

Philosophical Appraisal of the Impact of Education in Nigeria for National Development.

Umezurike Grace

Department of Philosophy and Religion, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at an exposition and assessment of the impact of education in Nigeria for national development. Using the philosophical methods of hermeneutics and exposition, the paper examined the degree to which education has impacted values, changed orientation, effected developmental strides in Nigeria. The paper studied the nature and various areas of Education in Nigeria. It also studied the corresponding impacts of these areas of education in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the paper exposed some of the challenges to the system of education in Nigeria such as government inadequate funding, gross irresponsibility by education managers and classical corruption in the education system. Also, no doubt, the paper examined the negative impacts of education in Nigeria and its devastating effects. From the finding of the study, it was obvious that education has impacted much to Nigerian society in the areas of human, infrastructural, economic, political, environmental and societal development. The implication of the study shows that in spite of the challenges and negative effects of education in Nigeria, its positive advantages to Nigeria are overwhelming, awesome and heartwarming. Therefore, this paper is an encouragement and a clarion call on every citizen especially the government to develop passionate interest and support the education system in order that her citizenry continue to enjoy the priceless values of education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Education, philosophical, educare, discipline and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that there is no univocal definition of education. This is because according to Todaro, education implies different things to different people, culture and society[1] Etymologically, the word education is derived from the Latin word, *educare* which means to 'bring up'[1] Hence it can be defined as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially in a school or university. It can also be defined as the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills and attitude. Ukeje

defined education as a process, a product and a discipline [1]. As a process, education is a set of activities for the reason of impacting and handing down ideas, values, and norms of society across generations. As a product, education is measured by the qualities and traits displayed by the educated person as one conceived as being knowledgeable. As a discipline, education is defined and assessed on the criteria of the benefits of organized knowledge gained.

Following the above definition, education can be said to be formal or informal. It is formal when it involves the receiving or giving systematic instruction in schools or university while informal education refers to the acquisition of skills or attitude outside a systematically organized school or university. Informal education can take place in homes, market, work places e.t.c. In Nigeria, informal education is chiefly seen in the homes and in the form of apprenticeship where people learn trading and other handiworks.

Historically, philosophers of different epochs have made some input in the bid to understand the concept of education. Socrates was one of the first to describe the concept of education. For Socrates, education is comparable to his mother's profession as a midwife. His concept of education is that education is midwifery whereby a teacher, like a midwife helps the student to give birth to knowledge. Hence like a mother, the student conceives the idea and the teacher like a midwife helps the mother (student) to give birth to the idea conceived. This conceived idea is according to Socrates from where the word concept was derived. Socrates disassociated a teacher from a sculpture who does his carving from blocks of stones leaving the stone passive rather the student is an active receptor of learning¹.

In the medieval times, Aquinas' emphasized the active role of student in the learning process. Thus he questioned, "can one man teach another?" He answered in the affirmative provided that the student goes through a process of thought which is similar and analogical to that of the teacher. Hence following Aquinas description, we make bold to claim that for the learning process to be complete, the frequency of operation between the teacher and the student must be at equilibrium [2].

The process of education and learning has been an age long debate in philosophical epistemology. Philosophers disagree on

the relationship between the teacher and the student. The philosophical question has been whether the student is a passive element upon whom education is deposited or does a student play active role in the process of learning. Put in another way, the philosophers questioned whether the mind contains innate ideas which the teacher only helps to elicit from the student or whether the student is a blank slate (Tabula Rasa) upon which the teacher writes knowledge. In this paper, we take a middle course whereupon the success of education is through the inter play of the teacher's and student's conscious and complimentary efforts. Similarly, there must be in education an internal element or the knowing mind and an external element which is data from experience.

Beyond the above philosophical rhetorics, this paper is aimed at an appraisal of educational impact in Nigeria. It achieved this purpose by examining the degree to which education has impacted values, changed orientation, effected developmental strides in Nigeria. Also, it exposed the degree to which education has impacted in human, infrastructural, political and economic, environmental and societal development. Hence an appraisal shows that education has manifested an overwhelming, awesome and heartwarming impact in Nigeria. Nevertheless, this paper also exposed some of the inescapable societal cracks warranted by education in Nigeria.

* In Nigeria, two forms of education were in existence before the advent of colonialism: indigenous/traditional and Islamic education. Traditional education was practiced most in the southern and some parts of the Middle belt Nigeria which consisted of essentially informal training in character, norms, agriculture, artisan, e.t.c. Islamic education was practiced in the northern Nigeria as informed by the Quran. These forms of education preceded the western education which was introduced in Nigeria in the 19th century European Christian Missionaries. This moved along side

colonialism in Nigeria when Nigerians were trained in the Queen's language. The Christian missionaries organized and trained some Nigerians on the art of reading and writing and the first set of persons trained were employed by the colonial government as clerks, interpreters, catechists, e.t.c.

Formal education in Nigeria can be said to have started with Christian Missionaries. Their coming to Nigeria was the need to resettle freed slaves from America and Britain and for the purpose of evangelization. Nevertheless, communication barrier with the natives warranted the setting up of schools where interpreters were trained. There was the need to train catechists and lay readers to support the missionaries in evangelization. This was championed by the Church Missionary society (CMS), Methodist and Catholic Missionaries. However, this form of education was limited to an elementary stage [2].

In the same vein, the colonial administrations made some good attempts to build schools though with the motive of raising artisans to assist in running the imperial state [2]. Hence Ajayi stated; 'the colonial administration saw the schools as agencies for producing various categories of minor functionaries such as clerks, junior technicians in public works, sanitary inspectors etc.'"[2]

Impact of Education in Nigeria

Education and national development are like the two sides of a coin. One cannot be accepted leaving the other and vice versa. The National Policy on Education in Nigeria in 2014 stated unequivocally that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development such that education ought to pursue the following philosophies and goals:

1. Formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas.
2. Development of the individual as sound and effective citizen for his sake and the sake of the society.
3. Promotion of progressive, united Nigeria, which demands relevant, practical and comprehensive school programmes
4. Inculturation of national consciousness and national unity.
5. Inculturation of the right types of values and attitudes
6. Ensuring and maintaining a high educational standard is paramount in achieving the above mentioned educational principles and objectives.
7. Acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies[2]

In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire stated in distinct words the impacts of education to the human society and the right educational methods that make educational impacts realizable. Paulo Freire was highly influenced by Frantz Fanon and Karl Marx[2]. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a combination of philosophical, political, and educational theories. In Freire's view, a good education method is the key to liberation which is the awakening of critical awareness and the thinking process in the individual [2]. Freire's primary reason of rejecting the banking approach to education is because he believes that education ought to impact adequate humanization [2] and liberation to the human person. This has become inescapably and urgently the concern of man because history shows us that both humanization and dehumanization can be real alternatives but humanization is the true vocation of man. Proper education method in learning such as meaningful and impacting dialogue [2]. frees the human person from the menace of oppressive attitudes and practices in the society. This method consciously shapes the human person and the society to perfection and Freire referred to this process as conscientization [2]. Freedom

is possible according to Freier from praxis which means for him, an informed action when education has played its proper role in the human society [2].

Paulo Freire's science of education shows that humanization is the true vocation of man. This is possible when education has adequately performed its role to the human society thereby leading the citizens to conscientization [2]. This is a true story of Nigerian experience such that education in Nigeria has led Nigeria out of barbarism and archaism to a civil society. In spite of our yet-perfect-society in Nigeria, a look at our past shows that our wont before the advent of education defined us as barbaric and less humans. Little wonder Horton denied Africans and Nigerians the ability of logical thought before the advent of western education. Hence he claimed:

.... instead of employing intuition and ideas, (they) have a rich proliferation of the-sort of thinking called magical.... people do not stop to ask "what are the irreducibly basic processes of inference, or how they can be justified. Situations which would provide such questions simply do not arise².

It is therefore very obvious that Horton cannot say this of Nigeria today following the salvific impact of education in Nigeria. Hence one can make bold to claim that education has exposed us to civilization, humanness and globalization.

In the area of human capital development, education has impacted tremendously to human capital development [3]. The study carried out by Mba et al, shows that the advent of education has impacted much on human capital development in Nigeria [3]. Thus investment in education increases the efficiency of labour and man power as a factor of production. The logic becomes

that education provides better opportunities, increases the chances of employment and improves the standard of living [3]. Little wonder Obaji noted that "the responsibility of producing highly quality manpower and specialist is that of the nation's tertiary educational institutions [3]. According to Adamu, in order to achieve laudable objective in economic development, certain variables react like catalyst and have the ability to accelerate growth and the chief of these variables is human capital. Hence effective investment in human capital through proper education stands as a key factor to economic growth and improved productivity in Nigeria [3].

Minding human capital and economic growth, Nigeria is a profound beneficiary. Very many Nigerians have distinguished themselves in character and learning. Many Nigerians have proven their worth in different professions in such areas as Medicine, law, engineering, accounting, administration. These Nigerians are so distinguished that they meet international repute. This manifestation of expertise has tremendously increased human capital and this increase has positively yielded corresponding economic growth to both these professionals and Nigeria as a country. Therefore, it becomes obvious that education has to a great measure boosted human capital and economic development.

There is a causal relationship between poverty rate and education status [3]. This claim has a strong bearing on the Nigerian experience. The empowerment by education has reduced the poverty rate of Nigeria to a reasonable extent and continues to increase the basic standard of living. This is true when the relationship between education and economic growth is properly analyzed [4]. Attempting this analysis in the Nigerian context, one discovers that the rural areas of Nigeria have the greatest poverty rate. This is because the people in the rural areas are typically uneducated. Hence education influences economic growth by reducing poverty incidence, social imbalance and income equality [4]. It creates positive

platform for the poor and needy to improve their lives [3].

In the same vein, it is obvious that trading and investment in Nigeria has gained tremendously through education and improved international relationship and industrialization are all impacts of education in Nigeria [1]. Isola claimed that "as information through education grows exponentially and as its incorporation in the production process becomes increasingly complex, the ability to acquire, adopt, and adapt a new knowledge will be an important determinant of economic growth [2] leading to improved production of goods and services. Hence effective ways to combat illiteracy, poverty, hunger and stimulate economic growth that is truly sustainable is through education [3].

In the area of technology, the impact of education is obviously unquestionable. Education has brought meaningful technological definitions to Nigeria and by mutual relationship; Nigerian education is getting more advanced following technological impact. The advent of education brought with it technological advancement in Nigeria. This technological impact is manifest in the areas of agriculture, business, education, entertainment, healthcare, government, security e.t.c. By technological advancement, financial transactions can be carried in ordinary Mobil devices, business transactions can be done even from distances, reading and writing can be done beyond physical schools, e.t.c.

In Nigeria, one of the most obvious of technological transformation is the media such as the radio, television, newspapers and the most recent are the use of facebook, whatsapp, twitter, imo, e.t.c. Statistical analysis shows that Nigeria is the African largest market for facebook. The excitement from this experience attracted Mark Zuckerberg, the facebook founder in Nigeria on familiarization tour. Similarly, technologically enabled devices make reading, writing and learning fun and exciting for both students and teachers following a good access to teaching and learning materials/gadgets

from every part of the world in the internet (especially the use of internet library). Little wonder the Nigerian National Policy on Education in 2004 introduced ICT in the curriculum of studies in Nigeria. This has brought holistic transformation in the learning process for both students and teachers.

Furthermore, the impact of education on leadership and governance can never be over emphasized. It was with full awareness of the impact of education on governance that Plato proposed the idea of a philosopher king. Here Plato stated a rigorous academic and military formation for the kings. Hence for Plato, this rigorous training in academics is to well-equip the kings because they ought to know more than others both in character and in learning. Thus he said;

given that only philosophers can have knowledge, they are clearly the ones best able to grasp what is good for the city and so are in the best position to know how to run and govern the city. If we only know that they were virtuous or at least not inferior to others in virtue and learning then, Socrates' friends agree, we could be sure that they are the ones most fit to rule. Luckily, we do know that philosophers are superior in virtue to everyone else. A philosopher loves truth more than anything else (philosopher means lover of truth or wisdom); his entire soul strives after

truth. This means that the rational part of his soul must rule because his soul is just [3].

Like Plato's concept of the philosopher king, Freire claimed that the goal of teaching is to move the student towards what he calls 'a critical perception of the world'. This is best appreciated by the philosopher king who has undergone the rigorous training in learning and otherwise for the best principles and practice of leadership in the society. Hence a revolutionary leader must be well equipped in education to better commune with the people in a critical and liberating permanent dialogue [3]. Through the rigorous training and education the leader comes to trust the people and develop deeper sense of responsibility to the people and the society at large [3]. Following this trend of thought on the relationship between education/formation and governance, it is obvious that Nigeria is a strong beneficiary on the impact of education to governance. An assessment of Nigerian leaders before and after the advancement in education shows that leadership and education are inseparable. A quick comparison of well educated leaders and the uneducated or half educated leaders shows the great need of education in leadership. Education has warranted advancement in the process of electing leaders, international relationship with other world leaders, practice of democracy, globalization agenda.

On the area of security, education has made a great landmark. According to Francis J. David, security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger. It is also the defence, protection and preservation of values and absence of threat to acquired values [1]. It is the primary responsibility of the Federal Ministries of Interior, Defence and other security agencies in Nigeria to design security policies to ensure safety from harm and preservation of values in Nigeria. Nigeria is very large with a

population of about two hundred million persons occupying 923,768Sq km. The technological advancement in the use of intelligent gadgets such as cameras, weapons e.t.c. in the area of security makes it easy for adequate security in a large country like Nigeria.

In spite of the wonderful work of transformation which education impacts on Nigeria, it has also left with us some challenges. The need for western education and culture has taken a toll on the local cultures in Nigeria. Hence this warranted a shift-away from traditional education which was a vehicle for driving cultural values. The drive for western education has warranted a great interest in paper certificate and less concern to merit and individual aptitude. Besides very few private companies, many government agencies promote this unethical habit of employment on the basis of certificate and less concern to individual merits.

Obaji opined that it is the responsibility of the educational institutions to produce high quality manpower and specialists [1] but it is unfortunate that the corruption standard of Nigeria has eaten deep in the educational sector. It is obvious that the play-down on merits for certificate is responsible to the massive turn out of unemployable graduates in Nigerian universities today. The quality of teachers is of a very low standard and no one gives what he has not. Most awful is that the same low standard teachers produce other teachers in the school system thereby making a fast run down the ladder of education standards [2].

Another big challenge to education in Nigeria is government poor implementation of educational policies leading to poor funding of education manifest in shortage of educational facilities and learning materials [3]. The 2006 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) policy recommended 26% budgetary expenditure on education to member countries [4]. Lamentable is that the 2018 budget only allocated 7.04% of

about N605.8 billion as against the 26% recommendation by UNESCO. Like Olaofe, there is high need to go back to the drawing board in order to reposition

education for optimal educational impact benefit in Nigeria [4].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper has made a frantic effort towards exposing the impact of education in Nigeria. This attempt has been possible following the use of hermeneutics to examine and extract the degree at which education has tremendously impacted values, changed orientation, enhanced technological breakthrough, economic empowerment, personnel and environmental development, socio-political transformation, e.t.c. No doubt education has its own challenges and negative influences in Nigeria such challenges include; government inadequate funding, comfort with substandard and mediocrity in education, irresponsibility by education managers, laziness on the part of the students and teachers, corruption in the education system, introduction of cultism. It is obvious that in spite of the challenges and negative effects of education in Nigeria, its positive impacts in Nigeria are commendable.

In order to position education as an agent of positive impact to the society, this paper employed the education philosophical principles of different experts especially Paulo Freire, Plato, Aquinas. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire brought a holistic transformation to Brazil following his philosophy of education. Here Paulo condemned the traditional education method which he called the banking method where the students are seen as empty vessel and needed the deposit of knowledge by the teachers. Rather, he proposed a dialogue model of education where the teacher is a passionate partner

of the students in stimulating the powers of thinking and quest for mutual humanization [4]. Hence in Paulo's hands, it is obvious that literacy is best seen as a weapon for social change and transformation. Thus education proves a means people can perceive, interpret criticize and finally transform the world [5]. Education is a means of influencing students' personal development, promoting autonomy, good citizenry, making students productive members of the society [6].

By and large, this paper makes a clarion call on all who are concerned in education to work assiduously towards strengthening Nigerian education system for maximum productivity and greater societal impact. This call begins with the students that they may feel the urge to work harder and be transformed by education towards adequate humanism in character and learning. It also calls upon education facilitators such as managers, supervisors, teachers and most especially the government to develop a positive attitude to education. This will encourage the rapid growth of education in Nigeria to be standard friendly. The government is also encouraged to give adequate funding to education sector minding the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations' (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% per capital GDP. More so the government ought to be interested in the implementation and monitoring of education budget to ensure transparency and accountability. This will go a long way towards improving the impact of education in Nigeria.

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