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CONTRIBUTIONS OF EDUCATION TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND PUBLIC SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the contributions of education to private individuals and public sector of the economy. Education is a conscious and deliberate effort to create an atmosphere of learning and learning process so that learners are actively developing their potentials for him to have the spiritual of religions, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble characters and skills needed themselves and the society. Education is the fundamental factor for development be it personal or economic development. No society can achieve sustainable development without education of its people. Education is a way of enriching peoples understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of people's lives and leads to broad social benefits to individual and society. Education Raises peoples productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneur and technology advances. Education secures economics and social progress and improves income distribution. The educational sector ensures increase in output per worker and this can transcend to economic growth. Research has shown that increase investment in education leads to economic growth this includes higher salaries for individuals, grater workforce effectiveness and high gross domestic

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Introduction

Education and economy are two concepts that cannot be separated from each other in terms of growth and development in every country across the globe. Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital or human training. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefit to individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promote entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution. A country that seeks to experience rapid economic growth must give high preferences to ensuring that a high percentage of its population is entitled to quality education. The educational sector is one that ensures an increase in output per worker and this can transcend into economic growth.

Studies have all revealed that increase in national income and per capital income is a function of education and that differences among nations can better be explained by differences in the human, rather than physical

capital. In Nigeria, the investment in education and human capital development has brought positive changes and good effect in economic growth and development in so many years now. However, every Nigerian according to the constitution shall have a right to equal educational opportunity irrespectively of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges. Education should be qualitative, comprehensive functional and relevant to the needs of the society and emerging concerns. The covenant with every Nigerian child is equal access to quality education relevant to the needs of the Nigerian economy.

Contributions of Education to Private Individuals and Public Sector of the Economy Are As Follows

1. Educational increases Human Capital Development: Education has helped in quality human development that has being a very important tool in economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Through the teachings of professional courses such as; Engineering, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Economics, citizens have developed their capabilities to handle economic related problems and proffer solutions to it. The various learning processes in the educational system have significant effect that it adds to the economic development in Nigeria. The technological innovations, productions and industrial activities are basically carried out by those with the knowledge of how that particular section works. This also creates job opportunities in various government and non-government sectors. The more people are educated, the better the economy because it is only though proper and adequate learning process that geniuses are discovered to handle one economic programs or another.

2. Poverty Reduction: Education in Nigeria has helped in reducing the poverty rate and also balancing the social and economic injustice by providing the underprivileged resources and opportunities for upward social mobility and social inclusion. Through the introduction of various skill acquisition programmes, for instance, the National Directorate for Employment (NDE) program, erecting of technical schools and other skill acquisition institutions', the citizens have greatly garnered gainful knowledge on how to invest and develop themselves which in turn improves the economy of the nation. The poverty index of every country can be reduced only through proper education and Nigeria is really moving towards that.

3. **Education Helps in Harnessing of Business Potentials for Economic Gains:** Education helps in maximizing the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society. Education is also a powerfully instrument for national development and social change. It is a vital tool for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria.

This in turn improves the economy through maximum inputs made by those that acquired various skills in terms of small and medium scale businesses (SMEs). Furthermore, those that went to exceptional business schools also have the opportunity to attract foreign business partners which in turn boosts the economy of the country. Most self-employed Nigerians in the information and technology

sections have been tremendously doing well due to the fact that they are well groomed in the business activities.

4. **Education Boosts Agricultural Activities:** Through education, the Nigerian market has transformed from local agricultural farming to modern and simplified way of promoting agriculture in the country. Before the introduction of education, the local farmers made use of little agricultural equipment such as hoes, diggers and machete, but today, the introduction of tractors and other kinds of agricultural machines have boosted the output in the agro business which has added to the economic development by providing employment for about 30% of the population as of 2010. In addition, agriculture has contributed 32% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021.

5. **Education Attracts Foreign Business Partnerships:** Education has helped in attraction of foreign investors in the country. It has also placed Nigeria in the economic decision making bodies of the world. For example, the representatives in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have been educated experts in the field of petroleum, equally as a member of the economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU), it is highly educated people that are projected for any economic summit that will be of benefits. Also, the rapid growth of Nigeria's banking system has been the great impact of quality education in courses like economics, accountancy, mathematics and banking and finance.

Education plays an important role in the development of the private individuals and in the national development by awakening of curiosity, proper interest, attitudes and values and building up proper skills as independent study and capacity to think and judge properly. Being a major investment in human capital development, it plays a critical role in long-term productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. This explains why the state of education in Nigeria continues to be our national discourse at all levels. Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of education at all levels has far reaching negative impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural and economic sustainability. At this point, it is important to realize that discussions on education and its reforms to make it contribute meaningfully to national development should gradually and systematically move away from a politicized to a more analytical approach that appreciates the complexities inherent in proffering genuine and workable solutions for revamping our educational system.

In the Nigerian context, for the sector (i.e., education) to contribute meaningfully to national development; there should be proper funding of the three tiers of government. If this is done in the proper way, the Academic Staff Union of Universities will not have any need to embark on industrial actions as there will be improved infrastructure in the primary, secondary and post-secondary schools; there will be no more brain-drain as research activities will be effectively carried out and examination misconduct will be eradicated or reduced and the sector will contribute meaningfully to national development. Samalia and Murtala (2010:245) state that something urgent has to be done in the educational sector since

'illiterates' are leading Nigerians. But the problem with Nigeria is that there is no difference between an educated president and not so enlightened ones in terms of their leadership. Irrespective of the above observation, the main focus of this paper remains the contributions of education to national development.

The focus of this research is to look at the roles of education to national development. Prominent among the points to be considered here is that education supplies the needed manpower for national development. Afolabi and Loto (2012:330) support this argument by stating that a developed or educated polity is the one that has enough manpower and each person occupies his or her rightful position to enhance the growth of the society. To support this, Ajayi and Afolabi (2009:34-36) have also remarked that education is largely perceived in Nigeria as an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization. From the definition of education given above, it is clear that education trains an individual to be useful in the society and to meet up the need of the society for national development. Therefore, it should be clear that without education, a nation cannot get the needed manpower for material advancement and enlightenment of the citizenry. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors, inter alia are all the products of education. This explains why it is argued also that the quality of a nation's education determines the level of its national development. In addition, education promotes social and group relationships (Armstrong, et al 1981:142).

In this regard, Obasanjo (2012:3) states that education trains individuals to relate to and interact meaningfully with others in the society and to appreciate the importance of effective organization for human progress. Here, the school system within the educational system fosters this development. The school brings people of different cultural backgrounds together for a common purpose. This promotes mutual co-existence among the different students. Learners who strongly identify with their school are thought to have a more positive attitude towards teachers, other learners and the entire educational enterprise (Armstrong, et al 1981:143).

Again, in the school system, there are official clubs and organizations in existence. Learners who participate in these organizations and clubs gain experience in working with others outside the individual organizations and to some extent in working and competing with outside groups with minimum friction and this goes a long way to promote national unity and peaceful co-existence which will lead to national development. Sometimes, organizations not formally sponsored by the school in some cases make arrangements to use school facilities when classes are not in session. Learners derive benefits from their association with these groups in the same way they profit from participation in school sponsored organizations. By doing this, education provides a setting within which different learners' organizations flourish and

a context for helping young people learn appropriate patterns of interpersonal relations. Through this, it provides a forum for the development of many kinds of acceptable person-to-person behaviour patterns as the school classes include a variety of individuals. In these classes, learners meet people from different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds from their own. Here, male-female relationships begin to develop as young people mature. It is obvious education through the system inculcates much to learners beyond the prescribed academic curriculum and also encourages the development of social behaviours that will be useful to them as adulthood.

Education also promotes the culture of productivity by enabling individuals to discover the creative potentials in them and apply same the improvement of the existing skill and technique of performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of their personal societal efforts (Obasanjo 2012:3). Education teaches or trains people to be useful to themselves and the society they live. By this, they have to be productive and discover their creative abilities and use this to perform specific tasks to attain self-actualisation.

Education also develops in individuals those values which make for good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard-work and personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which good leadership potential is groomed. As already noted, education trains an individual to be responsible in the society. From this, it is clear that education gives moral training. Consequently, if the Boko Haram Islamic sect had received quality and sound education, they would have abstained from violence and it follows that if our elected representatives in the Rivers State House of Assembly had been well trained educationally, there wouldn't have been ugly incident as that of July, 9, 2013 in Rivers State. This, therefore, shows that Nigerian leaders are morally bankrupt and have nothing
to offer in terms of national development from their leadership style. This therefore demonstrates that education has not fully impacted positively on Nigerian leaders. From the above, it is clear that education has a critical function in national development. But in the Nigerian, context, education has not fully played its roles in the regard. This is as a result of certain inherent problems in the Nigerian education system.

First among these problems is inadequate funding. Education is no doubt, directly linked with the processes of nation building and development. Education in Nigeria has not been properly funded and this leads to poor infrastructure developed in the universities, secondary and primary schools. This poor infrastructure makes the environment very hostile. This explains why highly placed Nigerians like senators and state legislators are cruel to each other to the point of fighting in their legislative houses. The table below shows Federal Government percentage budgetary allocation to education in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2008 and 2009. Year Allocation (%) 1999 11.12 2000 8.36 2001 7.00 2006 8.77 2008 10.02 2009 8.08 Source: Abubakar, and Murtala, 2010, p.

257).

The table above shows how insufficient Nigeria's allocation to education has been. Corollary of the above is the question of quality in our educational programmes. This shows that products of this underfunded educational sector will be very poor and teachers will not be adequately remunerated for them to perform their duties effectively. This calls for incessant strike actions embarked upon by Academic Staff Union of Universities. This also explains why pupils and students in the school system sit on bare floor and under mango trees to receive lessons and lectures. As the sector is not properly funded, it cannot efficiently contribute to national development. This explains why Jega (1997:5) calls Nigerian funding of her educational sector "Much ado about nothing". The above situation emanates from our disregard for quality education which is informed by poor funding resulting in the crisis of credibility which appears to have bedeviled the academic qualifications obtained in Nigerian universities today.

Another point to be considered here is unsteady political environment. From independence till date, there have been several administrations in Nigeria. The successive political leaders either military or civilian often suspend the existing educational policies and replace them with the newly fashioned ones which typify their own political agenda. By this, the educational policy planners are compelled to jettison a plan still on the drawing board and take up new policies which must be geared towards meeting the current political demands. This has become a serious bottleneck to education in term of achieving national development. There explains lack of continuity in educational policy formulation.

Still in the same vein, education in Nigeria is politicized (Afolabi, and Loto, 2012:330). Educational policy decisions in Nigeria are highly political orders, directives, and assertions bereft of synergy. This happens when the envisaged educational plans and objectives are being politically manipulated to suit the whims and caprices of policy formulators. This explains why some political appointees are given portfolios as commissioners and ministers which they are least qualified for. This explains why Adesina (2005) states that Nigerian politicians would rather advocate unrealistic populist educational programmes than risk their constituency through technically derived and obviously realistic and productive educational programmes. It is sad to note that political appointments in most universities evade due process to the detriment of stakeholders.

Nevertheless, incessant change of educational policies also impacts negatively on national development. A policy requires sufficient time to mature from planning phase to implementation phase and finally to review phase. For instance, a policy that affects the secondary level of Nigerian educational system would definitely require twelve years to have just two complete cycles that is Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). This is the reverse in the Nigerian context as the usual

practice is to jettison such policy, drastically modify or completely abandon it for reasons obvious to the policy makers who are political leaders in power (Afolabi and Loto 2012: 339). Particular examples here include the phasing out of Teachers Grade II programme in the late 1980s and the establishment of National Teachers' Institute (NTI), replacement of Modern Mathematics in schools with General Mathematics and incessant changes in school calendar for flimsy excuses.

Also important to be mentioned is corruption. In most cases, budgetary allocation to the sector is always embezzled. At the same time, politicians use their offices to accumulate more money. For example, Nigeria has spent over N1.1 trillion on national assembly for the past eight years. With this, much will not be spent on education and it cannot contribute more to national development. These problems so identified explain why the crises in the sector have lingered for a long period.

Recommendations

The discussion above illustrates the strategic position of education in charting the course of national development. The crisis which has engulfed the Nigerian education sector centres on government neglect of funding education, politicization of education, changing political environment, incessant change of educational policies and corruption. Below is a recipe or lasting solutions to the perennial crisis that has bedeviled the Nigerian educational system.

Prominent among the solutions is that government should be determined to make provision for effective funding of education. The Federal Government should endeavour to ear mark 26% of the total budget for educational development as recommended in the United Nations Organisation.

Again, education should be a tripartite affair and responsibility of federal, state and local governments. At the same time, the private sector should also be made to participate in the funding. This will be successful if government on its part shows its seriousness and commitment to the system in terms of funding. The private sector can participate by providing research grants, awarding of scholarships and endowment of Professorial Chairs in universities. An enabling law should also be enacted making it mandatory for multinational companies operating in Nigeria to set aside a minimum of 5% of their profits to finance education and allied projects. There should also be the need for strong political will among political leaders to ensure continuity of educational policies and doggedness in the fight against corruption in the country. Severe punishment should be meted to financial crimes and other corrupt practices in the educational sector. Education should not be politicized as identified above and there should be a steady political environment to ensure continuity and maturity of educational policies.

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