poor. Yet, some Nigerian parents are willing to sacrifice much including personal comfort in order to insure that their children receive good education. Nigerians send their children to schools around the world and other African countries like Ghana, South Africa among others in search of quality Education.

The provision of high quality education that imparts intellectual, moral, and professional competence demands the good state of facilities in our institutions of learning, adequate remuneration for those who work in them, adequate planning and implementation of or proactive education policies, adequate funding, etc. These and related factors pose grace fiscal challenges to education. Thus the future of the education sector of the Nigerian nation depends largely on planning, funding and proper management.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Education**

Education as a concept can be viewed in so many ways by various scholars and individuals in the field of education. Sir Ahmadu Bello as cited by Enob (2003) defined education as spiritual and cultural transmission of inherited tradition; the purpose of education is mainly intellectual and moral discipline as well as transmitting the inherited aspect of our culture to all who come to school. The intellectual purpose here

is the ability to use one's cognitive domain in solving social problems. Fafunwa (1974) defines education as the "aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. Education is transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth or disseminating knowledge either to guarantee rational direction of the society or both".

### **Qualitative Education**

Qualitative education refers to the type of education that is concern with the goodness of it. It also deals with the standards that are laid down for such a thing to be carried out. This also refers to the ability of the school to provide the necessary facilities required to aid teaching and learning that can lead to the achievement of educational goals in line with prescribed acceptable global standard.

Qualitative education has some components which are

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Equality
- Sustainability.

### **Concept of National Stability**

National stability is a concept that has bearing on human effort and development; it springs from the needs of the leaders of a nation to protect the people against attacks, destruction or enslavement socially, politically and economically. According to Enejor (2000) war or insurgence is one of the most serious threats to national stability. National stability is the ability of a nation to stand on her feet socially, politically, technologically and economically.

### **Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept that is conceptualized in many ways. Bruntland (2012) defined sustainable development as development that is present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a two-way relationship between development and environment. Sustainable human development is nothing but a dynamic framework that meaningfully provides people with job options, eliminates poverty and ensures equitable distribution of wealth in a society. It is the relationship between insecurity and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

### **Vision 20-2020**

Indeed, the Vision 20:2020 envisages a prosperous Nigeria that is capable of breaking away from its current status of a natural resource, rent- dependent and infrastructural deficient state through hard work into one with high productivity, entrepreneurship and sound value system, achieving a high level of poverty reduction, employment generation, and wealth creation, which are the cardinal objectives of one of the nation's development programmes— National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It anticipates the consolidation and sustainability of the gains from the

macroeconomic reforms such as reduced domestic inflation, favourable exchange and interest rates for the economic transformation of the nation by 2020. It is important to note however, that since the pronouncement of this visionary statement, there have been legions of criticisms. The obvious fact is that the Vision 20:2020 remains a laudable dream yet to be implemented for reality.

### **Need for Quality and Quantity**

Nigeria is in daring need of quality as well as quantity in the education sector. There are currently about eleven million children (intended beneficiaries of the Universal Basic Education), who are either out of school or have very poor progression from primary to secondary schooling. This is in addition to gross inadequacy of tertiary education. All Federal and State University education annually (N.P.C, 2009), this requires a drastic action plan, to expand access and quality at all levels.

Previous reforms in the education sector including the National Policy on Education (2004), (Which encompasses the UBE Act), and the Education Road map, have not achieved the desired results due to persistent constraints of under-funding, as well as inadequate and poor facilities among others.

The onerous task of expanding the educational access calls for massive infrastructural upgrade in the area of provision of school buildings in an incremental basis to cater for expected population growth. Public- private-partnership in formal education and vocational training needs more vigorous approach as a viable mechanism for improving the effectiveness of an. education system in a cost effective manner without compromising equity. Properly regulated private participation leading to healthy competition among providers of services will lower costs and improve responsiveness to the needs of the populace. It can also encourage the public sector to improve the quality and efficiency of the public schools.

It is not easy to quantify quality. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 'quality is the degree to which something is good or bad; something such as size, color, feel, or weight, that makes one thing different from other things'. The quality of education in Nigeria therefore, is weighed on the balance of degree of good or bad. It is nationally believed that the quality of our education has grown and still grows down from good to had. This can best be seen in the low employability of the resulting labor force, and this calls for measures to formulate and enforce higher education standards, through quality assurance mechanisms.

Quality Assurance in public and private schools can be achieved through many ways among which are:

**Improved Inspection and Supervision of Schools:** It is quite sad that the level of inspection and supervision of schools despite the existence of Inspectorate divisions of ministries of education has drastically reduced in recent times. In the days of missionary ownership of schools inspection and supervision were among the best of quality assurance mechanisms employed by the missionaries to enhance discipline, dedication to duty, and strict adherence to the curriculum. A mere rumor that an inspector of education 'will visit the school next week' was enough to keep every teacher and pupil on his duty and learning post, keep every record and environment clean, and prepare lessons to the best of abilities. But all these faded off almost immediately the schools were taken over by government.

**Improved Monitoring and Reporting of Schools Activities:** The establishment of the National Education Management Information Systems (NEMIS), at the national level and the Education Management Information Systems (NMIS), at the states level, to monitor education sector performance is a welcome idea. But to make them functional is another issue. Reporting educational activities and expenditure in the electronic and print media can also be very effective in improving the education sector performance.

**Improved Data Management and Records Keeping:** NEMIS and EMIS are also meant to collate, analyze, and publish school data at national, state and local government levels. Such data provide empirical basis for planning, and monitoring progress towards EFA targets. However, these officers are currently a little more than data storage systems. Their breadths of collection are currently limited to Early Child Care Education, (ECCE), Primary and Secondary School sectors. To become the essential planning and monitoring mechanisms, they need to be robust enough to harmonize data from all sub-sectors and generate the data basis for the whole sector reviews, (EFA-GME, 2008, Nig.)

**Improved Budgeting and Implementation of Public Education Expenditure:** there is no doubt in any Nigerian mind that budgeting for the funding of schools in Nigeria needs serious inward looking and attention, Although budgetary allocations for education have been rising it is still far below the United Nation's and World Bank recommended standards of 25% of total national budgetary allocations. Nigeria is trailing behind countries like Ghana, Nambia, South Africa, etc. in meeting up with the recommended standards. Even though the budgetary allocations are low, implementation of the meager resources allocated is another issue. This is hardly done at, and as when due.

**Improved Manpower Training to Man the Education Sector:** There is no gainsaying the importance of this point. One does not give what he does not have. The teachers who teach the future leaders of this country must have enough training to equip them for the job. The expanding population and the introduction of the Universal Free Basic education (UBE) means expansion of classes and other infrastructures that go with every child of school going age having to go to school.

**Improved Political will towards Education:** If the government of the day recognizes the place and importance of education in any developing economy, she will accord it its rightful place and provide its gigantic and worthwhile needs. Any government in power at any point in time must give the education enterprise its right of place through commensurate budgetary allocations to execute the sector, and ensure full implementation of resources allocated otherwise its objectives will not be met.

**Improved Public-Private-Partnership in the Provision of Education:** The provision of education is not an enterprise that should be left to government alone. The private sector should be encouraged to provide educational services to the citizens of the country. In a situation whereby private individuals and organizations provide whole aspects or partial aspects of education services e.g. building schools and equipping them or equipping already built schools to uplift their standards, will go a very long way to improving standards of education.

Improved entrepreneurial spirit to provide education: It takes the heart of a lion to take the risk of making reasonable investments for educational provision to the public. Entrepreneurs coordinate the factors of production in order to provide the educational facilities for the education enterprise. The more the public is trained in entrepreneurial ventures of the economy, the better for the country.

### **Problems facing Quality Education in Nigeria**

Scholars abound have enumerate certain problems that made almost impossible to have quality education in the country. Okebukola in Ajeyaleme (2014) said for the last 15 years most of the graduates from faculties of education in Nigerian universities are incompetent as teachers. The observation which was made differently from the two scholars maintained that they are incompetent in the knowledge of subject matter content as well as in teaching, including communication skills. The courses emphasizes more of theory than practical, especially lacking in teaching skills acquisition through adequate teaching practices. Thus possession of the Bachelors degree in Education does not necessarily make such 'qualified' teachers competent to teach at that level. Obanya (2015) found out that secondary school teachers in four Nigerian States studies (Enuga, Kaduna, Lagos and Rivers) including the qualified' demonstrate poor quality teaching dominating classroom activities, 67% of the time. Olagboye (2014) lists some of the problems that face quality in Nigerian education system as:

- Supervisors lack training in supervisory competencies because some supervisors are promoted on the basis of seniority and length of service but not appropriate training and qualification.
- Inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities, teaching aids, and instructional materials in schools
- Poor remuneration of teachers and poor conditions of service which reduce their commitment to teaching
- Poor States accorded to teachers which dampen their morale and job satisfaction
- Presence of a large member of untrained and unqualified teachers in the school system.
- Teachers poor attitude to work and lack of interest in teaching.
- The half-hazard approach and lack of uniformity in educational policy formulation and implementation in the country negates development.
- Political instability of lack of political will among Nigerian leaders.

### **Analysis**

The education sector in Nigeria appeared to be very much favoured during the colonial period than today. The quality of education during the colonial era was fantastic in the sense that people at the primary school level could read and write very well. But today one finds out that some students of secondary even university cannot read nor write well. The question then is whether the problem is from teachers or students or government or the attitude of the entire society? The Federal government of Nigeria stated on her National Policy on Education (2009) that no nation can arise above the quality of her teachers. By implication this means that teachers employ to train teachers for the nation's education system is essential. This could be the reason for National Commission for College of Education (NOCE) to stipulate that the qualification of an academic staff to teach at any level shall be:

- i. A professionally qualified teacher having a minimum of NCE or PGDE certificate
- ii. A good Bachelors Degree of not less than a second class lower division in the relevant discipline
- iii. Holder of an HND with a minimum of a merit to be appointed as instructors.
- iv. Higher degrees or additional professional qualifications.

The NCE further stated that the work-load of a full-time lecture should be a minimum of eight unit hours per semester but it is observed that some lecturers are given work-load that exceed for more than the minimum standard. With large class size teacher effectiveness becomes questionable and the quality of students so taught leaves much to be desired. In line with this conception Arikawei and Torubeli (2014) stated that any educational system whose products can not contribute to the development of the society raise doubt about the credibility of its existence.

Nigeria has about fifty federal universities, thirty-six state universities and man)' more private universities. Some of these universities do not have infrastructural development talk more of manpower development. Is it through this that we can talk of quality education in the country? D we allow Nigerians to remain in this comatose in education forever or is there anything to be done to enable us think more of qualitative education rather than quantitative as it is today? Of course something must be done.

### **What to Do**

Nigeria cannot remain in this type of low quality in education. There is serious need for quality education and for this to take place; such obstacles already stated in the paper have to be addressed. Apart from the obstacles, lheonunelcwu 2013) believed that each element in the input-process- output framework of the education enterprise should be of an acceptable quality to ensure high quality in education. By this, it is meant that quality management which results in quality education has to really address these elements in the education enterprise. There is the need for adequate planning, provision, organization, evaluation and re-planning of the educational input, process and outcomes. For example, if the educational input (financial and. human resources) such as funding, learner enrolment, quality and quantity of teachers are in the right proportion, learner/teacher ratio, curriculum, textbooks, school materials and facilities etc are adequately, proportionately and timely provided for education delivery, quality management is on course.

There is need to emphasize and re-enact the inspectorate division of various ministries of education if quality education is to be ensured. In like Manner, Ihiam (2014) maintains that when the process of delivering the educational service is monitored, checked, encouraged and improved for efficiency and effectiveness, the end-product would be of high quality. At this point, how learning is organized is checked, the content and quality of what is taught, the number of teaching hours and contact hours ascertained, assessment and graduation procedures are determined.

Conclusively, faculties of education whose mandate is to train the manpower needed for our primary and secondary schools should not be left out in the new dispensation of installing quality in our school system. There is need for stakeholders to adopt alternative strategies that will help to bring about academic quality assurance in our colleges of education and faculties of education whose duty it is to train teachers. Voluntary agencies, school managers, teachers and students should make concerted efforts in ensuring quality control. Through this, the tension between quality and quantity can be minimized in Nigerian education system.

### **Implications for Sustainable Development**

Qualitative education is an instrument for excellence. It liberates people from poverty and ignorance. Ukeje (2012:p.155) opines that, "It is an investment in people which pays untold dividends to the society. When that investment is not made or is made inadequately, the society suffers a loss".

The importance of qualitative education to national development is no longer in doubt. The issue that agitates the mind is the effect of poor implementation of educational policies on the development of Nigeria. Ake (2008:p.2) maintained that "education is the process of becoming the best we can be". This implies that, with the numerous crisis in the educational system engendered by poor policy implementation, it is doubtful whether its recipients are really becoming the best as expected, if not, what is the fate of Nigeria?

In the present circumstance the dream of Nigeria vision 20-2020 to move to a state of parity with the advanced world appears to be a mirage. If Nigeria continues to hide under the umbrella of the National policy on education conscious of the implementation problems our national aspirations will suffer greater impediments, our sustainable development will only rely on miracles, if any.

### **Conclusion**

The Nigerian vision to re-invigorate the education sector and re-instate the standard of education in the country is in line with the Transformation Agenda and the Vision 20-2020 of the Federal Republic. The Vision 15- 2050 advocated by Jim O'Neil is yet a personal opinion but very significant, very reasonable and thought-provoking.

The Transformation Agenda and the Vision 20-2020 have made very giant strides in the formulations of policies that will ensure great improvements in the education sector, ensure return of high quality in the standards, eradicate poverty, and improve the overall living conditions of the population. Implementation of these policies is always the bane of our development strategies. A series of suggestions have been given by the author in this text, which if adhered to strictly by the authorities concerned, will go a very long way to enhance quality assurance in the education sector of the Nigerian economy. History has told us that there was very high standard in the quality of education offered by the early missionaries who brought formal education to Nigeria, and that the standard of education started to fall when schools got taken over by the Federal and State governments.

'In the light of the foregoing, we acknowledge the wisdom and courage of leadership in some state governments that have returned the schools to their original owners and have created a measure of partnership with them. Some states like Anambra and Benue have gone further to allocate funds for the rehabilitation of those schools returned". (CBCN, 2014). This is heartwarming and a right steps in the right direction towards re-instating Nigeria to the path. of improving the standard of education in the country.

### **Suggestions**

- 1 The noble policies of the Transformation Agenda and the Vision 20-2020/Vision 15-2050, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be religiously followed and implemented.
2. Issues that enhance quality Assurance in the education sector e.g. improving the inspectorate Divisions of the Ministries of Education, upgrading and equipping the



NEMIS and EMIS of the Federal and State governments, improving the budgeting and implementation capacities of State and Federal governments, etc, should be given adequate attention

3. The infrastructural decay in our institutions of learning should be adequately addressed. Libraries, laboratories, and ICT centers should be provided and adequately equipped.
4. More classrooms should be provided on an incremental basis to cater for the ever increasing population of school age children.
5. Exiting facilities in our Universities should be expanded to accommodate more entrants into the University system as the present arrangement only takes about one tenth of the population seeking University admission every year.
6. Government should step up statutory allocation to education as agreed with the United Nations and World Bank recommendations of at least 25% of national budgetary allocations to go to education.
7. Government should abrogate policies that impede public-private partnership in education. There is need for synergy in funding education in Nigeria.
8. Schools that were taken over by government should be returned to their original, owners to ensure return of high quality education and encouraged to succeed by allocating funds to rehabilitate them. Other states should take a cue from Anambra and Benue who have done this.
9. Government should reinstate grants-in-aid to mission and private schools in the spirit of partnership, in order to make quality education affordable.
10. Teachers and other staff working in Nigerians schools should be well trained and retrained to enable them give quality education to the children. Above all, their remuneration should be commensurate with their counterparts in other sectors of the economy; otherwise they will hardly give in. their best to educating the future generation because they will always look for 'greener pastures'.

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