REDUCING EDUCATIONAL WASTAGE TO REGENERATE NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
No nation can develop without a very sound and solid educational base. Considering the fact that higher education is a powerful agent for national development, there is need to efficiently and effectively utilize the available educational resources to checkmate educational wastage so that efforts at this level of education should not be in vain. Reduction in educational wastage at this level of education is a step in the right direction because higher education in the past few years has recorded a mighty fall in standard, such that graduates could no longer compete favourably with their mates elsewhere nor contribute to national growth. This ugly trend portends bad omen for the nation’s economy and can only be remedied through drastic reduction of educational wastage. Reduced educational wastage connotes efficiency and enhancement, which invariably imply change/innovation in the way school administrators combine and utilize inputs to yield outputs. This paper therefore highlighted the need for a reduced educational wastage; the causes of educational wastage and also suggested the strategies to reduce educational wastage in order to pave a faster track to national development via higher education in Nigeria.

Education in Nigeria is an instrument for effecting personal and national development. Obviously, the greatest asset of any society is her citizens and the various skills, attitudes, abilities and capabilities they possess. These skills, attitudes, abilities and capabilities are acquired through education. Thus, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in her effort to realize/produce functional citizens that would facilitate national developments in the country, sets out her educational goals in the National Policy on Education (NPE) document in terms of their relevance to the levels and needs of the individual for the individual’s sake and for the general development of the society (FRN, 2004:36). For instance, the FRN in her NPE defined the objectives of the Higher Level of Education to include:
1. contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
2. develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual in the society;
3. develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment;
4. acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
5. promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
6. forge and cement national unity; and
7. promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2004:36).

In pursuance of these aims and objectives, the FRN stated among others that:
(a) the internal organization and administration of each higher institution shall be its own responsibility; (b) the traditional areas of academic freedom for the institutions remains to;
(i) select their students;
(ii) appoint their staff;
(iii) teach, select area of research; and
(iv) determine the content of courses (FRN, 2004:37).

However, it is one thing to select students, appoint staff, select areas of research, provide infrastructural equipment, determine the content of courses, and yet, another to efficiently utilize those educational resources. Utilization of the available resources efficiently and effectively lies on the head of the school administrator, who is the chief executive officer of the higher level of education. In Nigeria, higher level of education includes universities, polytechnics, institutions of technology, colleges of education that form part of or are affiliated to universities and polytechnic colleges, professional specialized institutions etc (International Association of Universities, 2000).

The school administrator has very important roles to play. The roles include efficient provision and use of educational resources in order to foster better job performance among the teaching personnel and consequently quality learning among the students such that after graduation, they would fit into the world of work and contribute maximally to national development through high manpower training received at school.

Unfortunately, education in the higher institutions is faced with a number of serious problems, such as students’ drop-out, poor facilities and equipment, dilapidated
infrastructures, poor utilization of resources, poor conditions of service, cultism, examination malpractice, sorting etc. which are largely due to educational wastage being experienced in that level of education. No wonder, the relevance of higher education to the individuals, the society and for sustainable future is highly questionable. Most of the graduates of higher levels of education today, remain unemployed/unemployable because they do not possess the relevant skills and attitudes required to develop and accelerate self, economic and national development. This ugly situation urgently needs to be addressed if higher education in Nigeria would not totally go into moribund and consequently stagnate economic and national development as well as a sustainable future.

Hitherto, studies have revealed that sustainable future and national development can only be achieved through quality education hinged on efficient utilization of educational resources grounded on reduced educational wastage. As a matter of fact, the school administrator has direct impact on the effectiveness of the school. He discerns and influences development of educational goals and policies. He is responsible for the daily planning and coordination of activities going on in the school. He initiates activities aimed at effective implementation of all educational programmes existing in the school through the Heads of Departments. He has the responsibility for procuring, managing, stimulating and directing the human and material resources owned by the school; finances generated and or supplied to the school. He is in charge of security of lives and properties, school discipline, sanitation, effective relationship with the school community, and positively, projects the image of the school and most importantly, reduces education wastage to the barest minimum. Accomplishment of all these depends on his efficient and effective application of administrative and management skills such as; planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting.

The cost of education wastage is very expensive. If educational resources are wasted, educational objectives cannot be fully achieved. But, where efficient and effective utilization of resources exist, students without doubt, enjoy excellent learning; excellent performance in their examinations; and better still, high levels of satisfaction among the parents, staff members and students. Consequently, there would be full students’ enrolment without drop-outs, carry-over of courses and or sorting of any kind. By implication, when the students graduate, they would be capable of generating ideas from what they have learnt and be qualified to fit functionally in the world of work. In other words, they would have acquired both physical and intellectual skills and values which would enable them to be self–reliant and useful members of the society; hence the future would be sustained. It may not be out of place therefore, to say that national development can be achieved only through quality education hinged on efficient utilization of educational resources and founded on reduced educational
To this end, therefore, this paper was purposely divided into three sections. Section one explained some of the concepts used in the paper. Section two observed the need for reduction in educational wastage in order to foster national development and sustain the future as well as the causes of educational wastage. Section three, which is the concluding part, recommended strategies to reduce education wastage in order to regenerate and sustain the Nigerian higher education for national development.

What is Educational Wastage?

According to Hornby (2001), wastage means the act of losing or destroying something, especially when it has been used or dealt with carelessly. Hence wastage in education connotes inefficiency in the use of educational resources by school administrators. In other words, poor relationship of educational inputs with outputs is wastage. Educational output invariably determines shape of the national development. Education wastage engenders negative performance or outcomes. Obviously, education wastage is clearly seen in the following negative attitudes: students’ drop-out; carry over of courses because of students’ inability to perform as expected, hence failure to achieve; unemployment for graduates; employment without success in the area of work; brain-drain and poor utilization of educational resources such as personnel, time, physical, material and financial resources among others.

Regenerate

To regenerate is a process; a process of reforming a condition that is not favourable to a particular situation. A situation of giving new strength or life to something in order to restore lost qualities of that thing/process/condition and to make it to become better and/or grow again. If education input, process or output is used or dealt with carelessly, the quality/standard will be lost, hence its regeneration becomes imperative if national development would be achieved.

National Development

Development is growth plus change; that is development incorporates both growth and change. Thus education through its various processes is instrumental to any national development. National development refers to the growth, changes and improvements occurring in a given economy with the aim of promoting the quality of life among the populace (Salawu, 2006). According to Emenike (2009), the essence of a university degree is to position the holder to look beyond his environment and determine to make it better. By implication, higher education endows the graduates with...
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the wherewithal to advantageously, explore, exploit and utilize natural resources in order to meet the human needs for food, health, shelter, clothing, education, security, energy, communication etc. When these needs and more are provided satisfactorily to the citizens then, it is development. In other words, national development is a process which can only be achieved when higher education level is regenerated through drastic wastage-reduction. By so doing, it will engender mastery of relevant job skills and expertise in school and consequently a better structured society; higher capital income and higher standard of living.

Need to Reduce Educational Wastage (REW) in Order to Regenerate Nigeria Higher Education for National Development.

It is high time wastage in education is reduced to the barest minimum in Nigeria if she wants to join in the race for globalization of education; keep abreast of the innovations and reforms going on in the globe today in order to fast track national development. Nicholas (2005) noted that higher education is no longer a consumption good enjoyed by only the elite and their siblings, but it is an important element in national economic performance and a major determinant of a person’s life chances. There is a great need to REW in Nigeria because of the relevance of education to the individual, economic growth and national development.

Reduced education wastage improves and sustains teaching and learning quality and hence generates new ideas and information essential for the development of human capital which serves as key engines for market productivity, cohesion of nations and academic growth (Olowo and Edetanlen, 2008). Invariably, quality teaching and learning equip the student with the required skills, knowledge and values to be used in tapping the nation’s physical and material resources, which generate wealth and also, bring about economic growth and development.

With reduced education wastage, more citizens would have access to education, hence literacy level will increase. When more people are literate and enlightened, economic and national development will accelerate hence students are equipped with the skills that will translate into productivity.

Reduced education wastage in higher education translates into greater earnings for the individual graduate over time. Obviously, a society with quality higher education has lower level of drop outs, infertility and infant mortality; longer life expectancy as well as addresses gender equity issues in development (improved political participation, social justice, technological growth and overall development of the society).
By implication, reduced education wastage would reduce immigration of the Nigerian youths to other countries; draining the much needed labour force; students would stay in schools, learn effectively, be exposed to different ways of self-employment and empowerment strategies without interruption. Students would also graduate as functional citizens; able to handle serious work assignments and escape from dull and unpleasant jobs.

Reduced education wastage would reduce examination malpractice and incidence of cultism and as well engender discipline, sound moral character and inculcate the right social norms in the students, hence sound and quality output as well as ensure relevance of the graduates to the manpower needs of the economy.

In higher level of education, wastage of available funds, personnel, physical and material resources are due to poor utilization and they truncate affairs.

Finally to promote and sustain national development in Nigeria, the fast track is to drastically challenge wastage in the higher education level and embrace efficiency in the management and administration of the available resources in the higher education level. That is to say, rationing out the available educational resources without waste would effect achievement of maximum production of such required school graduates in the most desirable strategy, and they would essentially be skilled for maximum exploitation of economic resources for national development.

**Causes of Educational Wastage**

Despite the deteriorating nature of education in all levels of education in Nigeria and especially, the almost perennial inadequate achievement of educational goals in the TLE, resources are still wasted due to a number of reasons. Leaning heavily on the thoughts of Arinze in Salawu (2006); causes of education wastage are grouped into three:

1. The nature of educational inputs;
2. The nature of processing;
3. The nature of outputs.

1. **The Causes of Education Wastage due to the Nature of Educational Inputs** Include:
   (a) The nature and ability of students.
   (b) The nature and types of educational resources,
   (c) The goals of the educational system, and
   (d) The nature of the content (curriculum).
On the nature and ability of students, one aspect of manifestation is drop-out and carry over of courses in Nigeria higher education system. There are cases of drop-outs in primary schools, secondary schools and higher institutions. The main reasons for drop-outs are ill-health and death, truancy, financial difficulty or poverty, parents’ wish, sometimes students fall sick during their academic career and the ill-health may be serious that they cannot continue with their education. Some even die in the process. Some students also enroll into a programme, but habitually absent themselves from lessons or lectures. In some cases, they abandon the programme. Some students face financial problems due to the socio-economic background of their parents or guardians. There are also students who have learning difficulties. They find it difficult to grasp what is taught. Sometimes they waste four to five years in the university without passing any course.

In the area of nature and type of educational resources, which include teachers, equipment and facilities available for education, many higher schools, particularly, those in the rural areas of the country, lack sufficient equipment for practice in science subjects, especially. Some schools in those areas and even in the urban areas lack dedicated mathematics, vocational and science course teachers; facilities like lecture and examination halls and almost all the successive governments are not helping matters, hence the usual statement “lack of funds”. In a situation like this, every educational-minded person wonders how Nigeria can effectively join other nations in the race to achieve education Millennium Development Goals especially, with poor education resources.

The nature of the goals of the educational system is also another cause of education wastage. It has been observed that where goals of the educational system are practical-oriented and practically implemented, the products are gainfully employed on graduation. In practice, most often, emphasize is merely laid on literacy and general education, thus, most of the products become unemployed and unemployables as obtained today in Nigeria.

The nature of the content of the curriculum could also be a cause of education wastage. In a situation where the content of the curriculum consists of English language, History, Christian or Islamic Religious Knowledge, Music, Geography, Igbo Language and French, the product of that school may graduate without any type of hope, especially in this era of practical and science-oriented education. In Nigeria, today, masons, mechanics, electricians, welders etc are in short supply, yet, there is unemployment being observed with respect to many graduates of Nigerian higher education. The reason for this situation is not far fetched. There is scarcity of skilled labour because the Nigerian education system scarcely emphasizes vocational and
technical skills because there are no relevant resources to that effect due to education wastage, hence poor quality of education. Nigerian higher education needs to be regenerated if Nigeria would achieve national development.

2. The Causes of Education Wastage due to the Nature of Processing

The causes of education wastage could be process-based; for instance in administration or management, examination or certificate system. The nature of administration or management of the school system could be faulty in the sense that the administrator may be autocratic or high-handed. It could be that the administrator may be ignorant of the work to do. It could also be a non-challant administrator, who allows everything to go its own way without making any effort to put things right. Education wastage could be caused by the nature of the examination system where emphasis is laid on one-shot examination instead of continuous assessment as recommended in the national policy on education (FRN, 2004). Sometimes, education at this level is not related to the overall societal needs; also modern educational techniques to encourage acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills are not used in the process of teaching and learning. There are also students who have learning difficulties based on the teaching methods the teacher employed in delivering the instruction.

3. The Causes of EW due to the Nature of Educational Outputs

In the Nigerian educational system, the nature of the outputs could also cause education wastage. It could be that the graduates from the educational system do not possess the required skills due to the fact that the higher institution did not conform to the initial objectives hence, the graduates find it difficult to fit into the world of work. Somebody who studied literacy subjects, for instance, may not fit in very well in a computer-literate society of today. The graduates may not be fully employed, or it could be that they have not acquired the changes and thoughts desired by the larger society. Nwadiani (2000) calls them victims of unemployment as a result of what he called ‘compulsory miseducation’.

Other Causes of Education Wastage Include

Frequent strikes by students and the teachers, which disrupt academic activities is another cause of education wastage. Consequently, some students drop out of school when they think their time is being wasted. Some of these drop-outs oftentimes end up as touts in one organization or the other or even waste their lives as criminals, drug addicts, thieves or political thugs. It is no wonder that during the just concluded Anambra State gubernatorial election precisely, on the 16th of November, 2013, many youths; especially, students were readily available due to the present ASUU strike and they were used to disrupt and maneuver election activities in the state.
Another cause of education wastage is the poor condition of service of teachers and the school administrators. Where the teachers and the school administrators do not enjoy personal needs’ satisfaction, security or social status from their job the tendency for them to look else where for a greener pasture is high. Consequent upon this, education of the youths is left to suffer, as the students are taught mainly by part-time lecturers, resulting to underdevelopment of the national socio-economic sector. Based on this, some students would graduate ‘half-baked’ without the desired skills and attitudes for better living in the society.

Brain drain, irregular and poor supervision of school activities and facilities, and incessant transfer of teachers especially in the primary and secondary levels of education cause education wastage.

Appointment to most of the positions in higher institutions are sometimes politically-motivated, hence mediocre staff are appointed to manage affairs though, inefficiently and as a result education processes and resources are wasted and consequently, poor goal achievement.

Conclusion

To promote and ensure national development in Nigeria, the best way and fastest track is to drastically challenge wastage in the higher education level and embrace efficiency in the management and administration of the available resources in the higher education level. Reduced education wastage is synonymous with efficiency in education. Both are ingredients of improvement in education generally. Reduced education wastage implies efficient utilization of educational resources in order to realize the goals of higher education. Obviously today, higher education is faced with a number of problems owing to education wastage caused mainly by the nature of educational inputs, the nature of educational process and the nature of educational outputs; hence the relevance of education to the individual is questionable, therefore making reduced education wastage a priority can never be over emphasized.

However, education wastage can be reduced to the barest minimum if school administrators should challenge wastage and embrace efficiency in the management of higher education. That is to say, rationing out the available education resources; carefully caring for the sick students; awarding bursaries and scholarships to students whose parents cannot fund their education; emphasizing practical and exploratory teaching and learning process under an efficient and effective school administrator among others. Thus, students on graduation, would have been equipped with the necessary knowledge, training, values, attitudes and skills for self-reliance for survival
Recommendations

The way school leavers roam the streets today is tantamount to educational wastage/economic wastage, thus, it behooves on the government and higher education level managers or chief executives to take the bull by the horn in ensuring that education wastage is reduced to the barest minimum. Based on the foregoing, the following strategies/recommendations were made so that higher education level would take its proper course towards accelerating national development:

(a) On the Nature of Educational Inputs-based Wastage

1. For those who drop-out for financial difficulties, government and philanthropists should provide bursary awards and scholarships to enable them continue with their programmes and also donate instructional materials for them.

2. School administrators and the medical units of the higher education level should ensure effective monitoring of the students’ health so as to detect those who are sick and need medical attention and attend to them on time. By so doing, they would not drop out from school for reasons of ill-health.

3. Education planners and policy makers should ensure proper education planning techniques so that expansion from the primary level of education due to demand is complemented up to the higher education level to eliminate drop-out, which is wasteful.

4. Students that drop-out because they have learning difficulties should be helped by the school management by organizing extra lessons for them and or entrepreneurial studies to empower them in order to turn them into useful members of the society that would contribute maximally to national development.

5. Higher education level administrators should as a matter of fact, motivate and provide adequate quality human, physical and material resources in their institutions to make their institutions conducive and attractive for teaching and learning and consequently reduce truancy, brain-drain and other effects of education wastage.

6. The academic planning unit should closely link students flow with the school facilities and equipment.
7. In this transformation, technological and information-driven era, higher education planners and policymakers should ensure that higher education goals, courses and courses’ curriculum are modified to be in line with science, technical, entrepreneurial and computer areas in order to enhance self-reliance and sustainable national development.

8. They should ensure that both the human and physical resources are well blended and reconciled through effective planning, organizing, controlling, evaluating and coordinating, to achieve the desired results and reduce education wastage minimally.

(b) On the Nature of Educational Process- Oriented Wastage
1. Government and managers of higher education respectively should not allow politics to influence appointments in higher education level, especially administrative heads. Competent and qualified administrators should be appointed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of the scarce resources of education.

2. The leaders of higher education level should be democratic in the management of affairs of their institutions to enhance effective participation of all stakeholders in the institution.

3. Teachers’ performances should be re-examined with a view to improve their quality. Seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized to develop and improve their teaching methods, skills and techniques.

4. The school administrator should always de-emphasize certificate acquisition of necessary skills so that students after school would fit well into the society towards national development.

5. Poor facilities and equipment maintenance and handling result in abortion of processes that ought to initiate innovations and inventions. Therefore, the school administrator should effectively supervise, secure and maintain the school facilities and equipment.

6. The school administrator should also ensure usage of modern educational techniques to encourage acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills.
(c) On the Nature of Educational Outputs-Driven Wastage

In this changing world, education planners and policy makers should make sure that wastage in education is reduced. They should ensure that at the planning stage of education policies and programmes, they should carefully plan together with the National Manpower Board to employ positive manpower techniques such as taking into cognizance the skills, values, attitudes etc that would be required in the nation’s world of work so that on graduation, the students would be employed or at best be employers of labour and consequently, fit well in the society. This way they would assist in the process of national development.

References


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