

The Contributions of Education to Niger State Economic Development

Muraina Olawale Ojuola

Faculty of Education and Arts

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State

Abstract

Education is a crucial sector in any nation. 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 state of education in Nigeria continues to be our national discourse at all levels. This paper ex-rays the contributions of education to Niger state economic development. It discusses the concept of development, education value and economic development as well as contributions of education to economic development. The paper concludes by recommending that government and the private sector should brace up to improve the state of education in the state. Furthermore, there should be the need for strong political will among political leaders to ensure continuity of educational policies.

Keywords: Education, Economic Development, Human Capital, Niger State

JEL classification: J24, P36

1. Introduction

A nation develops in relation to its achievement in education. This explains why contemporary world attention has focused on education as an instrument of launching nations into the world of science and technology and with consequential hope of human advancement in terms of living condition and development of the environment. This is because, education, in the life of a nation, is the live wire of its industries and also the foundation of moral regeneration and revival of its people. It is also the fore and bulwark of any nation's defence and it has been observed that no nation rises above the level of its education. In Nigeria, much is not being derived from the sector due to neglect on the part of government, corruption, policy discontinuity, among others.

Education is a crucial sector in any nation. 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 Nigeria 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 (2010:254) state that something urgent has to be done in the educational sector. This paper examines the contributions of education to development especially Niger State.

2. Conceptual Clarification

In this paper, there are certain concepts like education and development which need clarification. This is done for proper understanding and good grasp.

Etymologically, the word education is derived from two Latin words “educare” and “educere” (Amaele et al 2011:6). Accordingly, “educare”, means to train, to form or to mould. In other words, it means that the society trains, forms or moulds the individual to achieve the social needs and aspirations. “Educere”, on the other hand means to build, to lead, or to develop. This is mostly favoured by the humanists who argue that the function of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the child to enable him function in the society according to his abilities, interests and needs.

Ordinarily, education is exclusively used for the development of human beings in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psychoproductive domains. It also involves a desirable approach in human behaviour through the process of teaching and learning. Fafunwa (1974) defines education as what each generation gives to its younger ones which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which are the positive values to the society in which they live.

From the above, education, according to Amaele, et al (2011:7) is seen as the total development of the individual child through acceptable methods and techniques according to his abilities and interests to meet up the needs of the society and for the individual to take his rightful place and contribute equally to the enhancement of the society.

2.1 Development:

Development is a planned activity aimed at speeding up or directing the process of change, which is already going on, towards an identified goal. Development may be large scaled and centrally planned scheme or small-scaled and local grassroot based

programme. There is in all development whether large scale or small scale the people who are involved, those people whose lives will be changed, those who need to be enabled by changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes to adopt new ways and new equipment also referred to as the target group. A major goal for development is to help the participants to take over the process of development for them to become self – reliant to take their own decision. The purpose of development interventions is to help to achieve a better life.

There are different levels and types of goals. Rogers (1992), distinguishes between intermediate and ultimate goals. The former is defined as objectives which are ends in themselves, bringing with them some sense of satisfaction, but which at the same time are the means to a further end. Intermediate goals also referred to as targets are justified largely in terms of their outcomes. Ultimate goals are those things which do not need any further justification. A new trend in development is the multi–sectoral approach, the need to have a fully balanced programme involving, all the major aspect of economic, social, cultural, and political goals, since national economic growth and relief of the suffering are the main goals of education, then its focus on inter–agency co–operation throws up many grounds of congruence between education and development.

2.2 Education Value and Economic Development

The term educational “value” means that someone or something gains value from the act of going through an educational process. This value can be in the form of increasing earnings, human capital or social capital, but it must have a positive financial yield in order to be worth investing in. In order for education to have any value outside of being simply a consumer durable it must return some sort of financial gains. The theory of human capital states that if you invest in human capital you will get value back in the form of increased productivity.

On an individual level, does a person gain value from an education? That is, does that person increase his financial income by increasing his level of education? It is clearly shown in statistics that people that complete higher levels of education such as the university or graduate levels tend to earn higher salaries than people that have only completed secondary school. While it is debatable whether the investment in higher degrees for individuals is worth the total costs (income forgone, tuition), it is not debatable that a person has increased their individual financial productivity. That is, a person with a higher salary due to his increased level of education needs to spend less time to make more money than someone who has only completed a lower level of education. By definition, this is increased productivity on an individual level.

From the perspective of business, we must consider whether businesses gain value from having more educated workers. Productivity studies have been done on workers producing simple goods such as wheat, and it was shown that literate workers were more productive than illiterate workers even though literacy was not critical to complete the tasks. Explanations for this trend include that going through the process

of learning to read and write improves one's problem solving abilities, their ability to communicate better and more efficiently, and that they can help educate and train other workers to be more efficient. Businesses also show that they value more educated workers simply because over a long period of time, they have been willing to pay them higher wages than less educated workers.

3. Contributions of Education to Economic Development of Niger State

3.1 Education Brings Development in the Following Dimensions:

3.1.1 Individual: Increased literacy; increased scientific knowledge and training; increased faith in change in the future; increased faith in the ability of the individual—through his own competence—to alter economic and social conditions; increased respect for, and willingness to abide by, societal (instead of familial or local) norms.

3.1.2 Social and Political Relationship and Institutions: Increased inter-nation or inter-group communication; an increasingly open class structure—making possible increased occupational mobility; increased specialization of labour; increased relational and secular bases for decision-making; movement towards some form of mass society (not necessarily democratic); extension of public services and civic duties; increased political participation; increased national identification; political and judicial regulations based on an impersonal system of law.

3.2 Also education influences the following:

3.2.1 In the realm of technology,. A developing society is changing from simple and traditionalized technique towards the application of scientific knowledge.

3.2.2 In agriculture, the developing society evolves from subsistence farming toward the commercial production of agricultural goods.

3.2.3 In industry, the developing society undergoes a transition from the use of human and animals power toward industrialization proper.

3.2.4 In ecological arrangements, the developing society moves from the farm and village towards urban concentration.

Prominent among the points to be considered here is that education supplies the needed manpower for 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 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

development. Therefore, it should be clear that without education Niger State 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 development.

In addition, education promotes social and group relationship (Armstrong, et al 1981:142). In this regard, Obasanjo (2012:3) states that education trains individuals to relate 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. The 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).

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 actualization.

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.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The discussion above illustrates the strategic position of education in charting the course of development in Niger State. The crisis which has engulfed the Nigeria 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 education system.

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

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 term of funding. The private sector can participate by providing research grants, awarding of scholarship and endowment of Professorial

Chairs in universities. An enabling law should also be enacted making it mandatory for multinational companies operating in the State 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. 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 education policies.

References

- Afolabi, F.O. and Loto, A.B. (2012) "Socio-political Vicissitudes and Bureaucratic Constraints on Educational Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria". In Edo, V.O. and Salami, E.F.K. (eds), *Issues and Trends in Nigeria's Development: A Festschrift for rev. (Fr) Abiodun, F.A.* Ibadan John Achers, P. 330 and 339.
- Ajayi, A.I. and Afolabi, F.O. (2009) "The Role of Tertiary Education in National Development: The Nigerian Scenario; *Journal of Teacher Education*, 10(1), 34-46.
- Armstrong, D.G., et al (1981) *Education: An Introduction* 4th edition, Canada: Macmillan Publishing Company, p 142 and 143.
- Amaele, S., et al (2011) *History of Education: from Ancient to Contemporary Era: The Global and Nigerian Perspectives*. Port Harcourt: Hrey Publications Coy, p. 6 and 7.
- Fafunwa, A.B. (1974) *History of Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Olusegun, Obasanjo. (2010) "*Education and National Development*", A Lecture Presented at the 2012 Graduation Ceremony of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, January 26, p. 3.
- Rogers, A. (1992) *Adult Learning and Development*. London: Cassel, Published in Association with Education for Development.