

Impact of Teaching, Learning and Education on Sustainable Development in Junior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores basic elements of teaching, learning and education on sustainable development in Nigeria's educational system as stipulated in the National policy on Education, (2013) and then reflects on successful implementation of junior secondary schools in Nigeria. The concepts are explained and illustrated using examples from implementation plan of junior secondary school stated goals. The subjects are pre-vocational and academic subjects which include - core subjects, pre-vocational electives and non-prevocational electives which prevent the erosion of the development could not be unconnected with the level of understanding of the concept of development and its desirability in effecting positive changes that could turn around youth and graduate employment, mass production, high consumption, minimum poverty level, insurgency to economic break through and prosperity as well as incorporating the socio – economic reforms that could turn around desirable changes in the educational sector . The study then concludes on how teaching and learning of these subjects could sustain development in teacher education – not only to improve its training to prospective teachers, but also to improve their ability to teach others.

Keywords: teaching and learning, education, junior secondary school, implementation, development, sustainability, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has been and is still an issue of discussion in Nigeria for more than two decades. It has continuously formed the main theme of about 75% of conferences and seminar during the period of discussion. This simply signifies the fact that most development programmes in Nigeria has had their impact felt at the point of implementation, but with time, fades away with the initial impact eroding away with time. The problem then, is the sustainability of such development to cover the intending period while effecting the required changes and innovations (Odufowokan & Kiadese, 2017). However, the degree of the erosion of the development could not be unconnected with the level of understanding of the concept of development and its desirability in effecting positive changes that could turn around youth and graduate employment, mass production, high consumption, minimum poverty level, insurgency to economic break through and prosperity. Hence, effective teaching and learning formed the education that the Nigerian citizens need in moving forward to preserve the development being wasted away.

Emmanuel, (2013) averred that Nigeria has not attained the kind of quality education she desired to bring about national development that could be sustained. This he said has been the reason for the recent attention on improving quality education for sustainable development theme for deliberations in conferences and concluded that the education the

country could offer before now cannot bring about the desired sustainable development. However, this paper portrays the risk and disaster inherent in a country's inability in implementing the teaching, learning and education of its basic educational programme for the first nine year education that the theme of the conference covers, hence the relevance of the paper to the conference.

Teaching, Learning and Education

Wikipedia, (2017) defined learning as the act of acquiring new or modifying and reinforcing existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences which may lead to a potential change in synthesizing information, depth of knowledge, attitude or behavior relative to the type and range of experience while the ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals, plants and some machines. It affirmed further that progress overtime tends to follow a learning curve, it does not happen all at once, but it builds upon and is shaped by previous knowledge. To this end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge, hence learning produces change in the organism and the changes produced are relatively permanent.

Odufowokan and Kiadese, (2017) described the relationship between teaching and learning as ``what and how teachers teach`` and ``how and what learners learn``. They further affirmed that the teacher and what he teaches and the learner and how he learns are two extreme positions that have been adopted by

those who engage in it. The first, on one hand could be termed ``traditional`` and the other ``progressive``. The traditional position emanated from the unquestionable assumption that the purpose of teaching is to ensure that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and set of values. Both knowledge and values are taken to reflect a society's selection of what it most wants to transmit to its future citizens and requires its future workforce to be able to do. Accordingly, human learning may occur as part of education, personal development, schooling or training. It may be goal-oriented and be aided by motivation; also it may be aided as a result of habituation or even as a result of more complex activities such as a play. It may occur consciously or without conscious awareness (Wikipedia, 2017). Going by these, Emmanuel, (2013) confirmed the dual purpose of quality teaching and learning when he suggested an improvement in the act of teaching and then sustaining it, to a point that quality education would be assured.

Statement of the Problem

Management of the basic education aspect of education has been ignored for some time and is just receiving the desirable attention World over, Nigeria inclusive. The problems which result from the neglect and the consequent that followed form the focus of this paper.

Limitation of the Study

This study is delimited to the educational sectors in the 36 states in Nigeria including the Federal capital territory, Abuja. It also involves basic education and the follow up socio-economic problems that are consequents of the disaster of ignoring that aspect of education. it is also delimited to junior secondary schools and their teachers and students with other stakeholders.

Junior Secondary School Education

Secondary education is the education children received after primary education and before the tertiary stage. Accordingly, the goals of this stage of education are to prepare the individual for (i) useful living within the society; and (ii) higher education. Specifically, junior secondary school education shall be both pre-vocational and academic. It shall be tuition free, universal and compulsory. It shall teach basic subjects which will enable pupils to acquire further knowledge and skills. every students shall offer a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13 subjects - including all core subjects in group A - Core Subjects (English, French, Mathematics, language of the environment, one major language other than that of the environment, integrated science, social studies and citizenship education and introductory technology) and at least one subject each from group B – Pre-vocational electives (Agriculture, business studies, home economics, local crafts, computer

education, fine arts and music). Emphasis on group B shall be on practice and group C – Non-prevocational electives (Religion knowledge, physical and health education and Arabic). At the completion of the junior secondary education, students shall be streamed into: - (i) the senior secondary school; (ii) the technical college; (iii) any out-of-school vocational training center and (iv) an apprenticeship scheme.

Junior Secondary Education and Development in Nigeria

Junior secondary school stage is an important foundation part of the education that a child receives. In specific term, a building with a weak foundation is bound to fall and so for education to produce the desired development and the sustained it, the foundation must be strong, hence the need for educationist, parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders in education to put in their full support both at the foundation and construction level of education. Specifically, therefore secondary education shall: -

- (a) Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.
- (b) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
- (c) Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.
- (d) Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art, and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- (e) Inspire students with a desire for self improvement and achievement excellence
- (f) Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity
- (g) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens
- (h) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development

Therefore, in order to achieve the stated goals, secondary education shall be of six years duration, given in two stages; a junior secondary school and a senior secondary school; each shall be of three years duration. The first stage however forms the basis of this study.

The Challenges of Secondary Education in Nigeria

Odufowokan and Bakare, (2016) confirmed the serious challenges the secondary school education has been facing in the past and present. They averred that the challenges no doubt have had adverse effects on growth and development and highlighted the challenges as: - (a) Tradition and socio-cultural belief (b) Funding and Financing of Secondary Education (c) Changes in government policies (d) Diversified Opportunity (e) Trained Manpower in the Applied Sciences (f) Non-promotion of Cultural Heritage (g) Students` Self Improvement and Achievement (h) Respecting the views of others (i) National Goals` Values. However, these challenges are general challenges facing senior secondary education, specifically, Odufowokan, (2016) itemized peculiar challenges the junior secondary sector has had as follows: -

- (a) Planning as neighborhood school
- (b) Keeping of the art and culture
- (c) Exchange of visit
- (d) Character training
- (e) Encouragement of youths club
- (f) Encouragement of co-curricular activities; and
- (g) Integration of ICT

Planning as Neighborhood School: -

The junior secondary schools however shall be planned as neighborhood schools where students would trek short distances to school and that if there are special circumstances which warrant the establishment of boarding facilities in junior secondary schools, such should be provided. It is essential that everything possible should be done foster a sense of national belonging in any junior secondary school. This is the biggest challenge facing the establishment of junior secondary schools in Nigeria; most junior schools are situated at long distances where students would have to trek kilometers to schools. In some urban and rural schools, students would have to board taxis, buses and canoe to schools.

Keeping of the Art and Culture

It is mandatory that the junior secondary school shall take measures to ensure that culture of the nation is kept alive through art

Exchange of visit

One of the conditions for the establishment of junior secondary schools in Nigeria has been the encouragement of inter-state exchange visits of students that is students from a school in Ogun State shall be made to visit another student in Bayelsa, Nasarawa, Bendel or other schools in other states.

Encouragement of Youth Clubs and Organizations

Another contributing factor to the challenges of junior secondary schools in Nigeria is the encouragement of youth's clubs, organizations and school societies which were tagged important instrument for character training and formation. Specifically, the National Policy on Education said should be positively encouraged.

Inclusion of Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities should form the basis and essential part of the child's education at the junior secondary school level. This should also be encouraged.

Provision of Infrastructural Facilities by the Government

Government shall provide necessary infrastructure and training for the integration of ICT in the school system in recognition of the role of ICT in advancing knowledge and skill in the modern world.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Planning as Neighborhood School: -

The mission and vision of junior secondary school education emanated from the new educational system 6-3-3-4. The conception at the initial stage was a perfect one, but without finance is a mere waste of time. Proliferation of schools at the junior or senior school level is a huge investment in education. Education is a social service and recent calls have invited individuals, firms and industries, non-governmental organizations, foreign bodies' participation. Neighborhood schooling means having the schools at stone throw distances to students' residences. This will gulp a huge sum of money.

Keeping of the Art and Culture

Going by the above, the inclusion of art and culture is an addendum for already starved education stage to contend with. To keep the culture of the nation alive as proposed by the education policy through art is not difficult, but Nigeria's diversity involves about 374 different languages. If restriction to major tribes is done then we may have about three major tribes` art to include in the junior secondary curriculum - that is Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. The three are very rich in culture and should be rich in implementation at the teaching and learning stage. Therefore, it is mandatory that the junior secondary school shall take measures to ensure that culture of the nation is kept alive through art.

Exchange of visit

This is more or less called excursion or private visit to junior secondary schools other than that attended by the students. It could involve exchange of visits between schools in different local governments and

states to actually implement and going by the number of students involved might take a lot of time, apart from funding of such projects. Only few urban schools whose boards of governing are rich could embark on such visitation and sustain it.

Encouragement of Youth Clubs and Organizations

This appears to be the simplest factor in terms of organization and implementation because everything is internal. It involves the selection and grouping of students according to individual endowment in knowledge, physical stamina and relationship with teachers and fellow students. Clubs like literary and debating societies, science students' association, biology and physics or economics' students association showcase brilliant students in respective subjects while clubs like farmers, crafts and technology associations would amalgamate students performing well in those areas. Therefore, forming and sustaining these associations depends on the crop of teachers in the junior secondary school level.

Inclusion of Co-curricular Activities

As some countries excel in certain sports, schools through the encouragement of co-curricular activities are also blessed. Different schools have records of excelling in certain sports like table tennis, long tennis, relay races, drama, dance and a host of other activities that keep the school alive. Keeping these co-curricular activities going depends largely on the encouragement by the management of each school, parents and the students themselves. Co-curricular activities should form the basis and essential part of the child's education at the junior secondary school level. However, sustainability in this regard becomes very simple when it is encouraged.

Provision of Infrastructural Facilities by the Government

There is no doubt that 'something' cannot be done with 'nothing' hence, availability of infrastructural facilities by the government would facilitate sustainable development of education – teaching and learning programmes. Once the materials are available, then nothing stops the training for the integration of ICT in junior secondary schools, selection and grouping of students in to different programmes, visitation to other schools could be made easy where the school has luxurious bus as school bus, purchase of sporting materials for co-curricular activities, management of school clubs and organizations, planning of visitations to neighborhood schools and others would be sustained once the facilities are available.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, education in terms of teaching and learning cannot be separated from required sustainable development. To actually keep the level of development already attained, education,

teaching and learning played a dominant role which is possible when we train and educate our youth from the cradle. In the words of Odufowokan, (2016), if a proper foundation is laid at the primary and junior secondary school level, then, there is likely to be no problem for our youth in future. Hence, Nigeria as a nation has had different development plans in the past and each of the plans has gulp millions of naira, however, the acquired development is endured for a short time, thereafter it goes to oblivion. It is not enough to have development plans, but also we should try as much as possible to sustain the development such that they could be built upon by our future generation, hence the need to have a formidable junior secondary school education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidently from the aforementioned, Nigeria's junior secondary schools have not prepared her graduates for the challenges of teaching and learning that would bring about the required sustainable development. The study concluded that improved sustainable development depends solely on a viable and hitch-free junior secondary school education. It is against this background that the following recommendations are made for effective junior secondary education in Nigeria: -

1. Government and other stakeholders in education should make sure that the junior secondary schools are situated in short distances to communities to ease patronage from guardians, parents and students as stated in the National policy on education.
2. Government should also ensure that the junior secondary education and other levels of education are seriously financed to produce the anticipated sustainable development that will ensure youth emancipation, employment and security as well as reduce corruption.
3. The government through its supervisory role should introduce accreditation exercise into primary and secondary schools while it ensures that it is properly monitored and administered for sustainable development.

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