

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined university education for job creation and sustainable national development in Nigeria. Concept of tertiary education was examined. Objectives of tertiary education by federal republic of Nigeria (2004) were enumerated. Importance of university education in job creation and sustainable national development were highlighted. Problems militating against university education in job creation were, identified to include: not relating real life experience with theoretical knowledge acquired in school, learning environment and get-rich-quick syndrome. Recommendations were made such as: university lecturers should relate their teaching with real life experience of the learners, and provision of facilities should be by a combined effort of governments, lecturers and non-governmental organizations.

Introduction

Education is a veritable and indispensable tool for national development. To that end, Uwameiya and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006) viewed education as a legacy a nation should bequeath its citizens. Noticing this, Onyeachu (2007) and (2010) emphatically remarked that it is the level of education of the citizenry that determines the level of development in that country. Moreover, it is the level of education that determines the ability of the individual members of the society to use their education for job creation which will in turn, lead to sustainable national development.

This paper is therefore, looking into university education for job creation and

sustainable national development in Nigeria . This will be discussed under the following sub-headings:

1. Concept of tertiary education
2. objectives of tertiary education as indicated in National Policy on Education (2004)
3. Importance of university education in job creation and sustainable national development.
4. Problems militating against university education for job creation for national development.
5. Recommendations and conclusion.

Concept of Tertiary Education

Tertiary education is the education given to the learners in educational institutions after secondary education. Federal republic of Nigeria through her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004: 36) viewed tertiary education as education given after secondary school in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses.

Objectives of Tertiary Education as Indicated in National Policy on Education (2004).

FRN (2004: 36) identified the objectives of tertiary education which university is among to be:

- a. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- b. Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- c. Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- d. Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful member of the society;
- e. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- f. Forge and cement national unity; and
- g. Promote national and international understanding and interaction

To achieve the well articulated objectives of tertiary education, federal republic of Nigeria (2004:38) therefore, recommended that university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by:

- a) Intensifying and diversifying its programme for the development of high level manpower within the context of the need of the nation;
- b) Making professional course contents to reflect our national requirements;
- c) Making all students, as part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education, to offer general courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism.

FRN (2004) further recommended that university research shall be relevant to the nation's developmental goals.

To achieve these expectations, awareness needed to be created on the importance of university education for job creation and sustainable national development.

Importance of University Education in Job Creation for Sustainable National Development.

University education trains students in different fields. To that end, Uwameiye and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006) recommended that a worthwhile and sound education should not only meet the challenges of today, but meet future challenges and contribute to creating a future society and its culture.

University education is very important in that it is through university education that learners are taught through their various disciplines the knowledge and skills needed for production of goods and services. That is why Ivowi (2006) noted that knowledge and skills acquired through exposure to relevant programmes in tertiary institutions manifest in their innovative use to increase the tempo, quantity and quality of goods and services. Consequently, Ivowi (2006) remarked that when individuals specifically use some knowledge and skills to generate goods and services to create wealth, the entire community is likely to gain from such innovations. This means that university education with numerous programmes should enable individuals to face challenges and bring out in them their creativity that would lead to job creation. This means that when jobs are created, there will be sustainable development. Ivowi (2006) further appreciated that university education not only creates jobs for wealth acquisition through improved productivity but it equally provides opportunities for her programmes to provide and stimulate activities which will lead to innovative discoveries and excellence in the production of goods and services for the improvement of mankind and the entire society. When this is done, national development will occur and be sustained. To that end, Abdulkareem (2001) earlier noted that universities all over the world are accepted as the citadel of knowledge, education and human resource development. On that note, Nigerian university system sprang out of

the need for the development of high-level manpower to take the challenge of nation building. That is why every university in Nigeria is striving to produce the right type of manpower in sufficient quantity and quality. This is another way of creating job opportunities, because when human beings are developed through university education, they will open industries and companies, and work in them and employ other people to work with them.

Production of individuals who are capable of employing others is good step in sustenance of national development. Abdulkareem (2001) therefore appreciated that when universities create individuals who are capable of creating job opportunities, they are transforming the nation from a developing country to a developed country. In spite of the numerous importance of university education for job creation as identified in this paper, there are some problems militating against university education for job creation.

Problems Militating Against University Education in Job Creation

There are many problems militating against university education in Nigeria . These include:

1. Not relating real life experience with undergraduate practice

This is one of the problems militating against university education towards job creation. Majority of university undergraduates in Nigeria do not relate their learning with real life experience, they just learn mere theoretical aspects of the courses just to answer

graduates and parade themselves in search of white collar job. Observing this short fall in university education, Ochuba (2001) complained that the gap between undergraduate experiences and real life practice is a cog on the wheel of university education and the world of work. Ochuba further lamented that a situation where in most times, students are fed with a lot of theoretical knowledge with little exposure to practical skills retards the development of high level manpower by the universities

2. Learning Environment

This is another problem militating against university education in Nigeria and job creation. Most Nigerian universities are in existence without enough facilities for students learning. For instance, a situation where majority of the student are staying outside peeping through the window when lecture is going on as a result of insufficient accommodation, one wonders how such student can internalize the content of the lesson not to talk of acquiring entrepreneurial skills as to create jobs instead of seeking for job. On that note, Ochumba (2001) regrettably complained that the current educational environment, which is faced with inadequacy of all resource inputs except students, has compounded the problem of job creation of Nigerian university students. No wonder Ehiamezor (2001) recognized facilities as those factors which enables production workers to achieve the goals of an organization. Ehiamezor (2001) therefore remarked that the school facilities are the operational inputs of every

programme, hence, facilities must be in operational shape to produce result.

3. Inadequacy of School Libraries

This is another impingement to university education. Most Nigerian universities exist without enough library facilities. For instance, in most of them (universities) what is in existence are building without enough books on them. Some institutions have outdated books.

4. Lack of ICT Facilities

Another problem that causes great set back to university education for job creation is lack of information and communication technology facilities for students use. Where these facilities are not in existence, majority of university undergraduates cannot learn well. This affects the extent to which they acquire skills. On that note, Onyeachu (2006) noted that learning environment of the Nigerian child affects his learning. Onyeachu further lamented that most Nigerian undergraduates are experiencing sub-standards academic performance today because of the school environment they find themselves.

5. Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome

This is another problem militating against university education for job creation. The high desire of Nigerian youths to get rich quick has prevented the youths from bending down to acquire the necessary skills and competencies expected of them. The question one may ask is: how can somebody who have not mastered the skills in his or her area of

specialization open industries or companies for others to be employed in and work in them for national development. This is not possible because as Agun (1988) rightly observed, no teacher teaches what he does not know. Lamenting on the consequences of this ugly desire of get-rich-quick syndrome, Onyeachu (2006) remarked that Nigerian youths are faced with the desire to get rich quick rather than learning to acquire the skills for improved productivity. This is because the rich people in the society are highly regarded more than highly educated without money. Because of this, Nigerian children want the type of education that will enable them to get rich immediately. This desire adversely affects university education and hence, sustainable national development.

6. Certification

This is another cog on the wheel of university education for job creation and sustainable national development. Any society that is faced with the desire to get certificate with little emphasis on job proficiency cannot create job opportunities for her citizens neither can such society develop her human resources. In a situation such as this, development will be retarded. No wonder, Onyeachu (2006) asserted that, the desire to get certificate mostly noticed in our society today adversely affect the education of the Nigerian child. Nigerians now focus much attention on ways of passing exams by all means in order to get certificate and not on ways of acquiring skills and techniques needed for trades or professions. This

desire is high because of the society's interest on certificate rather than on job performance.

Conclusion

Federal and state governments as well as school administrators, lecturers, students, parents, alumni of universities and non-governmental organizations should put their efforts together towards encouraging university undergraduates to be job creators instead of job seekers. Doing this will lead to the achievement of university education objectives which is the development of high skilled level manpower as recommended by federal government through the National Policy on Education (2004).

Recommendations

For university education to create job and sustain national development, the following recommendations are made.

1. University lecturers should relate their teaching to real life experiences. They should match theory with practice. Doing this will enable university undergraduate to relate their learning experiences with real life experience.
2. Heads of departments monitor at least once a month the products of their students. This will help to find out the extent to which they have acquired the entrepreneurial skills in their different areas of specialization. Students who

- produce better things than the others should be rewarded.
3. Provision of facilities for use in the universities should be by combined effort of the federal and state ministries of education as well as the school administrators, parents, students, alumni, philanthropists and even non-governmental organizations. Doing this will enable students and their lecturers to have enough laboratory equipments for science students and other useful faculties for art and vocational students.
 4. Deans of faculties should organize orientation and re-orientation programmes for their students on the need for them to learn for mastery so that they will be proficient in their job and equally create job for other members of the society. Doing this will help to sustain national development.
 5. State governments, professional organizations and even religious groups should organize conferences, seminars and other sensitization programmes for youths on the dangers associated with the desire to get rich quick without working very hard in life for improved productivity.
 6. University lecturers should lay more emphasis on job proficiency. They can do this during their classroom teachings. Any student that does well in practical aspect of his/her course will be highly appreciated by giving him/her certificate of honour as well as immediate employment by the institution. Doing this will improve the quality of human resource produced by universities.

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