

ECONOMICS EDUCATION AND NATION BUILDING

Nebo, John C.

Abstract

Mismanagement of our resources is one of the most important factors that jeopardize nation building. It is on this note that this study was conducted to examine the appropriate ways of solving these problems through the introduction of economic education at all levels of our educational system. A total of two (200) people of different professions, randomly selected in Enugu State were used for the study. Three research questions were presented. Questionnaire with items on the importance of economic education for nation building were designed and administered after their validation. Data collected were analyzed using percentages. The study revealed that Economics Education is very important in all the fields of our endeavours and most importantly in nation building; and that it should be introduced in all the levels of the educational system in Nigeria. Based on these some recommendations were proffered to the relevance of Economics Education in national development.

Introduction

Every community or nation exists to achieve some goals in life. These areas called the national objectives, which help to build the nation economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically, and scientifically.

In Nigeria, the national objectives are stated in the National Policy on education which are building of:

- (a) a free and democratic society;
- (b) a just and egalitarian society;
- (c) a united strong and self-reliant nation;
- (d) a great and dynamic economy; and
- (e) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 1989: 1).

However, Nigeria in the past couple of decades has been searching for ways to achieve the above national objectives through the use of educational policies and programmes. This is because according to Ukeje (1995), education is the most important ingredient for nation building. The nature and quality of educational policies and programmes a nation offers therefore go a long way in determining the achievement of its national objectives.

Researches have shown that Nigeria at one time or the other has introduced several educational policies and programmes like 6-3-3-4 system UPE, UBE, etc with emphasis on the subjects to be included in the curriculum in various levels of educational system. For instance in the new educational system (6-3-3-4), emphasis was more on languages and science education.

According to the National Policy on Education (1981) the core courses for JSS are English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Integrated Science, Agriculture, Education, Moral and Religious Education. Even in SSS emphasis was also on language and science education. Little or no emphasis was made on subjects like Economics Education, which is the head of all social sciences. Thus it was made an optional subject in secondary school level and was removed as a course in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

In spite of all these emphasis on language and science education in our education system, our national objectives and the desire to build a strong nation are yet to be achieved (Ukeje, 1995). Rather what we have now is a compendium of problems which jeopardize our nation building. Such problems according to many people like Achebe (1982), Ogbonna (1985) Nze (1987), Bloom (1985) and Animalu (2000) are as follows:

Economic Problems

Poverty, debt overhead, low level of employment and industrial capacity utilization, low value of our national currency, (Naira) balance of payments squeeze, high inflation, stagflation and ultimately a declining standard of living.

Political Problems

Conflict and diversity, unstable policies and leadership, low spirit of democracy, patriotism, nationalism, etc.

Socio-Cultural Vices

Indiscipline, poor attitude to work, robbery, arson, religious and ethnic bigotry, godfatherism, volatile and risky nation for business investment, excessive violation of human rights, high rate of illiteracy and finally falling standard of education.

Consequently the above problems are caused by many factors, but the most important one according to Animalu (2000) & 2001 Ukcje) (1995), Achebe (1982) and Okolo (1991) is mismanagement of our resources. This was supported by FMOI (1985:5) when it stated that the bane of our problems has virtually been our inability to manage our resources efficiently as manifested during the oil boom and Gulf War period with the slogan that money was not our problem but how to spend and manage it. Then the question is how can Nigeria produce the people who can work on available resources and manage them well in order to generate sufficient wealth for her citizenry and her nation building?

In an attempt to answer (his question, this paper recommends that, the aspect of education that deals with effective and efficient management of our resources, which is economic education, should be introduced at all levels of education and made compulsory. Hence whatever you want our society to be you put it in education (Galbraith, 1967).

For the purpose of analysis and discourse, however, it is necessary to proceed with a clarification of key concepts which form the causal relation in the variables of the theme of this paper (economic Education and nation building). Such concepts include Economics, Education, Economics Education and nation building.

Concept of Economics

Economics as a subject has no single universal definition; This is because it is a living subject and a science which has almost not preceded but followed the creation of the science itself. Its definition depends on the time, situation and place on which it is defined. In relation to the theme of this paper {Economic Education and nation building) Economics can be conceptualized as was put by Samuelson(1980). '

Economics is the study of how to improve society and make human civilization possible. He said that Economists today agree on a general definition of economics as:

The study of how people and society end up choosing with or without the use of money to employ scarce productive resources that could have alternative uses to produce various commodities and distribute them for various person and groups in society. Economics analyse the costs and She benefits of improving patterns of resources use.

In another development, we can take the definition of Economics by Lord Robbins as: a science, which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means, which have alternative uses.

This definition is good and relates to the above because it is scientific and most embracing. A detailed analysis reveals that it embraces the main fundamental problems in man's activities. However, it is described as a science of administration of scarce resources in human society.

In a nutshell, one can say that Economics is the science that studies man's behaviour in relation to the management of available resources in order to build the individual and society.

Education

Education is the most important ingredient for nation building, it can be defined in the Nigerian context as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society (FRN, 1989: 1) . In other words, it is the process of training and developing the knowledge, skill, the mind and the society he belongs. In a follow up education can be said to be study of physical, mental, spiritual and moral development of the individual so that the individual can contribute effectively and efficiently in the society he belongs.

In short, educational activities involve the production and distribution of knowledge, skill and ability whether they are undertaken in regular institutions of learning or else where. This means that Nigerian education is geared to the study to acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skill, ability and

competence both mentally and physically by the people for the effective and efficient management and utilization of our available resources, which will help to build the nation.

Economics Education

If Economics is the science that studies how man manages his available resources to satisfy his wants. And education is the science of knowledge, skill and ability of individuals. Then Economics Education according to Todcro (1980) is the study of how man has to achieve his nation building through the use of his personal skill and knowledge in directing, coordination and controlling available resources at his disposal. In a follow up Economics Education is the consistent and constant understanding of the basic economic problems of the nation:

1. What commodities are to be produced?
2. How are the goods to be produced?
3. What quantity is to be produced of each commodity?
4. Who gets what i.e. how are the commodities to be distributed among the citizens?
5. How can productivity increase in order to bring about economic growth?

In a nutshell, Economics Education is the study of the ways in which scarce resources are managed and administered well for the development of the nation.

However The Study Of Economic Education Lead Us To The

- (a) Understanding of the fundamental economic principle which can be applied to everything in any part of the world.
- (b) Understanding' the application of the economic principles to the contemporary economic problems and other problems.
- (c) Understanding the basic concepts of economic wants, scarcity of resources, scale of preference, choice, opportunity costs and real cost.

Nation Building

Nation building, according to Animalu (2001:31), which likens to national development, is the building of interrelated sources of the power cycle in a nation namely: military power, political power, economic power, technological power and scientific power: it is on this he said that:

All military problems are political, all political problems are economic and all economic problems are scientific and technological. In a follow up (Aboyede 1983), defines nation building as the attainment of a number of ideals of modernization such as rise in productivity, social and economic equity, improvement of institutions and values, improvement of education, social political status of the people of the nation and lastly all round important of the life of the people of the nation.

However, nation building is the all round development of the nation politically, socially, economically, culturally, scientifically and technologically.

Statement Of The Problem

In 1996, UNDP put Nigeria as the 13th poorest nation on earth with GNP \$695 and 9¹¹ most illiterate nation. Researches and history have shown that Nigeria has the potential that can make her come out of the above position and help her to build her nation and be among the newly developed nations. Such potentials are, availability of manpower, natural resources, population, finance, good climate, scientists, technologists, educationalist etc. (Todaro, 1980 and Ogbonna, 1985).

However it was found that what makes Nigeria not to develop as a strong nation is mismanagement and under-utilization of her available resources and this can be solved through

functional education hence according to Galbreath (1967), "whatever you want your society to be you put in education". Then the question is what aspect of education that will help us to solve the problems of mismanagement and under-utilization of our resources in order to build our nation strongly?

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objective of this study, the following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

1. what is the course/subject that can help us most in understanding and practicing the management and utilization of our resources well?
2. What is the importance of the course/subject in the development of our nation?
3. What do we do with the course/subject in order to make everybody in the society to understand and practice it towards management of our resources?

Design Of The Study

The study was a survey study covering management organizations in Enugu State.

Population

The population for the study comprises of the management staff in industries, institutions, companies, ministries, government parastatals, local governments etc.

Sample

The sample consisted 100 management staff in some selected organizations in Enugu State.

Method Of Data Collection

The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages after tabulation.

Presentation Of

Result Research

Question 1

What is the course/subject that can most help us in understanding and practicing the management and utilization of our resources well?

Table 1: Responses On The Course That Can Help Most In Understanding And Practice Of Management Of Resources

S/NO	Items/subjects	Score	%
1	English	10	10%
2	Mathematics	15	15%
3	Economics	60	60%
4	Social Studies	2	2%
5	Agriculture	3	3%
6	Science Subjects	10	3%
		100	100%

The table above shows that 60% of the staff chose economics as the subject most relevant to the understanding of management of resources. **Research Question 11**

What is the importance of the subject in the development of our nation? .

Table IE: Responses On The Importance Of Economics Education In The Development Of Our Nation

S/N	Items	Yes %	INO%	Total;
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1	Help in understanding of nature, type and management and practice for our resources	92 %	8%	1001
2	It offer all the ingredients needed for higher productivity, efficiency, effectiveness in resources management.	89 %	11 %	1001
3	All the citizens come across its offering in their daily activities	66 %	34 %	1001
4	It help us to understand and deal with national issues and problems and make progress.	75 %	25%	It." "
5	It helps us to take rational objective, truth decision in the solution of our problems	67%	33 %	1001
6	It helps us in all activities concerning production, distribution, consumption, exchange and human welfare.	98%	2%	100""

The table (II) above shows that all the Items on the importance of Economics Education, i.e. item N ' (1) 92%, NO (2) 89% items NO (3) 75%. items NO (4) item NO (5) 98% were accepted by the respondents to development of our nation through the study of Economics Education.

Research Question III

What do we do with the course/subject in order to make everybody in the society to understand and practice it toward management of our resources?

Table HI: Responses On What We Do To Make Everybody Understand And Practice The Management Of Our Resources.

S/NO	Items	Yes %	N0%	Total
1	Introduction of Economics Education in all levels of Education	94 %	6%	100 %
2	Making of Economic compulsory in all level of Educational system	61 %	39%	100%
3	Teaching- Economics as a subject only as optional subjects in secondary school	27%	73 %	100%
4	Teaching Economics only in universities	36%	64 %	100%
5	Teaching Economics as Social Studies	25%	75%	100%

This table III indicated that for Economics to achieve the aim of nation building through management of our resources the subject should be made compulsory at all levels of education system, which have 94% and 61% (yes).

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that out of nine then six subjects listed in table 1. Economics was chosen to be the subject that can help us most to understand and practice the I management and utilization of our available resources well. This is because management problem i« the most problem that its hindering our nation building. These findings are in agreement with views of Aboyade (1983), Okoti (1999) and Samuelson (1986), who said that management courses like Economics is required to be studied and when this is done it will help the individual to contribute in the development of our nation.

In addition to the above the study revealed also that the study of Economics is important to the development of a nation through the understanding and practicing of management our our national resources which is the bane of the problems in our nation building. This view was supported by Kayode (1989), Animalu (2000), Nze (1987), Todaro (1980), Akerejera (2001). and Animalu (2001). They opined that economics inculcate technique of thinking in people, which is essential to formulation of so and judgement of human beings and human resources development.

Finally, in terms of how can Economics Education be undertaken by everybody in Nigeria in order to make it achieve the aim of nation building through the effective and efficient management of our resources, the study revealed that the subject should be introduced and made compulsory in all the levels of our Educational System for study. This was supported by Samuelson (1980) when he stated

that,

people who have never made a systematic study of Economics are handicapped in everything about national issues. They are like the deaf trying to appreciate a symphony.

Thus, this is the study that everybody in this society be it head of state, governors, chairman, manager, commissioners, policy makers, children and adults must constantly learn in order to making vital decision that involve Economics. They need not be themselves be professional experts in Economics but to be intelligent consumers of the conflicting economics advice given to them.

Conclusion

To build a strong nation under the following frame of national objectives {Democracy, of egalitarianism, self-reliance, equal opportunity, and dynamic economy) everybody should be made to study Economics through Economics Education. This is because Economics literacy is the right of every citizen which should be encompass bodies of knowledge about how the wealth of nation is derived, how it is distributed and the place of the individual in (the scheme of the economic development of the nation.

In view of the above premise the following recommendations are proffered. (

- i) The government should review the National Education Policy in Nigeria.
- (2) The study of Economics as a subjects should be introduced and made compulsory at all levels of our Educational system,
- (3) Any person who have not studied Economics and any management course should not be given a management post, All these have curriculum, educational and nation building implications.

Preference

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