

EDUCATION AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

Dr Eya, Patrick

Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary defines education as "systematic training and instruction designed to impart knowledge and develop skill". There are several definitions and meanings of education. It is a concept that is difficult to define in any precise terms. This is because it has (the growing qualities of a living organism as Igwe (1990) put it. Even the permanent attributes of education is constantly changing in emphasis and adapting itself to new demands and new circumstances. The concept of education changes with time, place and individuals.

Some define education as that which fits a man or woman to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously in all the offices, both private and public, peace and war. This definition implies that education is the training a man needs to be an effective and functional member of his community in accordance with its approval norms and values in both peace and war. Nwagwu (1976:2) defined education as the "process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attributes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well-being of mankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, at times, hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature".

Mills in Igwe (1990) asserted that the core of education lies in "the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up and if possible for raising the level of improvement which has been attained". Nyerere (1967) said that the purpose of education is essentially to transmit from one generation to the next, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society, and their active participation in its maintenance or development". From Nyerere's statement of the purpose of education, one can see education as a reinforce of the prevalent social norms. It prepares the beneficiaries for the duties they will perform as adult members of their communities.

In politics, education is seen as an instrument for political enlightenment and emancipation. Thomas Jefferson of the United States of America once said that "any nation which expects to be ignorant and be free, expects that which can never be". Samuel Egwu of Ebonyi State Nigeria sees education as the most important tool for the transformation of the state.

The sociologists see education as the most potent process of socialization of the people. Ugwu (1996) defined education as the process of helping an individual to live the fullest life he is capable of living. In the view of Swift (1969), education is the way the individual acquires the many physical, moral and social capabilities demanded of him by the group into which he is born and within which he must function. This definition implies that education is all that goes on in society, which involves teaching and learning. Fafunwa (1977) defined education as the aggregate of all the processes by which the child or young adult develops his abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour, which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. For him education implies a process of transmitting culture. Nduka (1964) defined education as the united concern of a people for the right upbringing of its children and the improvement of its national life. The right upbringing of children in this context implies teaching them or initiating them into the values, norms, customs and culture of the society to which they belong.

From all the definitions, views and meanings of education above, one can summarize education as a process of developing a person mentally, physically, socially and spiritually so that the person can be useful to himself and others in the community which he lives. It is a means for developing the entire person to enable him live effectively and efficiently in the society. Education involves acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, competences, ideals and culture.

A well-educated person is one who has acquired the above attributes of education. He is a happy person. She has self-confidence and well informed. She is free from unnecessary fears, shame and superstition. She is full of initiatives, resourceful and responsible.

There are three types of education:

1. The traditional or informal education.
2. The formal education and
3. The Non-formal or Adult education.

The traditional or indigenous education is the one acquired from home, along the street in the farm, in the market etc. The main objective of the traditional education was to produce an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day According to Fafunwa (1974:25) the seven objective of traditional education include:

1. To develop the child's talent and physical skills.
2. To develop character.
3. To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority.
4. To develop intellectual skills.
5. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs
7. To understand, appreciate and pro-mote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

The traditional education produced the manpower that served the society. This type education is still producing people that still serve the society. The problems of traditional education manpower development is that it has limited goals since it is geared to meeting the basic needs of t3 child within his restricted environment. Again, the products of traditional education are stack illiterates. This is a very serious limitation. People die with their knowledge. It is conservative and unprogressive.

Modern Education and Manpower Development

Modern education can be traced back to the coming of the missionaries. They brought the Western education to Nigeria. According to Fafunwa' (1980) the Roman Catholics through the influence of the Portuguese traders were the first missionaries to set foot on Nigerian soil. They established seminaries as early as 1571 to train Africans for church work. Their influence was almost wiped out by slave trade which ravaged West Africa for about three hundred years.

It was in September 1 842 when the first English-speaking Christian Mission came to Badagry that the Western education was fully started in Nigeria. This type of education is formal. The formal and non-formal, started almost at the same time. This type of education is superior to indigenous education because it is carried out by writing and reading. It produces people who can read and write It is much more meaningful. It is institutionalized and has professional teachers. • These are the following levels of education:

- a) The pre-primary education for the children aged 3-5 plus.
- b) The primary education for children aged 6-11 plus,
- e) The secondary education for children aged 11-17.
- d) Tertiary education for the products of secondary education.

Manpower is Developed at All These Levels

In realization of the importance of education in manpower development government has taken-over all schools in Nigeria since after the civil war in 1970. According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1998) education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development. Education has been so diversified to take care of everybody in Nigeria, we now have:

- i. Special education for the children and adults who have learning difficulties because c different kinds of handicaps -blindness, partial-sightedness, deafness, hardness-of-hearing, mental retardation, social, maladjustment, limb deformity or malformation etc.

Nomadic education for the mobile cattle rearers, fishermen and migrant farmers.

Emergency and crisis education.

This has not started in Nigeria but in countries like Iran, the United Republic of Tanzania. Pakistan, Guinea, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Nepal it has started. These areas have or have had serious and prolonged wars and crises with the result that over 80% of the civilians are refugees.

The subject of education in emergencies has gained importance due to the numerous complex emergencies of recent years, but restoration of access to education is also important in Local emergencies such as earthquakes, floods and droughts. UNICEF notes further that "Persistent Poverty the increasing number of children living on streets and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are silent, chronic emergencies". UNICEF noted in its policy paper that "Any emergency education programme must be

a development programme and not merely a stop-gap measure that will halt when a particular situation is no longer experiencing intense media coverage.

At the Jomtien conference of 1990 the participants recalled that "education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men of all ages throughout our world" and noted that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world'. For the first time the policy-makers and representatives of the world of education and civil society agreed on a world strategy, to promote universal basic education for children, and to reduce massive illiteracy rates among young people and adults especially women.

All these individual, national and international efforts to educate all is in realization that proper education is the answer to majority of human problems. I hasten to add proper and right type of education because wrong education will produce wrong manpower which will rather increase the problems. In the past women education, science education, special education and teacher education among others were not given adequate attention. But today emphasis are on those earlier neglected sectors of education. It is also due to the importance of education in manpower development that this Association (NAFAK) has chosen the theme of her annual conference to address the issue. It has comprehensive sub-themes.

There is one big surprise and an important question any right thinking person will ask. "With all the attributes of education why is it that many educated people in Nigeria are helpless, unemployed and roam the streets." Some even engage in antisocial behaviours like armed robbery, assassination, ritual killings etc. Does it mean that education is no longer equipping her beneficiaries with the skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes? Individuals, governments, organizations and the society are worried. Answers to the questions may vary with individuals, time and space. I am sure that by the end of this conference relevant and realistic answers to the questions will emerge. It is felt that something is wrong with education. Odoli (1991), said that the high rate of unemployment among school leavers and colleges graduates has been severally attributed to lack of skills and competencies required in world of work. Ifedi (1982) in a reaction, agrees that one of the main causes of unemployment among school leaves is lack of trained and employable skills. Uzoagulu (1985) in his own contribution said that many unemployed school leavers do not possess those necessary skills and competencies which the modern economy demands. All these according to Odoh, go to show the great need for manpower development towards meeting the needs for employable skills among the masses of the Nigerian citizens. Both Odoh, Ifedi and Uzoagulu were making a case for Business Education. They said that business education is the solution to the unemployment problem.

Some Problems Militating Against Manpower Development

There are various problems that are working against the development of manpower in Nigeria. These are: first, the problem of adjustment. Maladjustment brings about the inability of the individuals to cope with the problems of their environment. It makes it possible for individuals not to be able to resolve their personal conflicts and so brings about a balance between themselves. Secondly, there are the emotional problems. These are basically imbalance in the forces of great powers and influence designed by nature to enable the people to cope with circumstances for survival or success. Most of the emotional problems are anxieties, inferiority complexes, greed, envy, hatred, guilt etc. All these are barriers to proper adjustment, serenity and true happiness. It is because they generate too much emotional turmoil and disruption that they stand out as the most serious problems encountered by Nigerians. Another problem is choice of career. This according to Okonkwo (1981) is one of the greatest tragedies that can face a learner when he does not know the right course to learn and when to learn. It is perhaps most tragic when a learner after the course of his studies, does not know the right job to do. The worst still is that nobody is available to guide the learner on what to learn, how to learn it and what career to choose at the end of his study. In some cases when a learner is directed accordingly, he feels like joining the band wagon of mediocres and rejecting the right career. Therefore, he becomes a misfit. This brings great confusion. The victim is faced with a dilemma. He either learns the right thing wrongly, with tears or learns the wrong things in the most unfortunate way. He may choose the wrong career in which he has no aptitude, interest or capability,

Moreover, there is the problem of indiscipline and unrest in schools. Indiscipline and unrest have been officially recognized by the Nigerian government as a national illness. Traits of indiscipline are felt everywhere in homes, in schools, and in churches. It also exists in the government and the political set-up, it yields lack of proper order in one's life. It aids inability to bring one's impulses-needs habits and behaviour in line with the demands of one's life. It is the acts of lawlessness, chaos anarchy and disorder which *may* be seen individually or collectively. Furthermore, there is tin problem of improper training and unemployment. Education in Nigeria aimed at paper qualification which may be

obtained through foul or true means. Many students obtain their certificate through malpractice or even by buying the paper. Even, most of the literate ones become unemployed. All these yield maladjustment, resentment, anger, boredom and frustration. In some cases, it affects one psychological disposition and may gradually degenerate to mental illnesses or depressions. There is again, a problem of improper guidance and counselling. It is universal in Nigeria that counselling units, well furnished and equipped, are not established in schools and educational ministries. Guidance and counselling are very essential for living. They are in fact one of the most essential requirements for human success and survival yet there are least available. Finally, there is the problem of juvenile delinquency it is frequently reported in our daily papers and other media. All around us; the youths mess themselves up in homes, in schools and in the society. They project all sorts of disapproved behaviour ranging from cultism, alcoholism, armed robbery, truancy, disobedience to constituted authorities, sexual immorality, violent revenge, brutal bullying etc.

Conclusion

There is yet no known means of developing manpower other than through education. Therefore, for education to perform this task effectively and efficiently education in Nigeria should be properly funded, supervised and teacher education programme revamped. Emphasis should be on functional education that will be relevant to the Nigerian environment. A situation where lip services are paid to education, teachers are neglected and schools allowed to decay, the manpower produced will continue to be misfits. Security of the staff of educational institutions should be guaranteed. -The right type of students should be admitted in schools. Technical education and science education should be given due and practical attention which they deserve. Appointment of institutional heads should be based on merit, experience and performance.

Finally, the National Policy on Education should be fully implemented.

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