

Problems and Prospects of Uplifting the Standard of Teaching Education in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper highlights and explains in detail the causes of fallen standard of teaching and teacher education in Nigeria, and finally suggests the ways to uplift the standard in the country. It was discovered that government failure to implement the 26% of its total annual budget on education upon which the listed problems will be catered for like: inadequate number of schools of international standard, considering the rapid increase in population of the country and lack of adequate qualify /professional teachers. Other factors include: corruption and examination misconduct. It was recommended that government should implement the 26% educational share in the national budget in order to adequately address monetary challenges. The other factor addressed is Nigerians positive attitudinal changes towards corruption/examination misconduct.

Keywords: Education, Teaching, Educational Standard and Training.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone for sustainable development and determinant of technological, political and socio-economic growth and development of any nation. This is because no country will grow above the level of its education. There are many opinions of what Education means to different people. Education is one of the fundamental factors of economic development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity, creativity, promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition, it plays a very crucial role in economic development, social progress and improving income distribution.

Education is therefore the key to unlock the potential of people, empower and equip individuals in society. Education facilitates the development and also provides the basis for societal transformation. Idowu (2011) opined that education is the main instrument used by the society to preserve, maintain and upgrade its social equilibrium and so the society's future depends largely on the quality of education.

The aim of education in its totality is to produce an individual who is not only educated but also be able to transform what was learned in to real life situation for ones benefit and the society at large. Therefore an educated Nigerian should have self confidence, respect and for others and the country as well as to be well equipped to face societal and even global challenges. The knowledge an individual need for the aforementioned task is in the hands of the teachers, this means that the teacher is one important factors followed by the school administrators, the curriculum planners, and the political system. It is worth to note that the problem of Nigerian education is not just the policy but implementing the policy.

Concept of Teaching:

Teaching according to Oxford Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007), is to give lessons in a school, college, or university, or to help someone learn about something by giving him information. The Oxford Dictionary defines teaching simply as to give instructions and lessons in a subject.

Teaching is thus getting students involved in the active construction of knowledge. A teacher requires not only knowledge of subject matter, but the process of how to engage students to learn, so as to transform what was learned into real life situations. Good teaching, therefore, requires a commitment to systematic understanding of learning pedagogy and learning contents. The aim of teaching is not only to transmit information, but also to transform students from passive listeners of other people's knowledge into active constructors of their own and others' knowledge (Roland Christensen, David, Garvin, and Sweet 1991). The teacher cannot of course transform without the student's active participation in the process. Basically constructivist teaching approaches is about the creation of pedagogical, social, and ethical conditions under which students agree to take charge of their own learning individually and or collectively.

Teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning. Teaching (Instruction) is outside the learner. Learning is internal to learners. You cannot motivate others if you are not self-motivated. Motives are not seen, but, behaviors are seen. Is learning a motive or behaviour? Learning is both a motive and behaviour but only behaviour is seen, learning is internal, performance is external.

Sequira (2012) classified the role played by teachers in the class as Traditional versus Modern role. Traditionally the role of the teacher has been as a purveyor of information: the teacher was the fount of all knowledge. This suggests a picture of students sitting in rows in front of the teacher who is talking and passing information to students with the aid of a chalkboard, while the students either listen passively or, if the teacher is lucky, take their own notes. This, of course, is not true anymore in the modern society. Modern teacher is a facilitator: a person who assists students to learn for themselves. Instead of having students sitting in rows, they are likely to be in groups, all doing something different; some doing practical tasks, some writing, some not even in the room but in another part of the building using specialist equipment or looking up something in the library. All of the students might well be at different stages in their learning and in consequence, the learning is individualized to suit individual requirements and abilities. This shift from the traditional model is the result of a number of factors. First, it is recognized that adults, unlike children, have a wealth of experience and are able to learn in many ways.

Imparting knowledge involves certain skills and methodology. Having a good knowledge of a subject area is one thing; sharing such knowledge is entirely something different too, in that special techniques are required. This obviously plays out even among students. Some students, after acquiring the knowledge cannot perfectly share such knowledge with their fellow students. This is where the expertise of a qualified trained teacher comes in. A teacher or an educator is a person who helps students to acquire knowledge, competence or virtue. Teachers may provide instruction in literacy and numeracy, craftsmanship or vocational training, the arts, religion, civics, community roles, or life skills. Formal teaching tasks include preparing lessons according to agreed curricula, giving lessons, and assessing pupil progress. Teacher's professional duties may extend beyond formal teaching. Outside of the classroom teachers may accompany students on field trips, supervise study halls, help with the organization of school functions, and serve as supervisors for extracurricular activities. In the educational systems, teachers may be responsible for student discipline.

Role of the Teacher in the Classroom: Generally, the role of teacher can be categorized into:

1. Traditional Role - Teacher Centered
2. Modern Role - Facilitator (Student Centered) (Sequira, 2012)

There has been a shift from the Traditional to Modern role in the present context. Learning increases when the teacher builds on the previous experience of the student. However, individual's learning differs and each individual learns at his or her own pace. Identifying the slow learners in the class requires greater attention of the teacher.

According to Harmer, (2007), most teachers take on a variety of roles within the classroom, others take the role of a controller, Prompter, Resource person, Assessor, Organizer, Participant or Tutor depending upon the objectives of the lesson and the pedagogical approach.

1. The Controller: The teacher is in complete charge of the class, what students do, what they say and how they say it. The teacher assumes this role when a concept is being introduced and accurate reproduction and drilling techniques are needed. In this classroom, the teacher is mostly the centre of focus, the teacher may have the knowledge of instruction, and can inspire through his own knowledge and expertise; but, does this role really allow for enough student talk time? Is it really enjoyable for the learners? There is also a perception that this role could lack variety in its activities.

2. The Prompter: The teacher encourages students to participate and make suggestions about how students may proceed in an activity. The teacher should be helping students only when necessary. When learners are literally 'lost for words', the prompter can encourage by discreetly nudging students. Students can sometimes lose the thread or become unsure how to proceed; the prompter in this regard can prompt but always in a supportive way.

3. The Resource: The teacher is a kind of walking resource centre ready to offer help if needed, or provide learners with whatever language they lack when performing communicative activities. The teacher must make her/himself available so that learners can consult her/him when (and only when) it is absolutely necessary. As a resource the teacher can guide learners to use available resources such as the internet, for themselves, it certainly isn't necessary to spoon-feed learners, as this might have the downside of making learners reliant on the teacher.

4. The Assessor: The teacher assumes this role to see how well students are performing or how well they performed. Feedback and correction are organized and carried out.

There are a variety of ways to grade learners; the role of an assessor gives teachers an opportunity to correct learners. However, if it is not communicated with sensitivity and support it could prove counter-productive to a student's self-esteem and confidence in learning.

5. The Organizer: Perhaps the most difficult and important role the teacher has to play. The success of many activities depends on good organization and on the students knowing exactly what they are to do next. Giving instructions is vital in this role as well as setting up activities. The organizer can also serve as a demonstrator, this role also allows a teacher to get involved and engaged with learners. The teacher also serves to open and neatly close activities and also give content feedback.

6. The Participant: This role improves the atmosphere in the class when the teacher takes part in an activity. However, the teacher takes a risk of dominating the activity when performing it. Here the teacher can enliven a class; if a teacher is able to stand back and not become the center of attention, it can be a great way to interact with learners without being too overpowering.

7. The Tutor: The teacher acts as a coach when students are involved in project work or self-study. The teacher provides advice, guidance and help students clarify ideas and limit tasks. This role can be a great way to pay individual attention to a student. It can also allow a teacher to provide remedial course to fit specific student needs and can also make student becoming too dependent or even too comfortable with one teacher and one method or style of teaching.

Educational Standard

Educational standard identifies the measurable skills a student should have at certain points in the education path. Teachers without Borders (2006) reported that the standard of education is how the products of schools can be measured in terms of outcome. That is, a measure of how school leavers contribute to the society in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. This is in terms of skills, knowledge and right attitude acquired by graduates the country produces. When the standard is low, half-baked graduates are produced. These graduates go into the market with less knowledge and less skills and often with negative attitudes. Some standards are more general and offer guidelines for core ideas to incorporate into curriculum, rather than measurable goals.

The falling standard of Nigerian educational system has been alarming to all well meaning Nigerians, because, education is the bedrock of development. But unfortunately, a lot of problems bedevil the education system in Nigeria (Efosa, 2018). Ezembu (2011) believes that the standard and quality of our educational system can be measured by the efficiency and functionality of the products turned out by our schools. This has implication for teachers. Hence, Ukeje (1991) in Olarinoye (2011) stated that the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change affected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers in schools. Afemike (2007) sees educational standard as having many dimensions and therefore the reasons on its falling or rising can be misleading. Afemike (2007) also maintained that

standards of education has been conceptualised from different perspectives including standards in curriculum, teaching, teachers and students achievement, management, accreditation, among others.

Challenges in Uplifting the Standard of Education in Nigeria.

The challenges of Nigerian educational standard is attributed to multi faceted factors which includes: teacher is one of the key factor followed by the school administrators, the school curriculum, our political system and corruption.

Inadequate Qualitative Teachers and Improper Teaching Pedagogy

Most of the teachers are not appointed based on merit which gives room to many applicants to take teaching as an alternative to other job and are also called teachers. The teacher is an important element in determining and assessing the educational standards. No school can have a standard of learning by its students higher than what the teachers have offered which in turns reflect the quality of such teachers. Bello (2010) lamented that some schools in the rural areas only have the headmaster as government employee while the rest, who may be secondary schools dropouts, PTA staff. Bello (2010) therefore queried what miracle these staff can perform to uplift the standard of education.

Applicants, who took teaching job as an alternative to other jobs, thereby lack commitment to the job. Teachers lack training and re-training in the new approaches to teaching (teaching using slides computers, flash cards and or active teaching method) as they dwell on the traditional method of teaching where the teacher is actor while students are passively listening to the teacher which does not match with the rapid changing society thereby making teaching monotonous and students ends up with nothing to contribute to the society and world at large.

Examination Misconduct

According to Ukpong (2013) Examination misconduct is any act considered by law as offence committed by students individually or jointly with fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, and anybody or group of people before, during or after examinations in order to get undeserved marks. This is done by bringing in un-authorized materials to the examination hall, buying exams question papers disrupting the conduct of examinations, changing of grades after examination, impersonation and using money or body to earn marks. Despite the efforts being made by school administrators and teachers it still persists. This syndrome, examination misconduct is one of the greatest problems that has contributed to the decline of teachers' personality and the standard of the entire educational system. Ukpong (2013) therefore links the increasing rate of examination misconduct to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and poor admission policy.

Consequences of Corruption in Educational Sector

Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, which has been with all of its kinds as a global crime in societal history. The types of corruption into Nigeria's educational sector are numerous. Security men at the gates of educational institutions in Nigeria receive money from parents, students and visitors and consequently involve themselves in corrupt and fraudulent practices that emotionally impose siege mentality not only on learners but on other stakeholders and consequently disrupt meaningful academic activities. Apart from the security units, there are other high profile platforms upon which corruption occurs in Nigeria's education industry. Ministries and agencies of government entrusted with overseeing the day to day affairs of the education industry in charge of procuring necessary equipment and teaching materials, construction of buildings, supplies, inflate vouchers and in most cases claim monies when nothing has been supplied or provided.

Another serious corrupt practice in education sector in Nigeria is the issue of "ghost workers" syndrome and this manifest in forms of non-existing workers, dead workers, retired and workers who have resigned their appointments but still receiving salaries and other benefits and entitlements meant for workers. Classroom teachers are not left out in the orgy of corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria's education industry and a pattern of corruption that is unique is the sale of grades, sexual harassment, and absenteeism in schools.

The Teaching Curriculum

Duze (2011) in his study on falling standard in Nigerian Education concluded that educational standards are falling at all levels due to poor implementation of school curriculum leading to inadequate skills acquisition. The teaching curriculum in Nigeria was not prepared according to constructivists learning theories where the students are allowed to construct their

mind while the teacher will only serve as facilitator/guide, but rather based on didactic lecture method which up till now did not produced any positive outcome. Constructivist teaching methods are Contemporary teaching styles which tend to be group-focused and inquiry-driven. Constructivist teaching methods embrace subsets of alternative teaching styles, including modelling, coaching, and test preparation through rubrics scaffolding. All of these are designed to promote students participation and necessitate a hybrid approach to teaching. When government makes policy is the curriculum that actualise the dream.

Poverty

The prevalent poor economy and the recent recession has deepened the poverty level of 80% Nigerians to live an unsatisfied life style (Federal Ministry of Information and National --Orientation, 2006). Acquiring quality education is supposed to help in fighting poverty, ignorance and diseases, but acquiring this knowledge has become an expensive burden for many people who are in need of this knowledge. The quest for knowledge has equally led to poverty of various degrees. Several persons including lecturers and students in order to survive resort to social vices such as bribery, pilfering, stealing, cheating, lecture guide/book price hike and prostitution.

Prospects of Quality Education

Uplifting the standard of teacher through rigorous training and re-training will translate to improve students' grades. Economists have now accepted that investment in education, or human capital, is an important element in the economic development process. Econometric studies provide very strong and consistent evidence that more educated workers are more productivity and that they earn higher salaries. There are complementary relationships between these variables (human capital and physical capital). There are some variations in the relative amounts of the two types of capital, but no country has high levels of only one type. For example, the U.S. has more human than physical capital, while Japan has more physical than human capital, but both countries have high levels of both. Finally, human capital and physical capital are complementary. Education has both direct and indirect effects on national income. So human capital and physical capital are both required for economic development and that each has a positive external effect on the productivity of the other. To this end Education is the key to solve every problem, no nation can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital.

Curriculum planners

Teaching with modern approaches like the active teaching methods should be introduced to improve education in Nigeria. Subjects that enhance innovation and creativity should be introduced across board. Curriculum should be re constructed in such a way that lecture method will be the story of the past. Since several studies have shown that lecture method when compared to other teaching methods does not provides positive effects. The curriculum planners should also introduce appropriate teaching aids to be used for effective teaching and learning situation. Teaching/learning aids like flash cards, slides, computers, libraries, and laboratories should be made available in schools for sharper learning.

Training and Retraining of Teachers

Capacity building for staff especially teachers is main guiding principles. Teachers should be given the opportunity to go for in-service training both in and outside the country to be exposed and be updated with national/ international standard. Educational conferences should be held pertaining the teaching profession as well as on morality on regularly basis across the country. The problem of poor conditions to teachers that has been critical to the problem of poor standards will be adequately addressed when education is adequately funded and judiciously managed. Basically, what is required to stem the tide of low standards of education in Nigeria is the acceptance of the UNESCO recommendation on the funding of education which places it at 26% of a nation's annual budget and the diligent implementation of educational policies. Stakeholders in the education sector should also attend, deliberate and brainstorm in order to find lasting and acceptable solutions to the falling standard in education all over the country in this technological age of computers, slides, smart phones, etc. Learning should therefore be made simple as these innovations speed up the process of assimilating knowledge especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Restructuring the National Policy on Education

Education should be restructured, if not totally, reviewed so as to meet the yearnings of Nigerians. The educational sector in Nigeria needs to be restructured and involves taking remedial actions to raise the standard of education should be

explored. The current admission policy that places emphasis on quota system, catchment area, backwardness and discriminatory fees which have not encouraged qualitative selection of students should give way to a policy that encourages merits. Okoroma (2002) opined that funding and admission policies are critical factors that must be placed at the front burner and adequately addressed to facilitate the desired solution to the problem of poor standards of education. Teachers welfare is of the uppermost important that is by improving their salary scale on regular basis. It could be submitted that when teacher's benefits like allowances yearly increments, leave grants, other fringe benefits and incentives are not paid regularly in other to boost teacher's morale to deliver their best to the society and the country at large. Pension and gratuities are not prepared on ground immediately after retirement in order to remove the uncertainty and phobia of retirement for teacher's to be committed to their job. It is unfortunate that knowledge, remuneration and a suitable working environment are not considered as the major motivating factors for workers. Salaries are not paid regularly and as when due for conducive learning environment for teaching and learning.

Examination Misconduct

Examination misconduct has become a practice in Nigerian institution of learning which brings about unreliability on students' results for admission and appointments. Curbing examination misconduct should be collective effort of examination body, supervisors, school administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders and religious leaders. Examination misconduct is an epidemic which requires all the groups stated above to put hands on deck to curb the syndrome in order to uplift the standard of education. Registration online for all national examination body should be introduced to checkmate the exploitative nature of most school heads. Moral education should be preached pertaining stealing, cheating and all forms of examination misconduct with support of the above listed persons. Government should implement the punishment scheduled for anyone caught involved in examination misconduct without fear or favour and consider examination as the purpose by which schools are established. Provide media information both in radio, television, newspaper, magazines etc on people caught in examination misconduct at different levels of education.

Corruption

Corruption as one of the variable that contributes to the declined in the standard of teacher and teaching and has to be seriously dealt with if Nigeria wants to progress. Speaking on the consequences of corruption, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 "States that we either kill corruption or corruption will kill us". In fact fighting corruption is among his campaign agenda. The EFCC and ICPC need to pay regular visit to the educational industry to sanitize the sector from the ministry to classroom teacher. The anti corruption agencies have to review their policies on the culprits. The researchers are of the opinion that EFCC and ICPC should adopt the china's anti corruption policy that is jail or death penalty for different levels of corruption. Government should also establish whistle blower in the educational sector

Government

Most of the solutions for uplifting the standard of teacher/teaching in Nigeria are in the hands of the government because it has the power and makes policy, it is in charge of all the income, tax. Government should change its political ideology for the better in other to achieve this dream. Government should build enough schools considering the rapid increase in Nigerian population provide as well as providing infrastructure. School is a system and cannot function well without its parts. Schools therefore should be equipped and staffed to compete with other countries. Government need to increase its yearly allocation to the educational sector and enhance its monitoring unit. Government should understand that teachers' welfare is of uppermost importance that is by improving their salary scale on regular basis. If teacher's benefits like allowances yearly increments, leave grants, other fringe benefits and incentives are paid regularly will in turn boost the teachers' morale to deliver their best to the society and the country at large. Pension and gratuities are to be prepared on ground immediately before retirement in order to remove the uncertainty and phobia of retirement for teachers. These among others are few ways in which the standard of teaching teacher education can be uplifted in the country to address the current challenges in Nigeria.

Free Quality and Affordable Education

The quest for **free quality and affordable education** cut across all level of education in the country from nursery and primary schools to the secondary and tertiary institutions. Provision of quality and affordable education by the government can go a long way in improving education in Nigeria. The researchers therefore commend the effort made by

the present Kano State Governor in the person of Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje for launching Free Education in Kano state in 2019. Hoping that other governors will emulate from him. Equal opportunities should be given to applicants seeking job placement to compete for placement regardless of grades acquired and institution attended.

2. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the factors responsible for declining the standards of teaching and teacher education including their implications to Nigerians. It could be submitted that many developing countries are facing similar situations in different perspectives. This paper observed three critical issues responsible for the decline in the standard. These include government failure to implement the 26% of the national budget to the educational sector as recommended by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The other factor is that, the educational policy should be restructured to meet the yearnings of Nigerians. The last and the most significant factor is the collective positive attitudinal change towards corruption, examination malpractice cultism and other social vices.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was recommended that government should implement the 26% educational share in order to adequately address monetary challenges.
2. The educational policy should be restructured to meet the yearnings of Nigerians.
3. Lastly, there are needs for Nigerians positive attitudinal changes towards corruption/examination misconduct.

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