

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION FOR ALL

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Abstract

The global 'Education for All' programme is certainly a good tool for human capital development. This paper identifies some of its challenges and attempts to proffer solutions. It recommends the adoption of these solutions so that the programme will have richer grounds to thrive in, thereby promoting human capital formation, especially in the developing countries and in Nigeria in particular. Conclusion was drawn and recommendations were made.

Introduction

The leaders of the nine high-population developing nations of the world (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan) met in India on December 16th 1993 to consider strategies for achieving the noble goals of the 'Education for all by the year 2000; programme earlier initiated by the World Conference on 'Education for All' in Thailand in March 1990. They reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and those of the world summit on children to meet the basic learning needs of the people by making primary education universal and expanding learning opportunities for children, youth and adults (Nduanya, 1980 and UNESCO, 1995). The 'Education for All' programme remains the foundation for the achievement of human capital development. Basic education will continue to be an absolute priority, as it forms the essential first step towards further learning and plays a critical role in the shaping of values and the development and other necessary life skills. For this reason, we "reach the unreached" – the world's 850 million adult illiterates still deprived of the 'right to education (UNESCO, 1995). It is pertinent at this time to reflect on the challenges of 'Education for All' programme, as the developing world strives for human capital development.

Addressing the Challenges of 'Education for All'

Education had been variously defined by scholars. It is that knowledge you get when pleasure and pain are implanted in your non-rational soul, the pleasure and pain that helps you to accept what you ought to accept and reject what you ought to reject is called education. Education also means what you go through right from birth till death. Education means mastering one's own destiny. It means personal sovereignty. It is the key to a genuine participatory democracy, which is closely related to development and peace. It is just about knowledge. It is also about learning to do, learning to be and above all, learning to live together (Nwagwu, 1989).

Education and teachers have an ethical function that must never be forgotten. In this connection, while a market economy may be acceptable, a market society most certainly is not. What matters is not whether the market is free, but whether people are free. Education can no longer be regarded as a one-chance affair. It must be seen as a counting process whereby people are offered learning opportunities at a number of times throughout their lives. This life-long and life-wide education for all demands the diversification and expansion of structures, and a better linkage between general and vocational education. It also implies the development of alternative educational opportunities and delivery systems, both formal and informal (Amujiri, 2002). Too often, the model of higher education in both the industrialized and developing countries involves an acceptance of old, inappropriate model that have remained largely impermeable to economic, cultural and social needs. The role and function of higher education system need to be re-examined in the light of the profound transformations occurring in society today (Morrish, 1992). The Article 26.1 of the universal Declaration of Human Rights states in part that “Higher Education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit, regardless of age, sex, and other considerations (UNESCO, 1995). But, this principle is flouted in favour of the ‘Minister’s list, Vice Chancellor’s list, ‘Catchments area’ consideration etc., which have literally deprived the intelligent ones the opportunity to obtain higher education. This anomaly needs to be urgently addressed. Higher education has to be universally available. Secondary education must be treated as a level on its own right, not simply a means to pass students through the corridors of the higher institution of learning. It is pivotal to higher education system. Individuals of all ages need to be summoned to the highly important work of teaching in the primary and secondary schools (Amujiri, 2002). Science education is a key component of all education systems. The unprecedented growth in scientific knowledge and dramatically increasing complexity of this knowledge together with an ever-increasing demand for high quality and quantity constitute a challenge for science educators at all levels. How to introduce science and its breathtaking advances into limited curricula frameworks, what should be the correct balance for education in the basic science and the environment, and the interconnection of science education and education in technology are just some of the questions for which answers need to be sought. Science education can be satisfactory if account is taken of the cultural background of ethical implication of scientific progress (Nwogu, 1984). The universities bear the great intellectual responsibilities of identifying new strategies to promote science education and science teacher training, as well as setting and maintaining high professional standards in education for scientific research. Introducing new information technologies in science education, upholding basic and specialized university courses as well as modernizing university laboratories remain a pressing need and a challenge for inter-university co-operation at the national and international levels (Amujiri, 2002). Action needs to be taken to build university science education in the developing and least developed countries. The world scientific community should commit itself to such action. UNESCO and the Third World

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Assembly of Sciences are partners in such an endeavour (Amujiri, 2002). Science today is at a turning point. All countries have to face important decisions in this field. The richer nations are being required to rethink their science and technology properties in countries that are striving to build up the critical capacity necessary for effective science teaching and research that lead to human capital development. Science education is capable of responding to sustainable development and has proved to be one of the major daring forces propelling human capital development. And yet, this fact and its implications are still underestimated by decision-makers and politicians seeking short-term success. Short-term benefits in policy making naturally involves dangers for the basic research. A healthy, productive scientific community is dependent upon pursuit of basic research. Basic sciences must be pursued by all nations, and the common stock of fundamental knowledge must be shared by all. Science today is experiencing the continuing asymmetry in the distribution of scientific research capacity worldwide. The developing countries are responsible for a meager percent of research and development, while the member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) can claim 85%. The world is still divided between the information haves and haves-not. The research and information gaps need to be bridged (Eneh, 2008). Each country's capacity to move towards attaining significant human capital development depends to a large extent on the existence of a critical mass of skilled human resources in the many scientific, technical and professional fields needed for addressing complex environment, resources and development issues. Training of the right kind and number of scientists, experts, technicians and educational personnel is urgently needed for the required human capital formation, especially in developing countries. UNESCO has highlighted a number of key problems with the contest of the vicious circle of low human capital investment through productive return in which so many developing countries are locked. The "critical mass" is lacking at national level. Despite consideration efforts, many developing countries do not yet have sufficient trained personnel for sustainable development of their natural resources and suffer from a shortage of training facilities, especially for preparing teams of specialists to conduct studies and research useful for decision-making.

Established institutions and programmes may be limited relevance to the local conditions, with the result that many trainees in the developing world receive an education that has little or no bearing on their countries' social and economic needs. On the other hand, there is also the problem of lack of continuity. People from developing countries who expertise in industrialized countries returns with appropriate skills to their home developing countries that lack the facilities with which to practice. The soon get constrained to abandon their professional fields for pursuits in other areas of endeavour for survival. Another challenge for developing and industrialized countries alike is that nature does not respect the frontiers of scientific disciplines. Interdisciplinary action requires studying natural phenomena in all their complexity. And yet, most

current training programmes are sectorised and disciplinary and do not address the complex interactions between people resources, environment and development.

All UNESCO's intergovernmental scientific programmes dealing with fresh water, oceanography, coastal and marine sciences, the earth sciences, and particularly land resources include a major component of training precisely oriented in interdisciplinary direction. The recently launched UNESCO-Cousteau-Ecotectralogy programme is to identify, promote and multiply trans-disciplinary university efforts by financial assistance and networking through the establishment of UNESCO-Cousteau-Ecotectralogy chairs across the globe. Hence, one of the basic tasks is to insure that in villages and municipalities there are people with knowledge and motivation to prescribe and perform all the "ecojobs" that is vital to the safeguarding of our environment (Amujiri, 2002).

Management Challenges on the Human Resources Development and Utilization

Teachers and staff personnel: Education/Training for performance. The teacher, no doubt is the heart of the educational process and the determinant of the quality and effectiveness of its result. Teachers' characteristics and skills boost learning and performance. Education is a labour intensive industry, but with the smaller pursue lacks the capacity to compete favourably with the capacity intensive industries to win back enough of its own best quality products. The education of a teacher is a lifetime process and development plan for the teacher. It is designed to equip the teachers for immediate needs as well as long-term professional need. The programmes are intended to properly equip the teachers as agent for dissemination of certain kinds of socially approved knowledge, skills and attitude to rising generations, innovators in the modernization process, and the agent of community uplift. Okeke (1989).

The nature of the preparation in the process inculcates the teacher the "six teacher roles" namely as director of learning, as a counselor and guidance workers, as a mediator of the culture, as a link with the community, as a member of the teacher staff, and as a member of the teaching profession. To guarantee quality in those admitted to the professional practice, the selection of candidates is on the basis of intellectual, physical and professional responsibility. When the preparatory institution has certified preparation and fitness, the individual is licensed (Okeke, 2004).

Teachers should be motivated through a participation in tuition free programmes, seminars, workshops, special courses, enhanced and attractive condition of service, effective participation in policy formulation, granting special allowances to specialist's teachers, award of scholarships and bursary to deserving students, postgraduate and postdoctoral candidates. Teachers can be compensated through pay, direct monetary payments in form of wages, salaries and bonuses; of benefits-indirect remuneration such as medical insurance, paid

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holiday and vacations, pensions housing and vehicle loans (Olurotime, 2002). Top management philosophy/orientation: in our current level of development effort should be made to see that the public service grows rapidly, and become dynamic, more functional and result oriented (Inyang, 2002). Material incentive for staff: in this regard, a lot has to be done to improve the lot of teachers who are bedrock for the success of the implementation of UBE programme. Oluchukwu, (2002) supported this when he said that teachers must be recognize and accorded as a profession, enhanced regular income for teachers as well as adequate provision for advancement and promotion.

According to Abelega (2003) human resource development is concerned with development of human capabilities as well as use of the capacities more productively. This means that human resource development is an investment in people in order to make them grow and contribute to the development of their environment. According to Ihunda (2005) human resource development deals with the activities undertaken to expose an employee to perform additional duties and assume position of importance in the organizational hierarchy. It involves the long-term systematic educational or organizational process and procedure by which employee gains more organizational hierarchy. Again if we expect our teachers to bring up a crop of well-cultivated graduates who are able to function in today's world then it means that we need to integrate modern technology in the curricula of teacher training programmes. It is quite evident that all issues, whether related to goals, learning and achievement, organization of programmes or performance of the education system involves an analysis of the role of teachers, their behaviors, performance, remuneration incentives, and skills and how they are used by the system (Lassa, 2000).

Finally human resource according to Peretemode (2005) include all the human being that function to aid teaching and learning the teacher, non-teaching staff of the school, the learner, members of the community and other resource persons in the community, viz carpenters, mechanics, accountants etc.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to identify some of the challenges facing the 'Education for All' Programme, which is a very important tool for human capital formation. The state of human resource readiness for realization of capital development goals is low and poor now. The identified challenges are far from being exhaustive. Efforts were made to proffer solutions to the identified challenges. It is recommended that these solutions should be applied for 'Education for All' programme to have richer grounds to thrive in, thereby promoting human capital formation, especially in the developing countries including Nigeria.

Recommendations

- Government should ensure that in developing teachers, motivation should play a vital role to enable teachers put in their best without deviating into other businesses.
- Government should ensure that adequate provisions are made for the implementation of the programme, by adequately developing and utilizing resources for the achievement of the stated objectives.
- There should be awareness programmes made at the grassroots for the success of capital development programmes involving community/members/stakeholders.
- Revising or outright dumping of education curricula that have no bearing on the socio-economic needs of the people.
- Sticking to merit for admission into higher institutions of learning as provided in the universal Declaration on Human Rights, as against the corrupt form of having Minister's list, Vice-Chancellor's list, etc.
- Science education should take into account the cultural background of ethical implications of scientific progress.
- Introducing information communication technologies in science education, updating basic and specialized university courses as well as modernizing university laboratories.
- Growing the "critical mass" and raising the number of trained personnel for sustainable development of the nation's resources.
- Providing fertile grounds for interdisciplinary studies and actions for sustainable development.

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