

PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The major concern of every patriotic Nigerian is the development of the nation through job creation using education. Primary education is the foundation on which the development of a nation is built. It is an indisputable fact that primary education is an element in the development of an individual and the society in general. This paper highlights those challenges faced by primary education for job creation and sustainable national development in Nigeria. It then proffers broad but far-reaching directions towards solving those challenges.

Introduction

According to Adamaechi and Romaine (2000) education is not just an end in itself, but investment, a means to an end. They further maintained that education is not an investment on human capital, but also a pre-requisite as well as a correlate for economic development, it is actually indispensable for both progressive leadership and enlightened followership.

In fact, the importance of education as an instrument of nation building and national development has been argued and emphasizes from time immemorial. According to Smith in Adamaechi and Romaine (2000), “a state spending to educate its citizens is a form of investment.” Adamaechi and Romaine (2000) also quoted Stuart who argued in the 19th century that it was in the interest of the general public that everyone should have at least primary education and it must be provided by the State Government.

Primary education as referred to in the National Policy on Education (2004), is the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. Since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system.

Mkpa (1999) posited that it is at the primary education level that foundation is laid for the cultivation of the generations of manpower resources of any nation. He cautioned that if the foundation at the primary education level is weak, we cannot anticipate a solid intellectual and professional output at proceeding levels.

Furthermore, he stressed that there are some Nigerians for whom primary education is the terminal contact with formal schooling. He argued that such persons who for several reasons cannot continue with further education often fall back on the knowledge and skills they have gained from the school for socio-economic and political survival in the society. He concluded that the curriculum

of our primary schools should equip the recipients with several knowledge, skills and competencies for effective living in the Nigerian society.

Job creation programs are programmes or projects undertaken by a government of a nation in order to assist unemployed members of the population in seeking employment. According to the communiqué for the presidential summit on job creation on April 12th, 2011, the presidential job creation summit organized by the National Economic Management Team (NEMT), was held in Abuja to form resolutions and agree on critical next steps for job creation initiatives.

Governed by the theme “putting Nigerians to work”, the summit sought to outline clear, measurable and highly impactful programmes and policies aimed at increasing capacity in the domestic workforce, empowering private institutions for job creation and strengthening local industries for economic growth (Daily Times, 2011).

Concept of National Development

National development embodies positive growth at the social, economic and political spheres of life. Amplifying the concept of development, Lawal (1992) states thus, development implies originality, improvement, better standards of product and perfect means of production. It also connotes that ability to identify, tap and manage the hidden physical, scientific and technological potentials of the country and utilize this for the enhancement of better standard of living.

Furthermore, Onwuchekwa (1992), stated that, development is what induces sustained growth of income. Osasona (1996) sees national development as the sum total of all the processes by which a nation is transformed from primitive to contemporary civilization.

According to Abiri (1980), development can be seen in a developing nation like Nigeria as broad and all embracing. IT involves progressive achievement of:

1. greater efficiency in the management of public affairs;
2. greater ability to provide for felt needs;
3. easier and more worthwhile living for all;
4. greater capacity to defend and protect both individual and national interest and possession;
5. greater ability to benefit from experiences and to forecast and plan for the future.

A lot of effort is a call for sustainable development, there must be a maintenance culture of job created and the effort to sustain them by concern government educational sector and individuals; while development means multi-dimensional process by which material and financial side of people’s life constitute just a part.

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The fact that development is all embracing is an indication that it makes or mars a nation primary education therefore, create job which must be sustained to maximize national development in Nigeria. Abiri (1980).

National Educational Aims and Objectives

The National Policy on Education (Fourth Edition, 2004) outlines the broad national educational aims and objectives as:

1. the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
2. the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
3. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
4. the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

The National Policy on Education (Fourth Edition, 2004) equally outlines the goals of primary education as:

1. inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
2. lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
3. give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
4. mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
5. give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity.

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The aims of primary education, according to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) among others is to give ability to communicate and impart the necessary skills personnel, who will be enterprising and able to apply knowledge to the improvement of national development. From the above, one can see that the aims and objectives of primary education cannot be achieved without the active participation of government in providing adequate training resources for primary education.

For primary education to create job and sustained national development, experts should be consulted and be involved in planning, research, implementation of the primary education programme to make it skill oriented. Similarly, teachers who are role models should not be neglected. They are the resource input of any educational system. Primary school pupils constitute the

most important resource input of any educational system. In developing the framework for addressing the teaming unemployment levels in the country, the summit (Daily Times, 2011), sought to build on the core strengths of the Nigerian workforce, notably a highly youthful population, very enterprising culture and hard working communities. According to the communiqué on job creation, the summit anchored on the following areas:

1. Small and Growing Business and Entrepreneurship;
2. Vocational Education and Job Centres;
3. Graduate Employment and Business Process Outsourcing (IT-enhanced services);
4. Public Works Programmes;
5. Agriculture and Agro-processing;
6. Local content Development and Innovation; and
7. Housing and Construction.

Problem of Primary Education for Job Creation and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

Adesina (1988), Maduwesi (1996), Ezegwu (1998), Saidu (2000) and Monyei (2002) identified the following problems of primary education in Nigeria:

- (i) Lack of capital for financing educational projects.
- (ii) Lack of instructional facilities leading to shortage of infrastructural facilities.
- (iii) Political instability in government.
- (iv) Poor community support and lack of teacher's motivation.
- (v) Ineffective and sustained management of schools.
- (vi) General lack of systematic planning of primary education and its activities.
- (vii) Primary school teachers' lack of familiarity with all the required instruments for continuous assessment and lack of training for their utilization.

Conclusion

It must be said the primary education serves as a basis for job creation and National Development in Nigeria. Primary education also liberates, contributes to and sustained development in Nigeria. The objectives of primary education in Nigeria are captivating egalitarian in context and are imbued with far reaching pragmatic principles and expectations. If appropriate implementations are given to the functionality of primary education, this will engender job creation and sustained National Development in Nigeria.

Therefore for primary education to create jobs and sustained National Development in Nigeria there must be provision of enabling environment,

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qualities teachers' education, adequate supply of infrastructure and instructional materials in the primary education system.

Recommendations

For primary education to create jobs and sustained national development in Nigeria, the following recommendations would be useful implementation strategies:

1. Environmental education should be added to the curricular prescriptions for primary education.
2. Monitoring or inspectorate units should be resuscitated and equipped with sufficient staff and the required equipment and infrastructure to enable them exercise authority.
3. Teachers' condition of service should be improved. They should be properly remunerated so as to attract more hands. Primary education teachers should be given incentive, like science teachers allowance, community allowance, examination allowance, responsibility allowance and so on.
4. Community support to primary education should be encouraged and sustained by the community where the schools are located.
5. Instructional materials for primary education should be provided by Federal, State and Local Governments, parents, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Primary school teachers should be encouraged to produce and use the available learning/instructional materials to bring the lesson nearer home.
6. The problem of management and teachers rejecting posting to areas that lack social amenities should be tackled by government and private agencies through provision of infrastructure and payment of allowances to teachers.
7. There should be a need for in-service training in primary teaching so as to entice and make them competent, available and qualified.
8. The primary education programmes and objectives should be activity oriented so that pupils and teachers will learn best by "doing" using their five senses.
9. Primary education should be compulsory for all school age children and appropriate legislation be made to ensure compliance by parents and guardians.
10. The State Primary Education Board created in 1993 should equally be de-politicized to enable the commission perform their functions effectively.
11. The private sector should be aligned with the public sector to maximize employment opportunities in the agriculture and agro processing industries by employing primary school graduates.

12. Federal government should set-up public-private agricultural development/empowerment centre in the local government areas to cater for the welfare of the rural farmers, communicate government policies on agriculture to them and attract private sector investment in the rural communities.

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