

QUALITY EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND GOOD GOVERNANCE AS THE WAY FORWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DEAN ODEH

*Department of English,
College of Education, Warri,
Delta State.*

And

ROSELINE OGHENEOVO BEN-IZUAGIE

*School of Vocational and Technical Education,
College of Education, Warri,
Delta State.*

Abstract

Education is the cathedral of development and quality education and research remain the pivot upon which the wheels of sustainable individual and societal growth and development can be accelerated. Quality education, research and good governance bring about a healthy development to an individual or nation. Knowledge is power, while ignorance is a disease, destruction and stagnation. Quality is at the heart of education as it determines how much and how well students learn and the extent to which their education achieves a range of personal, social and development goals. No nation can rise above the quality of its citizens' educational levels as the type of education given to the people of a nation determines the rate of its development. Quality education prepares learners for wealth creation and to render quality services to a nation. Man is a seeker of knowledge, always exploring his environment. He can hardly exist on earth without a continuous search for knowledge to solve diverse problems as he is not problem free. Each generation leaves as legacies some problems yet unsolved as well as hidden treasures yet undiscovered. Researchers are embarked upon to discover hidden knowledge and to proffer solutions to problems. Quality education is the oil that wheels a research. Good governance is coterminous with development. It is the key instrument that oils a sustained, peaceful, secure and overall development of a nation. The government plays a crucial role in education, research and development. Every country has its own educational system and policies which influence educational programmes in the nation. Exploring the umbilical relationship among quality education, research and good governance and their roles for sustainable development is the raison d'etre of this paper.

Key words: Education, Quality Education, Research, Good Governance and Sustainable Development.

There is an umbilical relationship among quality education, research and good governance. These three elements are incorporated for sustainable development in any nation, state, local government or community. The true essence of any institution of higher learning is high quality teaching, research and service delivery (Akpan-Atata and Enyene, 2016:68). Every institution of learning is to impart knowledge and skills for individual and societal growth and development. Quality education and research enhance productivity and manpower development and invariably bring about sustainable development in a nation.

Teaching and research are an integrated process re-enforcing each other. They go pari-passu. The chief goal of research is to advance knowledge, while teaching is to develop and enhance abilities (Agha, 2016:2). Research forms the basis of the content of teaching and it enables teachers and lecturers to introduce new discoveries and new ideas to their pupils and students (Agha, 2). While teaching is the art and science of making things known to people and it is learner-centred or student-focused (Akpan-Atata and Enyene, 2016: 68). Research forms the basis of the content of teaching and it provides solutions to man's myriad problems. Quality education and research are "bedrocks on which innovational changes, advancement in knowledge and all sorts of technological integrations in all spectra of human endeavour are anchored" (Okoro et al, 2016: 105). Educational resources which consist of human and non-human materials are the most vital determinant factors of academic achievement.

The absence of a good quality education, research and good governance is coterminous with gross underdevelopment, backwardness and stagnation (Ossai, 2016:438). A good quality education is a sine qua non for good governance and conversely, good governance enhances quality education, research, manpower and sustainable development (Ossai, 2016:432). Illiteracy, poor education and bad governance are time-bombs in any nation. There can be no meaningful development without quality education, no academic, scientific and technological progress without research and no sustainable development without good governance. Quality education, research and good governance are indispensable tools for sustainable development in any nation.

Quality education, research and good governance are tantamount to development and progress. But bad governance, corruption, poor funding of school programmes, inadequacy of educational resources, siphoning and diverting educational budgets, lack of commitment on the part of teachers and learners, economic factors, among others are problems in any school system and nation. They are obstacles to quality education, research and sustainable development in any nation. The government may be likened to an extended hand of God as it is supposed to provide all the basic

amenities or necessities of life for the citizenry. The development and progress of any nation is contingent on its policies and programmes. Therefore, the government plays a major role in the development as well as the sustainability of the development of any nation. This paper is an amalgam of quality education, research and good governance as way forward for sustainable development both in the developing and developed countries.

Education

It is germane to define "education" first before further discussions on its quality, poorness, and what have you. "Education" is etymologically derived from two Latin words: "educare 'to rear' and "educere" 'to lead' (The Chambers Dictionary, 513). These imply that education is intended to rear up someone academically and morally, bringing out socially desirable changes in his behavior and helping him to lead the fullest life he is capable of living (Kalusi, 2008:32) Light will always over-power darkness and knowledge will forever govern ignorance. So, education makes one a leader as readers are leaders. Education is the handmaiden for creating the foundation for building the crops of policy thinkers and managers for effective governance of groups, states, nations and international organizations (Ekoko 2012: 1). Ossai (2016:433) also buttressed this fact when he states: "A knowledgeable, skilled, well-articulated man, has more to offer to the nation than half-baked individuals who do not have much to offer to the nation other than satisfy their selfish interests" .

Singh (2010:50) defined "education" as "a social science which encompasses teaching and learning specific knowledge, beliefs and skills" It is all about the impartation and acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as moral transformation to solve human problems. Teaching and learning are the hallmarks of education. The teacher is the resource person who imparts knowledge and skill. He is the organizer of all teaching/learning activities. Teachers are key to improving learning. They make powerful impacts on students' learning. While the learner, educatee or student is the acquirer of knowledge and skill and he is the centre of all teaching and learning activities. Teaching is learner-centred or student-focused and it is successful if it makes a positive impact on the learner. Education is basically for knowledge acquisition, skill development, attitude and values. It is all that happen to man from cradle to grave, preparing the learners to live as members useful to themselves and to the society. Agboghroma (2013: 148) lends credence to this assertion when he defines education in a broad sense as "a process of updating the knowledge and skill of the individual for the purpose of making that individual useful to himself or herself and to the community". It is either formal, non-formal or informal.

Finally, Fagbongbe (1985:39) as cited in Oniyama and Amroma-Asite (1998: 1-2) defines education as "the tool for the integration of the individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, political, cultural and

technological progress". Education integrates the learner into the wider society and makes one a global citizen. It is a source of enlightenment and liberates the whole of man from ignorance and backwardness. In fact, it is an instrument par excellence for both individual and societal transformation and development (Okorodudu, 2013:274). Life without education in this modern world is meaningless as it is the basis of everything. Simeon and Morrison (2016:117) affirmed this assertion thus:

Education is not just an end in itself, but an investment, a means to an end. It is an investment on human capital, and also a prerequisite as well as a correlate for economic development. It is actually indispensable for both progressive leadership and enlightened fellowship, it is indeed necessary for effective life in a technological society.

Education is the catalyst of change. It is the bedrock of development in sundry ways. Education is coterminous with development and no country can grow above the level of education of its citizenry. The world now operates a knowledge-based economy in which learning and knowledge acquisition are the springboard to wealth creation and the only way to achieve knowledge-based economy is to have an enlightened and well-informed citizenry (Olaye and Aiguobarueghian, 2013:7374). There can never be visible development without formal education as an illiterate person or society is bound to remain subjugated, uninformed and development may be retarded. This is because education is a tool for empowerment and human capital development and a better tool for political participation, appointment, employment, research, among others. This fact is indisputable as it is visible in USA, Britain, China, Japan, Australia, Germany, Russia, France, just to mention a few that are described "developed", "industrialized" and "rich" just because of their prime attentions given to education. Emenanjo (2006:32) cited in Bamah and Amanze (2012: 140) affirmed thus:

Studies in developmental economics reveal a near universal correlation between literacy, progress and development on the one hand, and illiteracy, backwardness and underdevelopment on the other. Available statistics reveal that all countries that have 70% to 90% literacy are advanced while countries that have 60% and below literacy are on the cline from undeveloped, underdeveloped and developing - all of which are euphemisms for varying shades of backwardness.

Quality Education

"Quality" is synonymous with "high standard", "superior grade", "good worth", well-made or "fit for purpose". "Quality" is at the heart of education and educational institutions are expected to produce the skilled manpower and new knowledge requisite for technological advancement and economic growth. Quality education as a result-oriented education that ensures that learners' academic achievements match their age

and grade level and meet national standards. According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and Education International (EI) (2016), a good quality education is one that focuses on the whole child - the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of each student, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. It prepares the child for life, not just for testing and certification.

It is not how long but how well that matters. Education is not simply a content delivery system; rather it is a system designed to help all children reach their full potentials and enter society as full and productive citizens. Education is a key change agent for moving societies along the development continuum (Okorodudu, 2013:276). Quality education hangs on pedagogical or academic and developmental capabilities, ensuring that students come out sound, active and productive members of society. It emphasizes literacy and numeracy _ not just "quantity" but "quality" and not mere paper qualification but competence. According to the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB), a non-profit organization founded in 1982 and commissioned by the Flemish and Belgian governments that contributes to quality of education in developing countries, quality education provides for all learners with capabilities which they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well being. VVOB identifies six dimensions in quality education. They are:

1. **Equity:** "Equity" in the parlance of education has to do with nondiscrimination to all learners. It implies that personal and social circumstances such as gender, race, ethnic origin, or family background are not barriers to achieving educational potentials and that all individuals reach at least a minimum level of skills and knowledge acquisition. It is more or less a gender and racial equity. Access to quality education is a fundamental right of every child. Equity capitalizes on "education for all". So, it ensures that children of whatever gender, the poor, nomads, migrants, disabled, privileged, refugees, rural and remote populations be given the access to formal education. This is in tandem with the Nigerian philosophy of education as entrenched in the country's National Policy on Education (2014:4) thus: "Every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability"

2. **Contextualization and Relevance:** This means that quality education should not be based on a blueprint that is applicable in all situations. Solutions and adaptations of education systems should be based on the real needs of a country or community.

3. Child-friendly Teaching and Learning: Quality education puts the child or learner in the centre and helps him or her to reach his or her full potential. It requires children's active participation in teaching/learning activities.

4. Sustainability: Educational change processes often need time to be realized. By enhancing the capacities of local education authorities such processes should be institutionalized.

5. Balanced Approach: Quality education aims at developing a balanced set of capabilities of children (knowledge and skills) which they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.

6. Learning Outcomes: Quality education requires a result-oriented approach. After completing a certain level of education, children must have developed a minimum standard of skills which will promote participation in society.

According to Simeon and Morrison (2016:117-118), "the quality of the educational system of a nation determines the caliber and quality of its manpower". A poor quality of education does not prepare the citizenry for sustainable development as it does not encourage critical thinking and fostering the desire and capacity for lifelong learning that adapts and shifts in local, national and global dynamics. Poor quality in education is injurious both to an individual and to the society at large. Nigeria and most African countries have a poor quality education and produce half-baked and unemployable graduates. Quoting a World Bank Report of 2001, Otagburuagu (2016:9) confirmed the deplorable state of Nigerian graduates thus:

Nigeria's university graduates are poorly trained and unproductive on the job ... Graduate skills have steadily deteriorated over the past decade. The poor performance of Nigerian graduates is particularly evident in two areas: poor mastery of the English language and lack of requisite technical skills... The deficiencies in both vital areas make Nigerian graduates of the past fifteen years unfit for the labour market and sometimes the larger society.

The educational system of Nigeria is bedevilled by bad governance, corruption, insufficiency of infrastructure and facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, neglect of the education sub-sector, examination malpractices, kidnapping, among others. Iheagwam (2016:32) lends credence to this fact when he states:

... the delivery of education in Nigeria has suffered from years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector. Findings from an ongoing educational sector analysis confirm the poor state of education in Nigeria. The national literacy rate is currently 57 percent.

Some 49 percent of the teaching force is unqualified. There is acute shortage of infrastructure and facilities at all levels. Access to basic education is inhibited by gender issues and socio-cultural beliefs and practices, among other factors. Wide disparities persist in educational standards and learning achievements. The system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial education. School curricula need urgent review to make them relevant and practice-oriented.

Research

A "research" is a careful, objective and systematic investigation to increase the sum of knowledge or to establish facts. It is a complex word "re" and "search" meaning "to search again". A research is "to search again" because there is nothing new under the sun and whatever one searches had been searched before by some others (Iwuama et al, 2010: 1-2). Problem is the centre of all researches as they are carried out to solve or find solutions to identified problems. This made Uzoagulu (2011:3) to define "research" as "a process of finding out solution to a problem". Research is important because it is a problem-solving mechanism and a contribution and concretization to knowledge which is the most important factor of development. So, a more research-conscious nation is a more developed one. Simeon and Morrison (2016: 116) affirmed this assertion thus: "The major capital stock of an industrially advanced country is not its physical equipment. It is the body of knowledge amassed from tested findings and discoveries of empirical studies and the capacity and training of its population to use its knowledge". In spite of the importance of research for sustainable development, it is bedeviled by financial predicament, corruption, lackadaisical attitude, lack of research equipment, facilities or materials, among others in Nigeria. Research and education are inseparable as research forms the basis of the content of teaching and more research-oriented teachers are likely to be more effective and efficient and excel in their disciplines (Aghah, 2016:2).

Good Governance

"Good governance" is a system of government that is based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government. (Odeh,2016:9). It ensures the common good of the citizenry, turning around their standard of living by providing basic necessities of life such as health care, pipe-borne water, electricity, shelter, education, food, employment, good roads, empowerment, social justice and devoid of corruption. Good governance is the key instrument that oils a sustained, peaceful, secure and overall development of a nation. The objective of good governance is human development, equity and social justice. Quality education, research and sustainable development are utopian without good governance. Bad governance fuelled by corruption is the bane of underdevelopment in Africa (Odeh, 2016:9). Leadership

problem is the key trouble in Nigeria and Africa at large. According to Achebe in *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983: 1),

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership.

When there is governance failure, everything can fall apart in a nation, hence the poor quality of education in Nigeria and in most African nations. "Anti-corruption" is the most prevalent aspect of good governance debate. Corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria (and most African nations) and it bedevils the development of the country. According to Okunoren in his *A Gift to the Troubled Tribe* (1991: 108-109), "there can never be peace and progress in any kingdom ... where people freely steal from that which collectively belongs to the people, also from the people of the kingdom individually " Corruption is a severe threat to education and development in Nigeria. Education budgets are embezzled or diverted, research grants are either embezzled or not paid, purchase of inferior laboratory and research equipment, incomplete supply of contract value of educational materials, abandonment of developmental projects, appointment of people without the required technical know-how to man commissions, committees and boards, among other abnormalities. Good governance brings peace, security and development, while bad governance breeds rancor, acrimony, insecurity, stagnation and underdevelopment.

Sustainable Development

"Sustainable development" is the "ability to make development sustainable - to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (The Brundland Commission, 1987). Sustainable development promotes the idea that social, environmental and economic progress are all attainable within the limits of the earth's natural resources. The world's resources are finite and growth that is unmanaged and sustained will lead to increased poverty and decline of the environment.

According to Bolokor (2013 :9), "political power and the national wealth are to secure a better life for our people". But the African leaders siphon public funds for their selfish interests, leaving the continent underdeveloped and backward - excruciating poverty, disease, starvation, unemployment, big foreign debts, high inflation rate, bad roads, lack of electricity, shelter, pipe-borne water, hospital, poor education, among others. Africa is the richest continent in terms of natural resources: petroleum and gas, economic trees, diamond, lead granite, cobalt, tin, silver, platinum, gold, among others. In spite of these natural endowments, Africa is still the poorest continent because of bad

governance fuelled by corruption. The provision of jobs, education, health care, constant electricity supply, infrastructure, roads, pipe-borne water remain the panacea to underdevelopment. Good quality education, quality research, commitment, honesty and good governance are the prerequisites for sustainable development. Quoting Martin Luther King Jr, Ichipi and Emunotor (2016: 125) stated: "The prosperity of a country does not depend on the abundance of its revenue, not on the strength of its fortifications, not on the beauty of its public buildings. It consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, its men of education and enlightened character".

Conclusion

A good quality education, research and good governance are the way forward for sustainable development of any state or nation. Qualitative knowledge is the raw material with which an individual or nation can be built. Education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world. It is the bedrock of sustainable development. Man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes. It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves. The leaders should have an attitudinal change and rule with commitment, ensuring good governance, justice, honesty, quality education, encouraging research and shunning corruption for sustainable development. Students should avoid examination malpractices and read hard - not just to pass examinations and acquire certificates but read for quality knowledge and skill for wealth creation.

The provision of jobs, quality education, basic social amenities and good governance is the antidote to underdevelopment, stagnation and backwardness. Political power and the national wealth are to develop the citizenry and the nation. The government at all levels should encourage research as research is a veritable tool for knowledge acquisition and development. Research grants and teachers salaries should be paid promptly, appointments should be only given to qualified persons, training and retraining of teachers, and adequate supply of school materials. Finally, quality education, research and good governance should be the business of every nation as they are the way forward for sustainable development of every nation whether developing or developed.

References

- Achebe, C. (1983). *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Agboghroma, T.E. (2013). "Nigerian Educational System: Contemporary Issues and the Ways forward". In Imhanlahimi, E.O. (ed). *Journal of Collaborative Research and Development (JCRD)*. 1(2). Association for Promoting Academic Researches and Developments in Nigeria (APARDN). Pp 148 - 161.

- Agha, N. (2016). "Towards a Reflective Nigerian Society: The Gap between Teaching and Research". In S.G.N. Eze (ed). *Academic Scholarship Journal*. 12. 1 - 21.
- Akpan-Atata, E.A and Enyene, T.E (2016). "The Gap between Teaching and Research in Library Information Sciences (LIS) Profession: The Bibliometrics Approach". In Eze, S.G.N. (ed). *Academic Scholarship Journal*. 12. 68 - 87.
- Bamah, N. and Amanze, V. (2012). "English, Computer and the MDGs as Drivers of Human Capital Development in Nigeria". In M. Osakwe (ed). *Language, Communication and Human Capital Development in a Globalized World*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.
- Bolokor, O.J. (2013). *Echoes of Reality*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.
- Brundland Commission (1987). "What is Sustainable Development". www.sdcommission.org.uk. Retrieved 30th October, 2016.
- Ekoko, E.A. (2012). "Security Is About People". In Aziza, R. O. (ed). *Abraka Humanities Review: A Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Delta State University, Abraka*.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National Policy on Education*. Abuja: NERDC. https://www.reference.com/education/meaning-quality_education. Retrieved 29th October, 2016.
- https://www.unite4education.org/about/whatis_quality_education/ Retrieved 29th October, 2016.
- Ichipi, O.J. and Emunotor, L. (2016). "Education and National Security: Paradigms for Good Governance in Post Millennium Nigeria". In L.A. Agba (ed). *Niger Delta Journal of Education (NIDJOE)*. 3. 123 - 129.
- Iheagwam, A. W. (2016). "Sustainable Human Rights Based Approach to Education: A New Ground for Post Millennium Nigeria". In Agba, L.A (ed). *Niger Delta Journal of Education (NIDJOE)*. 3. 24-37.
- Iwuama, B.C., Ogbabor, G.G. and Onwuegbu, O.C. (2010). *Research Methods in Education*. Owerri: Totan Publishers.
- Kalusi, J.I. (2008). *An Introduction to Philosophy of Education*. Warri: COEWA Publishers.

M.huffpost.com/us/entry/9284130."What is Quality Education"? Retrieved 29th October, 2016.

Odeh, D. (2016). "Literature as a Panacea to Moral Decadence for Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta". In A.A. Adeyinka, T.T. Asuka, A.A. Agih, and G.F. Panley (eds). *Education and Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Odeh, D. (2016). "White Man in Black Skin: Illuminating the Bane of Underdevelopment in Africa Through Alex Roy-Omoni's The Ugly Ones". In B. Okaba (ed). *The Peace and Environment Africa Journal*.3. 230 – 246.

Okoro, K. M., Ibiam, A.I. and Elekwachi, M.C. (2016). "Towards a Reflective Nigerian Society: The Gap between Teaching and Research in Building Technology from Facility Procurement Perspective". In S.GN. Eze (ed). *Academic Scholarship Journal*. 12. 104 - 113.

Okorodudu, R.I. (20 J 3). "Education in Nigeria: Contemporary Issues and Ways Forward", In Imhanlahimi, E.O. (ed). *Journal of Collaborative Research and Development (JCRD)*. 1. 273 -286.

Okunoren, S. (1991). *A Gift to the Troubled Tribe*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Olaye, M.E. and Aiguoarueghian, G.O (2013). "Education in Nigeria: Contemporary Issues and Ways Forward as it Relates to Tertiary Education". In E.O. Imhanlahimi (ed). *Journal of Collaborative Research and Development (JCRD)*. 1. 73-84.

Oniyama, E.E and Amroma-Asite, T.M. (J 998). *Fundamentals of Human Learning*. Warri: COEWA Publishers.

Ossai, A.G. (2016). "Quality Education and Good Governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects". In L.A. Agba (ed). *NigerDelta Journal of Education (NIDJOE)*. 3. 432-439.

Otagburuagu, E.J. (2016). "English Language, Literature and National Transformation". In S.T.Babatunde (ed). *Journal of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (JESAN)*. 18 1 - 15.

- Simeon, N.A. and Morrison, I. (2016). "Education and Manpower Development in Nigeria". In L.A.Agba (ed). *Niger Delta Journal of Education (NIDJOE)*. 3. 116 - 122.
- Singh, V.X. (2010). *Dictionary of Education*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation. The Chambers Dictionary. (1999). Great Britain: Softback Preview.
- Uzoagulu, (1998). *Practical Guide to Writing Research Project Reports in Tertiary Institutions*. Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.
- [www.vvob.be/vvob/en/education/our vision on quality education](http://www.vvob.be/vvob/en/education/our_vision_on_quality_education). Retrieved 29th October, 2016