

# **MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA THROUGH FUNCTIONAL AND VIABLE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

*Dr. Godspower O. Amele*

*Department of Educational Management  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni,  
Port Harcourt, Rivers State*

## **Abstract**

*This paper studies approaches for meeting the challenges of nation building through functional and viable educational administration. It described education as the factory of skill and talent development, capacity building, knowledge acquisition, information processing, modification and transmission, process engineering, tool invention and re-invention, and social, political, economic and religious thought, idea, ideology and attitude guidance and direction, oriented towards finding the right solutions for problems of national development. It suggests that Educational administration should be concerned with the developmental problems in the nation, to create incentives for intellectual property development; through research and development grants made available by the educational institutions, for giving more scholars the support they need to take part in research programmes; with focus on creating new intellectual properties—having direct relation to and impact on solving a major identified problem affecting national development; with inter-disciplinary approach that absorbs scholars from various academic disciplines to participate in research programmes, by taking advantage of research grants offerings created, monitored, managed and sustained by the academic institution from year to year. It concludes that the more these incentives are provided, the better stimulated will be the interest of learners to take interest in intellectual property development-focused researches.*

**Keywords:** Nation-Building, Education, Functional Educational Administration, Viable Education

It can't be agreed less that "Rome was not built in a day" and so too Nigeria, like any other nation, cannot be built in a day. Rome we know today has seen many phases of transition over 50 centuries; yet having such a long history hasn't been without countless challenges. Nation-building is not a goal to be achieved but a process to be maintained and continued. This was well stated by Gambari (2008), who mentioned the obvious, that: nation-building is always a work-in-progress; a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. He equally averred that, nation-building never stops and true nation-building never rest because all nations are constantly facing up to new challenges.

The overarching economic, social and political problems beleaguering Nigeria today has made it even more evident that the task of nation-building is truly herculean, and being that dynamism is wired into the fabric and corpus of the constitution and population of every nation that survives amidst a platitude of

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challenges besetting it, there is always a sizable room for improvement in every Nation. Nigeria is not perfect today, but tossed by the violent maelstrom of destabilizing political tensions all over, as an ailing nation which evolved out of the sabotage of nationalism, and continues to pursue independence today.

With conflict as a major setback to nation building, education equips leaders with the right skill and tools for managing conflicts better. Kingdom & Maekae (2013) emphasized that “a nation develops in relation to its achievement in education.” Persistent environmental conflicts pose a direct threat to security. As a result of persistent human and environment conflicts in Nigeria, Nigeria is beleaguered by the brunt of insecurity which hampers the struggles and developmental strides of any Nation. Usoro, Ekpenyong & Effiong (2014) recommended that, “leaders should always be proactive on conflict issues through effective communication and dialogue not until when there is a breakdown of law and order.” In Nigeria the reverse is the case not only because the leaders are not proactive in managing conflicts but most particularly because the leaders are not well educated as conflict managers.

Nigeria is a case in point of a nation that has suffered stunting in its growth patterns since after assuming its independence, and insecurity plays a major role in this. The government needs to embrace the importance of education in helping it manage environmental conflicts more effectively, because through sound education, information management and knowledge production, these important components of conflict management will be channeled properly to abate persistent human and environmental conflicts in Nigeria.

It is clear that nation-building is a topical issue of discussion in Nigeria today; because Nigeria is thriving as it were on a shaky, weak, and wobbling foundation that poises Nigeria on the pinnacle of political fragility. Accepting this obvious situation will help in addressing the everyday challenges to Nigeria's nation-building. It's a collective burden, because every Nigerian is part of the sickle cellular and anemic political entity called Nigeria. Special care is needed to treat the nation as a special ailing nation, a fragile, weak, and troubled nation, which being naturally endowed does not change the fact that she is still sick and in need of special care by everyone.

Nigeria is among the nations in the world that deserve the appellation of political, economic and social fragility, especially when viewed from inside-out. It fits the description accorded other most renowned fragile states, such as Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo ... noted to be among the countries that are labeled ‘fragile’ in newspaper articles and news bulletins. The stories about these countries evoke images of societies in conflict and chaos, where people live in poverty and lack access to the most elementary services. Security and justice are absent. Governments are at best incompetent, but more often they aggravate the volatile situation and are implicated in human rights abuses. These countries are a far cry from what ‘we’, living in donor countries, consider decently organized societies (René, 2016).

When discussing this topical issue of nation-building in Nigeria, the initial tendency is to identify challenges to its realization, while stage-managing how the nation is perceived internationally. So, internally, we tell ourselves the truth: identifying and trying to figure out ways to work on our weaknesses, but, externally, we want to hide the bitter truth in a bid to attract foreign investments. This internal

politicization of the perspective sold out of Nigeria as a nation is known as nation branding, which is considered to be an aspect of nation-building. And in indeed, if we have the notion we prefer to sell out of our national identity, then we should work hard to make it a reality within our locality.

Hence, it is important to also think of our national image in this discourse by employing the concept of nation-branding. We view nation branding as a “logical extension” of nation-building, which refers to the ways in which national identities are constructed and communicated. Whereas nation building primarily refers to a domestic process in which political elites (or state agents) attempt to overcome pre-existing cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious divisions in order to forge a national identity, nation branding is chiefly an externally oriented commercial enterprise to “sell” the nation by attracting foreign investors or tourists. Yet, especially for small states that lack military capacities, nation branding and the projection of specific national identities abroad can also be a fruitful approach to attain certain foreign policy goals or to gain recognition in international organizations (Rosemarijn & Wouter, 2019).

To serve this perspective on the national plate for the young generation to savor and embrace the sad reality of the need to sympathize with Nigeria in order to take special care of her, by everyone related to her by birth, the education of the young needs to bring this shade of awareness to the minds of every Nigerian across every level of learning, rewriting the narrative of our national story and identity to evoke the right emotions of sympathy and compassion—in every Nigerian—that will motivate all Nigerians to act in empathy for Nigeria’s special challenges to nation building. The task of transmitting this content of knowledge rests on educational administrators and managers, not on politicians, who will prefer to tell the story only in a way that favours their political interests cum the interests of their political parties, always. The problems in Nigeria could be addressed as the responsibility of all citizens to nation building.

The responsibility begins with making public policies, from educational viewpoints, embracing the role every citizen plays in governance in terms actions taken already and more that must be taken to achieve desired results. This is based on a good understanding of public policy itself, from formulation to implementation. Public policy implementation has as its objects as the execution of government plans of action for the benefits of its citizenry. However, if it is for the benefits of the people, it therefore presupposes that the people should be at the heart of considerations for such actions (Charles & Chukwuzogie, 2013).

The educational viewpoint required in public policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria is such that should aim at resolving the core issues distracting Nigerians from concentrating on achieving a synergy for national building. The questions of ethnicity, religion, class, federalism revenue allocation, and constitutionalism, amongst other factors, have remained largely unresolved almost 100 years after the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 (Akinola, 2012 quoted in Michael & Elias, 2018). The duties of educational administrators include setting educational standards and goals and establishing the policies and procedures to achieve them, as well as to supervise managers, support staff, teachers, counselors, librarians, coaches, and other employees. Educational administrators are the leaders of the educational institution where they are employed to make key leadership

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contributions to the institution. They are highly skilled individuals driven by a purpose to make a solid contribution to the world.

The professional career development of an educational administrator revolves around acquiring knowledge and research skills for tailoring education and social change, make preparation for their professional growth, situating educational leadership and the principalship, making assessment for learning, integrating human resource management in education, gaining hands-on skill for school finance and operations, identifying, locating and utilizing incentives to improve education, developing and deploying resources for teacher and classroom, engaging in conflict-resolution activities, having mastery of total quality management in education, situating the family as educator, and readiness for principalship. Thus educational administrators are front-liners in advancing research and knowledge within the academic environment. And when the objective is to rewrite the Nigerian narrative of nation building, it starts from the purview of the duties of educational administrators to create the relevant contents for transmitting the right kind of learning material for other participants to use and apply well.

### **Education**

Education is the transmission, acquisition, creation and adaptation of information, knowledge, skills and values (UN System Task Team, 2014 as cited by Agbo, 2014). Education can be divided into non-formal, informal, formal, and functional education. Non-formal education is skill development, enhancement, advancement, and empowerment programme that is introduced without a curriculum, syllabus, accreditation or certification such as seminars, symposiums, conferences, talk-shows, workshops, dialogues, etc., whose main objective is to increase the skills of the individual and in turn enable the individual experience the emotional rewards associated with increased love for a subject or increased passion for learning (Agbo, 2014). This is as much important to nation building as formal education which is uniquely an assiduous process of transmitting knowledge of particular subjects in a graded form of lesson planning oriented towards covering a curriculum in the modules designed for teaching and learning. Everyone involved in bringing any form of education to people are covered included in the scope of who this work defines as educational administrators on a more functional level of appreciation.

### **Nation building**

For scholars like Onuoha, Bassey & Ufomba (2018), Nation-building is about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. As Gambari (2008) exposed, nation building has many important aspects. Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it I also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organization. Above all else, however, nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared identity, a collective imagination of belonging. Nation-building is, therefore, about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose (Gambari, 2008).

The whole idea of nation-building, when communicated clearly, reveals the magnanimity of the lacunae in Nigeria, being that visibly it appears all the institutions built to represent Nigeria as a nation are all weak institutions from a close look at what makes each institution what it ought to be, however, the elite class loves to hold onto the appellation of greatness of the nation on a broad and remote point of view. A stack show of mediocrity in the political class is the assumption of greatness in the notion of Nigeria as a nation based on its population size, mineral riches, and number of institutions already built.

Quantity is their focus, but objectively quantity alone is not anything without quality. And for there to be quality there needs to be emphasis on excellence not merely average performance in institutional standards of operation, administration and management in the nation. This level of performance is what is lacking, and the burden is the quality of education available to Nigerians in Nigeria in the first place.

When the educational standard is of high quality, with all rounded emphasis on excellence, not just academic excellence, but excellence in character formation that affects the total educated person, then the quality of people sent out to represent the national character in the key roles they play within every institution they are absorbed will equally be characterized by excellence, and this is the goal of nation building.

In support of this view of excellence in the framework of merit for nation-building, Gambari (2008) owned the notion that, we are seen as giants not necessary because of the quality of our national institutions and values, but simply by the virtue of our large population and oil wealth. But in reality, the greatness of a nation has to be earned and is not determined just by the size of its population or the abundance of its natural resources. This shows that leaders or political actors who are not focused on the impact of their influence and power on raising standards of performance within the institutions under their immediate control are failed leaders, because it's assumed that 20 years with them still in control of power and having authority to enforce change that doesn't happen will be 20 more wasted years. Yet such leaders all hold claim to being educated. So which quality of education did they receive?

### **Nation building in Nigeria**

Agbo (2014) was convinced at the time of his writing, that with the immense wealth bestowed on this country by providence, the citizens have no business with poverty. He technically observed that we have enough human and natural resources to turn Nigeria into an economic giant, any day. Based on several factors, he further convinced himself that, Nigeria has the capacity to develop into a world superpower, in line with the federal government's Vision 20-20-20.

Nevertheless feeling good about something does not mean that thing is good enough, without ensuring that thing is used for a good purpose nothing good may result from knowing about it or having it. And that is the situation with knowing that Nigeria is a wealthy nation in both human and natural resources. The responsibility of every concerned Nigeria is to discover a way to enhance the quality of life in Nigeria in any way that they have control of one resources or the other at any given time. Taking that any concerned person always speaks from a point of view, there are many ways to look at the situation in Nigeria, and from whichever way one looks at it, one sees a gap between the "is" and the "ought."

To make an impact, one needs to raise questions on the reason the gap exists, and find a way to close it in one's own capacity. This sense of responsibility isn't in-born. So, people need to be taught to take responsibility for effecting the change they desire. They need to know how to become change drivers not just change seekers. This can start from the schools where people first learn about their individual identity and get exposed to their stake in the collective national identity. The schools will breed a quality of people that will take responsibility to address the gaps in their society if the schools focus on change.

In spite of his positive position on the future of Nigeria, Agbor (2014) was, however, in shock at the situation of the economy that created mixed reactions, since there were many factors hindering the achievement of the world super-power vision he shared with the Federal Government. From his own observation in 2014 put in his words, "Nigeria is still rated as one of the poorest countries in the world." Hence, he asked a puzzling poser: "Is it possible to have a robust economy and yet wallow in extreme poverty?" which he tried to answer with the following data sets obtained by him at the time of his observation, namely:

- The current UN Human Development Index, HDI, ranks Nigeria as the 26<sup>th</sup> out of 54 African countries, 13<sup>th</sup> among West Africa's 16 countries and 158<sup>th</sup> out of the 187 countries covered in the survey.

Noting that the UN Human Development Index is usually based on four macroeconomic variables: education, literacy, life expectancy and standard of living, Agbo (2014) was disturbed by the status quo and reality, saying that, if Nigeria lags behind most countries in the world, using those macroeconomic variables, then there is cause for worry. It's this cause of worry that has to be identified and addressed. Education comes first, followed by literacy, because citizens are not born aware of their roles or identity as citizens, they learn that from school and express it by means of their literacy also acquired from education. So, the starting point for having responsible citizens is education at school, and schools don't function alone, they collaborate with the families as well as the government and other civil society organizations, even as they integrate with every other institution. If schools are properly managed, the desired changes will be seen. If not, the challenges to national building in Nigeria will turn aggressive.

### **Education and nation building**

From setting up and running a government to managing the resources of a nation through institutions, industries and vocations of life in a society, there is need for a knowledgeable, skilled and experienced throng of individual actors and initiators to be chosen for the job, and it is only through education that such individuals are prepared for the job. Sharing in this view, Chimaka (2014) affirmed that education is an important means of growth and development of any nation. In addendum, he stated that, education especially formal education provides the needed human capital for a country's growth and progress. It equips the citizens with the necessary skills to function effectively and contribute to the nation's development. And making his point even clearer, he offered two notable quotes, first that "whoever controls the education system also controls the destiny of the nation" and the second similar quote that, "he who controls the education of the young controls the future of the nation" (Chimaka, 2014).

Take away education, and everything else collapses, institutions stop working correctly after a period of time. Nothing can be done well without learning the ropes. Education is a web of knowledge that connects peoples' ideas with the real world in a way that they function to effect change, solve problems, manage processes, build and maintain systems of doing things for the good of everyone in the society. The kinetic energy of education is wielded by its administrators. They tilt the entire institution of the state towards which every direction of the learning goals they set for education within their own institutions. That's why; the task of nation-building begins with having functional and viable educational administration. Putting the right people in charge of educational management is the starting point of addressing the leadership problems in the country. Fix it and all other institutions will be fixed with ease.

Olutola (1979) believes that there is still a strong faith in the proposition that education makes it easy to mobilize a society for national solidarity and for expending modernization. And goes on to aver that, in Nigeria, for example, the policy-makers recently reaffirmed their faith in the role which education can play in nation building when they declared in the new National Policy on Education that "The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development." And further added that the policy goes further to identify national aims and objectives of education which include, inter alia, 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, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. With this, Olutola (1979) inferred that, education is simply a tool for nation building.

But that goal didn't mention anything about having the right people at the helms of educational leadership as educational administrators and leaders. The skill first needed is the educational leadership skill. Education is an inverted pyramid whose largest part comprises of the quality of its leadership; its middle part consisting of the quality of educational programs created, and sitting at the bottom of the pyramid, is the adequacy of the facility for teaching and learning. That means, having the best facility in the world cannot produce the best educational institution. Having the right program only still won't do the job; the job begins with having the best people to lead the institution. They can charge a force that will transform the educational institution into being the best in the world. This is what a functional and viable educational administration is about. It means having the best people to take the job in education.

Chimaka (2014) avowed that, Nigeria as a country believes that overcoming illiteracy and ignorance will help in forming the basis for accelerated national development. Schooling or formal education brings about empowerment. It helps the citizens to participate more actively in politics in their country, improve in their economic development and productivity, understand and appreciate more their cultures and cultural heritages and increase their chances of reducing poverty. But all these can only be achieved with the right people taking responsibility of educational management and administration first.

### **Challenges of nation building in Nigeria**

There are numerous ways the challenges of nation building in Nigeria have direly and directly impacted educational administration negatively in Nigeria. This study will list out nine such impacts as follows:

- (1) Inadequate funding of educational infrastructure development...
- (2) Inattentiveness of government to the weak, lowered and poor standard of education across all levels...
- (3) Lack of accountability on the educational administrators roles of utilizing public funds for research and development programme that ought to have created incentives for researchers and students alike...
- (4) Inadequate resource allocation for teacher recruitment, training, and deployment and retention in their areas of competence and specialization, making the teaching profession a generalist knowledge based than a specialist skill based profession...
- (5) Insufficient management resources for educational administration in public institutions of higher learning for equipping teachers and students with tools needed to enhance teaching and learning...
- (6) Inappropriate fiscal planning and prioritization, as government spends approves huge funds for oversight projects with no direct impact on nation building while turning a blind eye to the plight of personnel managing the educational sector across all functional levels of educational administration...
- (7) Inefficient educational administration and social integration system devoid of direct alignment of students' educational goals with their real life goals by failure to create opportunities that absorb students as qualified manpower after school due...
- (8) Loss of interest in teaching, due to morale loss on the part of the heroes of knowledge transfer who have withdrawn from active monitoring, guidance and mentoring of students, because their welfare were never cared for...
- (9) School and community disconnect, as students go out of school and feel handicap in their communities with nothing to give back to their society, due to failure of educationist to ensure students stay focused on their study goals and commit to their discipline in order to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in the most fitting post-school projects and social programs.

In a study on the very subject at issue, Okorn (2019) reechoing the words of Gambari (2008) appraised that, as an integral part of the modern world, Nigerians are rightly concerned about nation-building. Gambari (2008) had also stated that, even in these days of globalization and rapid international flows of people and ideas, having a viable nation remain synonymous with achieving modernity. It is about building the institutions and values which sustain the collective community in these modern times.

Agreeing with Falode (2019) who also affirmed that the dream of Nigeria since independence in 1960 is to turn itself into a viable and cohesive nation, however, noted sadly that this has become an impossible dream due to myriad of challenges. Okorn (2019), who chose the exact words of Gambari (2008), drew our attention to the fact that we cannot have a nation by mere historical accident, because a nation has to be built with vision and resolve, for "nation-building is the product of conscious state-craft, not happenstance" (Gambari, 2008). The notion of "building" itself represents an ongoing activity, an active effort, a skillful endeavor and a purposeful engagement with resources, therefore cannot be left to just anyone who



happens to be concerned about making something work in the nation. It is primarily a function of education to build people who will be capable of building the nation that everyone will love.

Falode (2019) who described Nigeria as a multiethnic society with over 250 ethnic groups, adding that each of these ethnic groups also has religious and economic issues that separate them from one another, was supported by Okorn (2019) who also surmised that, Nigeria's effort at nation building started since independence to address issues that have predated 1960. These scholars gave credence to Bray and Cooper (1979) who had much earlier observed that Nigeria, perhaps more than other African nations, faces the awesome task of forging a nation out of a diversity of cultures. The need was accentuated by the tragic civil war that engulfed Nigeria from 1967-1970.

But blaming the past will not do any good if the conducts of people today have not changed from the same conducts of the people in the past which had resulted in the tragic civil war. The need to have educational institutions take teach people not just the value of peace but the need to play their roles as peace builders is now urgent, with the way life has turned out today. That's why there needs to be new nation-building oriented purposefully crafted educational programs that will pick all fabrics and bricks needed for nation building and train people who will have the skill for tailoring and laying them together to achieve the nation of excellence, justice, unity, peace, and progress that Nigeria is in so much need of.

The struggle continues, because as Falode (2019) pointed out, Nigeria's diversity has been a major obstacle in its drive to become a global and responsible player in the international community. This point was also supported by the study carried out by Okorn (2019), in which the researcher observed that the Nigerian nation-building endeavor is hampered by her historical antecedence, poor leadership, corruption, and contentious constitutional provisions.

It becomes the task of educational planners to see to it that new school programs are created that will drive home the message of changing the narrative together. Leadership is a skill to be acquired, and training people to become good leaders in every walk of life is going to be a driving force for building a nation of excellence. Educational administrators will have to think of how to design the kind of school programs that will raise the morale of pupils/students to seek out developing their leadership skills and play leadership roles everywhere they find themselves, to set an example of incorruptible leadership.

Whereas, Onuoha, Bassey & Ufomba (2018) had earlier observed the belief of Nigerian nationalists that federalism will foster nation building in Nigeria, they noticed sadly, that, fifty-eight years down the line as an independent nation, Nigeria is still grappling with challenges of nation building. The same old story of blame will keep being repeated until the educational institution is winded up to functional capacity of leading through viable educational administration the cause of building the capacity of nation-builders.

The first task would have been to employ a government system that will create harmony in diversity, in order to move the nation forward, and Federalism has proven to be that ideal government system for Nigeria. So, the claim has been made that Nigeria is a Federal Republic. Notwithstanding, for Onuoha, Bassey & Ufomba (2018), skewed federalism is what is practiced continuously and remains a threat to the continued existence of Nigeria as a Nation. Continue this practice, and Nigeria's

quest to become a strong and united nation will be meaningless. How then do we change the language and practice of federalism at the political corridors, which is clearly outside the scope of educational administration?

While Falode (2019) identified corruption, autarky, governance and distribution among the various challenges that have been the barriers to the creation of a viable polity, the argument put forward by Okorn (2019) was that the creation of dependable institutions and a patriotic demonstration of political will would be key to addressing the challenges of nation building. This argument was thus in line with the position held by Onuoha, Bassey & Ufomba (2018) that, though federalism is the most suitable principle for ensuring nation building in a heterogeneous country like Nigeria, the Nigerian model of federalism where so much fiscal resources and responsibilities is being concentrated in the center to the detriment of the states breeds confrontation between the central government and component units, thus hamper nation building.

Hitherto, what has to be done is a campaign probably championed by students of every higher education institution, led by the educational administrators, to state on placards what is known as expected of a federal republic practicing true federalism, and call on the government to take note of them as reminders and begin commissioning commissions and projects that will look into them all as the demands of the people of their government, and take necessary action to address them all for the good of the present and future generation of Nigerians demanding that the right things should be done, otherwise they leave the people with no option than seek a means to migrate to better societies where they have a listening government. Of course, sustaining such actions for the common good will compel change in attitude by the government, towards the practice of federalism in Nigeria for the good of all.

That's why, in favour of federalism, the researchers recommended a review of the 1999 constitution to reduce the power and responsibilities of the federal government to common services like Foreign Affairs, Currency, Immigration and Defense and granting of more responsibilities to states, as well as a reintroduction of the Derivation Principle; which allows states generate its revenue from the resources available in its domain and give a percentage to the central government, thus arguing that this will bring out ingenuity inherent in the various states, and lead to healthy competition in terms of development; and that this proposed new federal arrangement will not only give confidence to, but enhance nation building in the country (Onuoha, Bassey & Ufomba, 2018). These are the same terms the campaigners may restate on placards and carry to campaign grounds during electoral campaigns or at any other time.

In a presentation made at the first year anniversary lecture to honor Justice Mustapha Akanbi and the Mustapha Akanbi Foundation, Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambari (2008) argued that, nations are built by exemplary people and sustained by institutions that promote good governance and socio-economic development. Gambari's argument was a response to the question he was requested to address; that is, to examine our past critically to find out why after close to five decades of attaining independence, Nigeria is still not out of the woods. He believed that, as we moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in this age of globalization, this should be a matter of concern to all of us. It was noble for us to reflect on our journey so far, for us to do better in the future and leave a better legacy for posterity. Thus, doing this reflection today, it is worthwhile to consider and toe the position of Bray and Cooper (1979)

who declared that in the task of reconstruction and reconciliation that is now being undertaken, education plays a major role.

### **The Way Forward**

Teaching History as a compulsory school subject across all levels of education in Nigeria will be of great help in making everyone who gets educated in Nigeria to understand the changes our society have undergone in the course of history and see the important lessons we have learnt and could learn from history that will encourage every Nigerian to commit to building a nation for Nigeria as a collective responsibility.

In a cursory look at history, we see that, as Gambari (2008) mentioned, nations are an important part of modern society. If we go back into history, we see that the world used to be divided into empires and kingdoms. In modern period, however, nations or nation states have replaced empires as the basic unit of human political organization.

### **Critical evaluation:**

It is important to reiterate the strong words of Gambari (2008) that nation-building never stops and true nation-building never rest because all nations are constantly facing up to new challenges. Nigeria faces a platitude of challenges that are becoming sophisticated by the day. No one should give up on Nigeria simply because the nation is still grappling to forge an identity for itself in stealth mode. The interest of the leaders hasn't been on education thus far, and explains why the nation is still far from reaching any of its development goals. The way-forward will be for making educational development a national priority with the hope that through functional and viable educational administration the challenges of nation building will be met, even if not at once, as this can't be, but with significant progress in tractions.

### **Conclusion**

There are four important perspectives for meeting the challenges of nation building through functional, viable educational administration, which is synthesized from the thought of Gambari (2008) as follows:

**Nation building as work-in-progress:** there is end to the evolution of thought and people in a nation. One generation dominates at a given point in time, utilizing the information available to them at the time to solve the problems of their epoch, and the next generation succeeds them. One generation is never going to perpetuate itself in the nation. Neither will its peculiar challenges be the only challenge the nation will experience, so too will the information shared through the programs developed for educating and training the population be updated from time to time.

As new problems and needs are discovered, the citadel of information management, processing, and transmission, which is the educational institution, will always face new challenges of fine-tuning the educational contents available and utilized to transmit the new information, build new capacity, and develop new skills in through the educational programs at hand. Hence, the educational administration will at no time have a feeling of a job-well-done but would always be involved in the research processes undertaken to discover new problems affecting nation-building

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and discerning the changes needed to formulate informational contents utilized in educating those undergoing training from time to time.

**Nation building as a dynamic process:** there is no one-cap-fits-all approach in nation-building, and that explains why an educational institution is not only made of one department, faculty, course, and administrator. Being that there are many problems to be solved at every time, and the problems are always there, but solved in a regenerative way, those who are to succeed others in solving the problems from the dimensions considered will equally need to be trained through a similar process as those who are already engaged in solving the problems in their specific walks of life.

Significantly, everyone is a part of the system of sustaining the process of solving the multifarious problems in the nation, meaning that; for whatever particular problems they attempt to deal with as workers, they are contributing to the overall process of building the nation in parts of the problems they are working hard to solve. That explains why, workers are hired, trained, replaced from time to time, because they are not only working for themselves and their individual family, their contributions to their workforce is for the collective efforts required to sustain the process of solving problems for building the nation. The educational institution critically addresses the capacity gap by endeavoring to create and manage the right educational programs that will equip each person with the skill and knowledge they need to solve the problems of nation building in their own individual capacity with their interests in life.

**Nation building in constant need of nurturing:** no nation gets too old to be maintained or becomes scrap overtime. A nation is a system that runs through different active parts always requiring maintenance and servicing by those managing, monitoring and utilizing it for efficient problem solving. To be certain of one thing: the national system is a cosmopolitan human system; it is sustained by the overall sustenance of the human member-parts that comprises its entire framework. These parts are not simply the institutions built, but the nitty-gritty of collective human activities taking place within the geographical space occupied by the nation.

Any defective part is equally a part that can be improved upon, hence there is certain need to study and understand the challenges of people in every part of the nation across its numbered geographical sections. It's necessary for maintaining the nation as a system that is functional only when all its parts are functional. Any dysfunctional part will affect the overall functional status of the system. As such Educational administration could be said to be functional and viable not only when it sees to the effective or proper management of the educational institution, but when it produces qualitative research insights into the overall quality of life of the various communities and institutions from which the learners are drawn from, for which they are trained and sent back to. Continuous research is the key to uncovering the status quo of the functional member-parts of the nation, and transmitting these research findings to the corridors of policy making and development institutions is the overall purpose of having functional and viable educational administration, because that is the only way the servicing of the parts will be done.

**Nation building in perpetual need of re-invention:** like any tool used for work, a time comes when the tool gets worn out, and needs replacement. In view of

replacement, having the same tool given extra capabilities will require re-inventing the tool, and this is what civilization has taught us, that we can't stop or slow down development in our world unless we stop re-inventing the tools we use for our work.

The educational institution is the strategic factory of inventions. As is said, necessity is the mother of invention, and the educational institution is a necessary institution for equipping people with the skills they need to do their work better and become more productive from time to time. It is the function or a viable and functional educational administration to engage stakeholders in industrialization from time to time to review the challenges they face and recommend the solutions they need for addressing their pain-points. This is called strategic partnership.

With this continuous engagement with stakeholders, educational administrators are able to form a think-tank for reviewing and processing the new information gathered, undertake in-depth situation and process analysis and tabulate the resources needed for re-invention of the tools necessary for achieving the desired speed of development in the industries, thereby gearing up other development institutions to collectively contribute to the educational researches carried out, by way of sponsorship, supervision and policy drafts to ensure the research teams are not hindered or restrained from and in the course of carrying out their researches for the advancement of industries.

When educational administration is aggressive in advancing researches geared towards contributing to development and solving institutional problems and challenges in the nation it is said to be a functional and viable administration. It is functional because it is always at work for maintaining the processes of equipping talents with the skill and knowledge they need through the right educational programs designed to update the information content formulated and utilized in the training people from time to time. And it is viable because it is always involved in the process of developing new solutions to the problems and challenges faced by people in different communities and institutions that make up the nation.

The challenges of nation building can be met through functional and viable education administration for the reason that the educational institution properly interrelates with other institution as the factory house of skill and talent development, capacity building, knowledge acquisition, information processing, modification and transmission, process engineering, tool invention and re-invention, and social, political, economic and religious thought, idea, ideology and attitude guidance and direction oriented towards finding the right solutions for problems of national development.

### **Suggestions**

Educational management should be considered by national policy planners as a critical factor in making educational institutions work in Nigeria. The resources needed for managing educational institutions should be provided and increased from year to year with a goal of improving the quality of educational facilities and living standards of educational workers in every public educational institution in the nation.

Educational administration should be concerned with the development problems in the nation to create incentives for intellectual property development through research and development grants made available by the educational institutions for giving more scholars the support they need to take part in research programs with focus on creating new intellectual properties that will have direct

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relation to and impact on solving a major identified problem affecting national development with inter-disciplinary approach that absorbs scholars from various academic disciplines to participate in research programs by taking advantage of research grants offerings created, monitored, managed and sustained by the academic institution from year to year. The more these incentives are provided, the better stimulated will be the interest of learners to take interest in intellectual property development focused researches.

Viability of educational management and administration should be centered around impact of education on community, institution, industry, resource, and capacity development in the nation, with periodic assessments undertaken to ascertain the degree to which educational goals are met and converted into meaningful development and progress in the systems of leadership and process management in communities, institutions, and industries where the members of the academic institutions, especially alumni, but not excluding current students in undergraduate, graduate and post graduate programs are able to interact the resources around them, and demonstrate capacity for contributing to meaningful development in the nation. This is because education institution is inseparable from other institutions.

Functional and viable education should be the focus of education development policy in the nation for the reason that it concerns how the problems of development in the nation is captured in the programs of education, and how the re-integration of learners in their society is monitored and coordinated to ensure they are able to apply what they have learnt and make personal contributions to development through intellectual property development, business development, industry development, community development, resource management, process management, and the leadership roles they take up and play in the society.

Functional educational management & administration should be the objective of involving development stakeholders in educational programs, to sponsor or fund research programs to study the challenges faced in the diverse communities and institutions that make up the nation, so much that the findings of such researches will be easily transmitted to the proper quarters for use in developing improved, new and relevant solutions to the problems of development in various sectors of the national economy, channel resources for meeting the challenges of national development, and training the capacity of people required to manage the process, resources, and use the tools needed to implement solutions.

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***Dr. Godspower O. Amele***

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