

Management of Secondary Education for Poverty Alleviation: Implications for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper reviewed Management of Secondary Education for Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria. The concept of education was seen as a set of activities which entails transition of ideas, values, and norms of the society across generation. Furthermore, educational management was viewed as the theory and practice of the organization and administration of existing educational establishments and systems. It involves planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, directing, coordinating and budgeting. Also, the concept of poverty was seen as the lack of physical necessities, social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, powerlessness, vulnerability and humiliation. Poverty alleviation was viewed as efforts, actions and programmes discretionally employed to end or reduce the incidence of poverty. Findings revealed that poverty in Nigeria is caused by: inadequate access to employment opportunities, inadequate physical assets, such as land, capital, and minimal access by the poor to credit even on a small scale, inadequate access to the means of supporting rural development in poor regions, inadequate access to markets where the poor can sell goods and services, low endowment of human capital, destruction of national resources leading to environment degradation and reduced productivity, inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin, victimized by transitory poverty, and lack of participation and failure to draw the poor into the design of development programmes. Education strategies for poverty alleviation in Nigeria was viewed as government making simple, well-conceived and properly designed policies and programmes for poverty alleviation which should have a direct effect in the lives of the target group. It was concluded that secondary education in Nigeria has to be structurally managed with adequate financing. It was suggested amongst others that, government should provide free basic education for every child in the state through effective management of education.

Keywords: Management, Poverty alleviation, Sustainable development.

Introduction

Education has been widely accepted as a powerful instrument of change especially in the patterns of life of the individual and the society as a whole. It is the most potent tool for speedy socio-economic development and stable political emancipation in all nations of the world. Osuji and Koko (2018) were of the view that education is commonly perceived as the most powerful

weapon in alleviating poverty, elevating economic growth, producing skilled human resources, creating a healthy and enlightened social environment and creating self-reliant sufficient nation. It is against this backdrop that the National Policy on Education submitted that education shall continue to be highly rated in the National Development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (FRN, 2004). They further posited that, education is an instrument for sustainable national development, social change and a vehicle for developing skills, competencies and imparting knowledge. It is believed that without education, many socio-economic activities in the society will remain stagnant and the society will continue to wallow in ignorance (Osuji and Koko, 2018). In view of this, Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019) concluded that no nation or people can have meaningful development without paying proper attention to its education.

Secondary education as a level occupies a critical and strategic position in view of the crucial role it plays in preparing the students for higher education and useful living in the society. In essence, it serves as a link between the primary level and higher level of education. Osuji and Koko (2018), posited that secondary education is very important as it gives the youths the opportunity to acquire necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which enable them to live and become productive individuals and discharge their social duties as global citizens. Unfortunately, the secondary education system is besieged by series of challenges ranging from inadequate supervision to indiscipline on the part of teachers and students, cultism, examination malpractice, mismanagement of allocated resources, poor teaching facilities, and failing academic standards among others (Adeniran, 2019). Similarly, Awolola (2017) identified challenges like inadequacy of instructional supervision lack of infrastructural facilities, and lack of qualified teachers as some of the challenges facing public secondary schools in Nigeria. These challenges, to a great extent, affect national attempts to institute sustainable development. When national sustainable development becomes deficient to be sustained, socio-economic and poverty alleviation may become a mirage.

The issue of managing education for poverty alleviation in a fast developing, rich and densely populated country like Nigeria has been the subject of a great number of scholars for decades. The justification for these endeavours could not be far from the fact that education as an industry or indeed a social institution concerned with individual, commercial and capital development would not record any measure of success without an efficient management. Efficient educational management is the pivot upon which all other activities and programmes are revolved. Organizational resources such as finance, material and human resource require effective management in order to function effectively. Thus, the success or failure of any organization including education is mostly associated with the pattern and style of leadership.

The meaning of Education

There is no single most acceptable definition of education. This is because it connotes different things to different people, culture and society. Asaju (2014) sees education as a process, a product and a discipline. As a process, education means a set of activities, which entails handling down the ideas, values and norms of the society, across generation. As a product, education is measured by the qualities and traits displayed by the educated persons. Here, the educated person is traditionally conceived as a “knowledgeable and cultured person”. While as a discipline, education is defined in terms of the benefits of organized knowledge to which students are exposed to. Fafunwa (1974) in Asaju (2014) saw education as the aggregate of all the process through which a child develops abilities and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to society. Education is an act or process of developing and cultivating (whether physically, mentally or morally) one’s mental abilities or senses. It is the expansion, strengthening and discipline of one’s mind, faculty among others. It forms and regulates the principles and character of individuals in the society in order to prepare them fit for any calling. The result or outcome of education is not only determined by the knowledge, skill, discipline and character acquired, but also the act or process of training by a prescribed or customary course of study or discipline.

In this light, education can be seen as the process of teaching, training and learning in schools and colleges for the development of knowledge and skills so as to prepare individuals to live happily with themselves and others in the society (Asaju, 2014).

Aims of Education

The aims of education are aspects of what is educationally desirable or worthwhile, and those things that are valuable and considered necessary to be accomplished at any given point in time. Thus, the aims of education are not only different and dynamic from one society to another but even within the same society. Most times they are determined by the peculiar needs of the country or society. Okoh (2016) posited that education is an abstract idea hence, it cannot have aims. To him, it is only human beings that can have aim(s). Therefore, it is man that gives aim(s) to education. Therefore, the aims of education refer to a definite, specific goals or objectives of education. For instance, the National goals of Nigeria constitute the foundation for its national educational aims and objectives. There are five main national goals which serve as the foundation for building the national educational objectives in Nigeria. These according to the National policy on education (2004) include the following; a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land full of bright opportunity for all Nigerian citizens. It is believed that these five goals or National objectives can be achieved through qualitative education at all levels. Hence, the aims of education in Nigeria include the following;

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society.

3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, ability and competencies, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (FRN, 2004).

Although, the goals of education vary and sometimes conflicting, it has been realized that the building of a nation rests on the development of individual personalities to strengthen a series of men and women for the better services of their fellows and to raise the general level of knowledge, technology, wealth, and standard of living within the society. Furthermore, there is a consensus opinion that, if the educational system is made functional, positive changes which can accelerate national sustainable development in the country and poverty alleviation will be achieved.

The Meaning of Management of Education

The management of education borders on both human and material resources. The human components include the child, (pupil/student), parents, administrative staff as well as the management board, community and the board of education at the Local, State and National levels of Government. The material components constitute finances, infrastructures (buildings and other facilities), equipment and media/instructional supplies. Aside the human and material resources, there are ideas, laws and regulations among other organization elements influencing the entire education process. The effective coordination and utilization of these resources and elements to achieve educational goals and objectives is known as educational management. According to Bolam (2013), educational management is an executive function for carrying out agreed policy. He differentiated management from educational leadership, mainly responsible for policy formulation and appropriate organizational transformation.

Management of education is the theory and practice of the organization and administration of existing educational establishments and systems. He further posited that it is a comprehensive effort dealing with the educational practice, a dynamic system which deals with educational institutions from the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Management of education is aimed at bringing students and teachers under such conditions that will promote education, to enable the students to receive quality education from qualified teachers at a cost within the means of the state for better learning outcomes (Bolam, 2013). Basically, management of education deals with the managing of educational resources. It is fundamentally an educational, organization, where people are interrelated in managing resources. It plays a foremost role in the accomplishment of educational goals and objectives. Similarly, Ewegbenro (2022) posited that management of education is the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the activities of an institution by utilizing human and material resources so as to effectively and efficiently accomplish functions of teaching, extension work and research. The need for management of education policy at the national level is focused on economic, social and cultural development. According to her, the best means to achieve the development in these areas is through education and human resources development. There have

been tremendous advance in the field of technology and this is made available to society only through education. Education is expected to provide society with human resources which have specialized knowledge, attitudes, work ethics, moral, social and political values and skills so as to sustain and enhance the expected development of the nation. Thus, education has to make its curriculum more relevant to life and needs of a changing society in an effective and efficient manner. Therefore, education has to be dynamic so that it can contribute towards the accomplishment of national development goals and alleviation of poverty in the society (Ewegbenro, 2022). Furthermore, management of education theories, principles, techniques, skills and strategies, when applied to education will, bring about effective and efficient functioning of educational institutions. It is worthy to note that scientific and systematic management of educational institutions is necessary to bring about qualitative changes in the educational system.

Babalola et, al. (2006) rightly puts:

Educational management is being able to handle (carefully and not wastefully) what goes on in the process of educating people so that nothing goes out of hand. It is a concept that goes along with the quest to put the formal education system under control, regulation or supervision in its attempts to use carefully (that is to manage or economize) available scarce resources through cooperative efforts when establishing institutions of learning, enrolling learners, attracting best staff, conducting teaching, learning and research, as well as graduating learners at all levels of education (p.1).

They further posited that educational management involves some planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, coordinating and budgeting. For instance, to ensure that things are under control, there is need to put in other various agencies such as boards, ministries, commissions and schools, and staff these institutions, direct their affairs, and coordinate inputs, process and outputs of the education system (Babalola et, al., 2006). However, it is imperative to note that educational management is more than supervising. The word “Supervisor” comes from “Super” (over) and “Visor” (seer). Thus, a supervisor of education or an inspector of school is an overseer and the job is to oversee or inspect and monitor one or more of educational standards, workloads, equipment, money, materials, peoples (especially staff and students), educational technology and time, but a manager has a wider picture. The supervisor is often mainly concerned with the present while the manager is often concerned with the past, present and the future (Babalola et, al., 2006). Similarly, Amos (2013) is of the view that managers do not only monitor and inspect things now, but it is also usually their job to make predictions, to plan ahead and to decide how things will change and develop. Thus, educational management is synonymous with the strategizing, planning, running, organizing, governance and supervision of the entire process of teaching and learning that takes place at all levels of the formal education system. \

The Meaning of Poverty

Poverty may be defined as a situation whereby income and consumption are low (Umoh, 2014). Therefore, people are referred to as poor when their measured standard of living in terms of income or consumption is below the poverty line, which is a measure that separates the poor from being linked together. Similarly, Chambers (2017) saw poverty as the lack of physical necessities, social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, powerlessness and humiliation. According to Walton (2010), poverty is a malnutrition concept. It embraces undesirable conditions such as inadequate income, malnutrition, lack of access to social service and lack of social and political status. However, Sancho (2015) defined the poor as those who are unable to obtain an adequate income, find stable jobs, own proper or maintain healthy conditions of living. They also lack adequate level of education and cannot satisfy their health needs. Hence, the poor are often illiterates in poor health and have short life span (Sancho, 2015). He maintains that the poor have no access to the basic needs of life such as food, clothing and decent shelter and are unable to meet social and economic obligations. They also lack skills and gainful employment as well as self-esteem.

Walton (2010) identified poverty as:

1. Those whose opportunities to participate in the productive process are restricted by discrimination of different kinds such as sex, age, race etc.
2. Those for whom the economy has failed to provide jobs. These are people who are able or willing to work to earn adequate income if jobs are available.
3. Those who possess limited ability to contribute to the productive process to warrant an income that would raise them above the poverty line (Walton, 2010).

It is worthy to note that in measuring poverty, one may distinguish between absolute and relative poverty. However, emphasis is on capital income reflects and relative poverty which refers to people whose standard of living fall below the general and socially acceptable minimum standard (Sancho, 2015). On the other hand, absolute poverty is the inability of people to meet the basic needs of life. In the light of this, two groups of basic needs are discernable. The first group include; certain minimum requirements of a family or private consumption, adequate food, shelter and clothing as well as certain household equipment and furniture. The second group of basic needs include essential services provided by and for a community such as good drinking water, public transport, sanitation, health education and culture facilities (Umoh, 2004). Therefore, poverty is perceived to be prevalent in the absence of these basic needs and in situations whereby they are not satisfied.

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation entails efforts, actions and programmes discretionally employed to end or reduce incidence of poverty. According to the World Bank (1996), six basic principles form the framework for a more effective action to escape from poverty. They are as follows:

- i. Poverty alleviation must be at the heart of any economic and social development strategy.
- ii. The political will and commitment by government towards poverty alleviation must be backed up by economic activities.

- iii. Economic growth is necessary, but improvement of human capital should be part of the programmes.
- iv. The design and implementation of efforts towards poverty alleviation must be guided by the need of the poor as identified by the poor.
- v. Poverty must be looked at from a gender perspective as women are particularly valuable to the social and economic burdens of poverty.
- vi. Poverty must also be viewed as an environmental issue since it engenders resources degradation (World Bank, 1996).

However, poverty is caused by certain factors in Nigeria. In this light, Umoh (2004) pointed out the following as causes of poverty in Nigeria;

- 1. Inadequate access to employment opportunities.
- 2. Inadequate physical assets, such as land, capital, and minimal access by the poor to credit even on a small scale.
- 3. Inadequate access to the means of supporting rural development in poor regions.
- 4. The design and implementation of efforts towards poverty alleviation must be guided by the need of the poor as identified by the poor.
- 5. Inadequate access to markets where the poor can sell goods and services.
- 6. Low endowment of human capital.
- 7. Destruction of national resources leading to environment degradation and reduced productivity.
- 8. Inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin and those victimized by transitory poverty and
- 9. Lack of participation, failure to draw the poor into the design of development programs (Umoh, 2004).

Education Strategies for Poverty Alleviation

Poverty in Nigeria is dangerous to individuals and society. Poverty promotes ignorance and endangers social discontent and breeds social dissolution. Therefore, it is important that everything should be done to stem the scorch of poverty in our society (Olayemi, 2018). From the vaunted poverty alleviation programmes aligned by the Federal, State and Local Government level, it is quite clear that Nigeria is not lacking behind in measures of poverty alleviation but the challenge seems to lie in the translation of the policies into realities through effective implementation of the programmes. It is therefore, imperative that things should be done properly to enable the poor people educate their children. According to Olayemi (2018), policies and programmes of poverty alleviation should be simple, articulate, well-conceived and properly designed to have a direct effect in the lives of the target group (that is, the poor). This is the more reason education should be used as a model of reducing poverty in Nigeria through management implementation of Universal Basic Education Policy (UBE). This also calls for the proper management of the secondary education system in the state in line with the specification of the said nine years non-stop schooling by all the children of the school age in all parts of Nigeria.

To achieve this, the involvement of relevant stakeholders by State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in management of the secondary education remains paramount. In other words, the stage should be solicited and sustained. In addition, funds meant for the implementation of the scheme, should not be diverted to other issues, when the children of the poor have no access to basic education (Umoh, 2004). Olayemi (2018) stressed the need for continuity in policies and programmes of SUBEB as far as the implementation of the nine years of schooling by all children is concerned. The question of changing the original substance of what the scheme wanted to provide for the poor children is not helping matters at all. Good policies and programmes should not just be discarded because of the change of power. The implementation of poverty alleviation programmes should have greater grassroots participation, that is, the rural schools should be used as a model whenever proper take-off is enhanced (Olayemi, 2018). Finally, in order to be effective, the SUBEB programmes aimed at alleviating poverty through schooling, should be directed at giving opportunities for the poor to get their children educated.

Implications for Sustainable Development

It is no doubt that the Government of Nigeria has put some measures and programmes to help curb the rate of poverty in the nation. Notwithstanding, without proper implementation of these programmes, the nation will still be faced with high rate of poverty. Invariably, this implies that through effective implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes, the poor people will be able to give their children education, which will equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute their own quota, thereby, resulting to Sustainable National Development in the nation and society at large (Umoh, 2004). Since education is used as a model of poverty reduction in Nigeria through the implementation of Universal Management Policy, it implies that if every child have access to free education, capacity building will be increased, thus, promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. However, when financial resources meant for education is properly utilized, it implies that there will be provision for all the school facilities and equipment needed for quality learning outcomes such as conducive classrooms, reading materials, chairs, writing materials, etc. This will help to develop the student cognitive ability, become more responsible to themselves and the society, thereby resulting to sustainable development (Walton, 2010). Notwithstanding, there should be a continuity of the educational programmes and policies for poverty alleviation even when there is a change in power. When the reverse is the case, it may lead to high level of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. This implies that there will be no sustainable development.

Finally, when educational funds are diverted, it may lead to lack of maintenance of school facilities and equipment, delay in the payment of teacher's salary, etc. This implies that when there is a delay in the payment of salary, teachers will not be motivated to teach, thus, creating a vacuum for poor students learning outcome, leading to unsustainable development.

Conclusion

Secondary education in Nigeria has to be structurally managed with adequate financing, curricular change to embrace entrepreneurial skills development and giving a sense of industry

and self-reliance on the learners. The way of the vicious cycle of poverty is by fundamental curriculum innovation as embedded in the newly adopted 9-3-4 system of education.

Suggestions

Based on the conceptual analysis, the following suggestions are made.

1. Government should provide free Universal Basic Education for every child in the state through effective management of education.
2. The stakeholders of education in the state should put in place strategies for actual implementation of free Universal Basic Education.
3. There should be creation of job opportunities for persons who are willing to work so as to enable them get income thereby, reducing the level of poverty in the state.
4. Grants and loans should be made available to the poor by the Federal, State and Local Government to enable them set up business so as to help alleviate poverty.

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