

The Role of Religion in Educational Transformation in Modern Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper emphasises on the role of religion in educational transformation in modern Nigeria. It reflects religion how through it true transformation through religious, true and workable national transformation can be achieved by way of character transformation through religious values, tenets and teachings. It also sees education as a key factor in transformation as no meaningful transformation can take place in any nation outside the involvement of education which delivers the human capital for his success. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. Nigeria introduced the 6-3-3-4 system of education with the primary focus of meeting the educational needs of its citizenry and equipping the youths with sellable skills that will make them to be self reliant. Today, a new system of education called the universal Basic Education (UBE) otherwise known as the 9-3-4 has been re-introduced, whose curriculum is expected to meet the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2020. This work examines the peace of rural areas in educational development in modern Nigeria. It employs phenomenological approach as it

method. It concludes that the rural areas have been neglected in the scheme of things with regards to educational advancement and recommends that there should be a better coverage of the rural areas in educational programme and stress that religion has a vital part on transformation in our educational system.

Keywords: Religion, Education, Transformation.

Introduction

Societies through ages have one form of education or the other, whether indigenous or western education. This is because education is as essential to man as life itself on this planet earth. Education varies from place to place and from time to time. In fact, it is a very important means of developing any nation. The term education has not link itself to any stick consensual definition as its depends on the perspective from which one views it. It can be considered as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competence and the cultural norms of a society by people to transmit this life to the coming generations as to enhance perpetual development of the society. Fafunwa (1982) defines education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are positive value to the society in which he lives, that is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both”. History has it that, long before the advent of both Islamic and Western education, Nigeria has an indigenous type of education (i.e. education for the survival of the people subsistence education). However, modern influences, at about 300 years interval to each other, robbed the country of its indigenous education to a great extent. For instance, Christian education was later promoted by the colonial administration to suit its purpose of colonization (Abdul 2002). Change in time witnessed change in the purpose of education in Nigeria as education later changed its focus towards developing individuals to contribute to the

development of the nation and ultimately in preparation for self government at independence. Education is therefore, is important to the growth and development of the society because of its power to fashion an individual to be integrated into his society, and to become a promoter of his societal culture, and development. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, knowledge and competence for survival in a changing world (Adepoju & Fabiyi cited in Ekpo & Is'haq 2011).

In a bid for Nigeria to achieve the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the vision of 2020 target, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan on inception of power in May 2011 came up with a four year development plan tagged: Transformation Agenda (TA), 2011-2015. TA is based on a set of programmes aimed at transforming the Nigerian economy to meet the needs of the present Nigerians without jeopardizing the needs of future generation. TA therefore emphasizes continuity consistency and commitment (3-cs) and make education a key component of the human development capital of the agenda. This paper adopts a phenomenological approach in tackling the work.

Brief History of Education in Nigeria

Nigeria had witnessed a series of educational system since its birth in 1914. Immediately after independence in Nigeria, there was a lot of ills and shortcomings in Nigeria educational system as it was based on the British educational system which did not pave way for yearning needs, interests and aspirations of Nigerian society. Following the political independence of Nigeria, there was a realization that the type of education our colonial masters left with us needed a critical re-examination of the worth: of content, objectives, relevance, methods, administration, evaluation and so forth. This was said to have led to the then National Education Research Council (NERC) to convey to historic curriculum conference at Lagos in 1969. The conference recommended new set of goals and provided directions for major curriculum revision upon which the National Policy on Education of 1997 and the revised policy in 1981 and

2004 were based. Against this background of National aspirations, a new educational system commonly referred to as the 6-3-3-4 system of education emerged. The system, which consisted of six years of primary school education, three years of junior secondary school education, three years of senior secondary school education and four years of post-secondary education, was implemented in 1982. The 6-3-3-4 system brought about many innovations among which are the vocationalizations of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. At the junior secondary level, pre-vocational subjects were introduced into the curriculum while vocational subjects were introduced into the secondary school levels. The focus of the pre-vocational subjects was to expose students at the junior level to the world of work through exploration. Such exposure would help junior secondary school students make intelligent career choice and also intelligent consumption patterns. Among the pre-vocational subjects are practical agriculture, economics, and Business studies. Introductory Technology is an integration of components of woodenly metal work, basic electronic, applied electricity, water flow technology, air flow technology, food preservatives, automobile, technical drawing, physics, rubber technology, chemistry, plastics, basic building technology and ceramics. Business studies have typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, office practice, commercial and computer science as component at the senior secondary level, recommended vocational and technical subjects include: Agricultural Science, clothing and textile, Home Management, Food and Nutrition, Typewriting and shorthand, principle of accounts, commerce, woodwork, technical drawing, basic electronics, building construction, applied electricity and auto mechanics.

Religion: Towards a Definition

Defining religion, it has over time been established that, there can be no universally acceptable definition of religion owing to its nature.

However, in order to avoid vagueness of the subject matter, a working definition will be provided so as to create a perception of the subject matter in the minds of the readers. We shall briefly take a look at some definitions of religion which has been put forward by some scholars. According to Johnston and Sampson, religion may be defined as “an institutional framework within which specific theological doctrines and practices are advocated and pursued, usually among a community of a like-minded believers” (Johnson, 1994). On his part, Heynes opines that religion is ‘a system of language and practices that organizes the world in terms of what is deemed holy’ (Heynes, 1993).

Gwamna also defines religion as “man’s attempt to relate with supernatural force(s) as part of man’s search for meaning, understanding and explanation of life. Such attempt led man’s coding of such forces under different names such as God, the “*wholly other*”, *Allah*, *Chukwu*, *Olodumare*, and so on” (Gwamna, 2013). Going by these definitions, one thing that is clear here is the fact that, religion is associated with belief, the unseen, life in the hereafter, rituals and practices, etc.

We must also bear in mind that whenever the word ‘religion’ is mentioned, so many things run through one’s mind, but principal among them is the existence of a being called God or a deity. The fundamental content of belief in god is that there is a Mind and a Purpose behind the history of the universe and that the One whose veiled presence is intimated in this way is worthy of worship and the ground of hope (Dopamu, 2009). By and large, religion in this context has to do with the belief in the existence of the supernatural Supreme. Being, and how such belief can help in influencing the attitudes of religious adherents to growth and development in Nigeria. Whatever we think about the definition of religion and its function, it is generally known now that religion has always been an inescapable, inevitable, and concomitant of human life as we know it today (Dopamu, 2009).

Background of the 6-3-3-4 System of Education in Nigeria

A critical examination of the type of formal education in Nigeria before and after independence shows that this education was inadequate and unsatisfactory to the nation's yearnings and aspiration. In the opinion of Fafuwa (1982), education was parochial, elitist, regurgitate and irresponsive to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society. In a bid to check this abnormality, therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effective national development. Thus it is stated: "Education goals in terms of its relevance to the need of the individual as well as in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment and realities of the modern world and rapid social changes should be clearly set out (National Policy on Education F.R.N. 2004)".

The then Federal Government therefore made efforts to find the type of education best suited to Nigeria's development, hence the identification of "6-3-3-4 system of education". According to Omoro (2006), the history of 6-3-3-4 system of education dated back to 8th September, 1969 during the (International Literacy Day) when the Federal Commissioner for Education, Wenike Briggs inaugurated a conference which formulated the ideas leading to the 6-3-3-4 program, he further stated that the program was conceived as an instrument of national unity it was designed to inject functionality into the Nigerian school system. The 6-3-3-4 was fashioned to produce graduates who would be able to make use of their hands, the head and the heart. When it was finally introduced in 1982, there had been inputs by various sectors of Nigerian professional community. Then the 6-3-3-4 system of education was seen as a laudable and impeccable program capable of ushering in an educational revolution in Nigeria. However, the current situation on ground proves that the rural area is not given enabling environment for educational development.

Review Of 6-3-3-4 To The New 9-3-4 System Of Education

This is a type of educational system wherein the recipient of the education would spend six years in the primary school, three years in the junior secondary school, three years in the senior secondary school, and four years in the tertiary institutions. In these stages, we have primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions such as colleges of education, polytechnics and universities respectively. Primary education as regards the 6-3-3-4 system of education is the elementary type of education for children between ages of 6 to 11 years. This is the foundation of education upon which all others are built. It therefore determines the success or failure of the whole system. While junior and senior secondary schools are simply called secondary school where secondary education is received, that is the form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary education (National Policy on Education 2004). The broad aims of secondary education within the overall Nigerian education policy are:

- a. Preparation for useful living within the society and
- b. Preparation for higher education. Tertiary education, which is the post secondary education given in the higher institution aims at:
 - i. The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society at large.
 - ii. The development of the intellectual capabilities or capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments.
 - iii. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop, and
 - iv. The acquisition of the objective view of local and external environments.

From the previous discussion so far, one is convinced beyond a reasonable doubt the importance of 6-3-3-4 system of education. It is rather

a functional education, which enables its recipients to function economically, socially, morally, intellectually and politically. This educational system in itself is a conscious effort at matching and merging academic and vocational education programmes.

The 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria is job-oriented. It places premium on manual activities, technical proficiency, and respect for dignity of labour and economic efficiency. It is to provide the child with basic tools to prepare him for local craft. At the secondary stage emphasis is on the acquisition of vocational skills; while it is professionally oriented at the tertiary stage so as to minimize unemployment and produce skilled manpower, in science and technology. In brief, it is to make individual capable economically and socially. It is also stated in the National Policy on Education that a priority of place is going to be given to religion and moral instructions for the moral and spiritual well being of individuals; but “no child will be forced to accept any religious instruction which is contrary to the wishes of his parents” (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education 2004). This would remove any unnecessary suspicion in terms of religion and religion clashes. The new 9-3-4 system of Education (Universal Basic Education (UBE) which took off in 2006, has the first nine years of basic and compulsory education up to the JSS III level, three years in the senior secondary school, and four years in the tertiary institutions. It was designed to streamline the over-crowded nature of subjects offered at the basic education level. The NCE has in its 52nd meeting in Ibadan approved a subject structure as the new 9 year basic education curriculum, which has been developed by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The new curriculum is expected to be realigned to meet the millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for all (EFA) goals and the National Economic Enhancement Development Strategies (NEEDS). The following implementation arrangement which are being considered by government for the new curriculum include to introduce the new curriculum only in primary 1 and JSS 1 in September 2006, provide

massive orientation programmes to serving teachers on the new curriculum and begin the systematic training of teachers for basic education.

Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) is being promoted and has thus been brought under the UBE programme. The role of government and religious bodies is that of support in terms of infrastructure, instructional materials provision and ensuring that competent teachers and caregivers are engaged in the management of the centres. But lack of these in the rural area unlike the urban area is worrisome.

Educational Development in Urban and Rural Areas

With the passage of time, settlements grow in size and complexity. All present day cities were once villages or small towns or countryside. This growth to urban status is due largely to a combination of factors which includes availability of social facilities such as good roads, electricity, health facility, communication network, industries that provide employment opportunities and easy means of transportation. The availability of these facilities have often made the large towns and cities places of great excitement to rural dwellers who often move in from near and distant villages to increase the population of urban centers. At the same time there is the depopulation of the rural areas (Hornby, 2000). The implication of this settlement pattern for educational advancement in Nigeria is that the urban centers began to attract the establishment of schools because of the teeming population. The urban areas also began to attract teachers who liked to settle in towns to enjoy the social amenities that are provided in the urban areas.

On the contrary, rural areas witnessed lack of establishment of schools. Where schools are available, teachers either resist or refuse transfers to those rural areas for lack of social amenities. Ezewu and Tahir (1997) gave a clearer explanation of the common situations in rural and riverine areas with regards to educational development. This is considered appropriate here because the situations are common in Nigeria. There has

been highly inadequate quantity and quality of infrastructures. Facilities such as market, health centers and recreational centers, which affect settlements, are not available in the rural areas.

Other facilities, which includes, good source of water supply, housing and transportation are also not available in the rural areas. The effect of the lack of these facilities in the area include inability to retain qualified and experienced teachers to man the few secondary and primary schools where they exist. It should also be noted that this factor is responsible for lack of official records and statistics about educational development in the rural areas, particularly as school supervisors appointed by the state and other local government officials, appointed to monitor educational development are highly infrequent in the places they are assigned to monitor. In worse cases government monitoring officials are non-existent in some rural areas. The effect of this is that there are no records about educational development in many rural areas in Nigeria.

It is clear that towns such as Port Harcourt, Owerri, Uyo, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar, Yenegoa and Benin city, have social amenities. The facilities available are such that they could attract much population, good buildings and teachers. Communication facilities are available and schools are often highly inadequate quantity and quality of infrastructures. Facilities such as market, health centers and recreational centers, which affect settlements, are not available hence they could not attract population, teachers and government officials. In the riverine areas transportation is difficult. Sometimes, it is difficult, to get boats. Moreover, weather is also a strong factor in determining accessibility. All these affect school attendance in areas where rural areas stand disadvantaged in educational provision, supervision and with regards to educational data available to researchers.

It should be noted that these disparities in educational development between urban and rural areas are often not noticed or neglected when noticed. This has at times resulted in serious national crisis because the rural areas that constitute the minorities have occasionally felt neglected in the scheme of things within the nation state. The fact that most readily

available information are not adapted to the regional question or rural settings since they have been collected at request of a central administration, they tend to be representative of the areas not covered. For these reasons, ratios of illiteracy are frequently presented at averages; the actual distribution of illiteracy is either underestimated or unknown. This has serious consequences on the minorities or those in the rural areas because it often results in the rural areas, particularly as their levels of deprivation are not known (Furter, 1980).

The Place of Religion in National Transformation

Obviously, religion is an integral part of every human society, which its importance cannot be glossed over. It is noteworthy to state equivocally here that; "experience has shown that religion exists, persists and continues to influence and determine the pace of humanity. There is hardly any part of the world that has successfully ignored religion" (Isiramen, 2010). Though, some scholars have on different occasions see no reason why we can depend on religion as a veritable tool for national transformation, instead, what they see is a complete opposite. For instance, Wole Soyinka sees religion as "one enemy of potential nationhood that requires, not just a separate address of its own...all of a frank, even brutally frank nature, since the intervention of religion in nation being has been of utmost savage, unconscionable and increasingly intolerant kind" (Soyinka, 2009).

In the work of Confucius, education is pivotal to character building (Prothero, 2010). Since this is true that the education is not learning trade but learning to be 'human', that is, learning to become more of ourselves and transform society through others; hence, the place of religion as it is known as an agent of socialization of an individual. Through tales in the moon light, sunday schools and the Qur'anic schools of African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam respectively, morality, ethnics and good characters are formed in the life of an individual. All these can be seen as different forms of religious education in the Nigerian societies but are geared towards forming a life that is morally correct.

Another major point that must be considered is the place of religious values in enhancing national transformation.

This by implication assesses the theological basis of the various religious teachings and their impacts on the formulation and implementation of key development concepts and practices, within the context in which the religious teachings are offered. Judging from the African Religion's point of view, their religious values, though not written down in any scripture, neither is it written in 'black and white', yet it is 'written' in all aspects of African life and that makes up its myths, folktales, proverbs, liturgy, songs and sayings. In all, the cardinal tenets of indigenous religions are devotion, peace and love (Akama, 1998).

This becomes the basis why among the Africans, religion is life and life in itself is religious. Mbiti corroborated this when he posits that; "Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices" (Mbiti, 1967). Without mincing words, what we see as the major religious values in the traditional religion also are the common denominator in both Islam and Christianity.

As a matter of fact, these religious values are quite important in the sense that, they influence the choices people make in life and thus, decide their behaviours. Since we have earlier pointed out there is a symmetrical relationship between religious values, character building, national transformation and development in every society, therefore, it behoves on all religious institutions and leaders to put the proper mechanism in place to impart necessary religious values that can aid growth and development. In turn, this process will bring the nation out of its doldrums of arrested growth and development.

The work of Williams is apposite at this juncture. In her work titled; "Religious Groups and the Politics of National Development" (Williams, 1992), she argued that religion and development can and do go together, and in particular that Nigeria's development as it is today cannot be divorced from the support of religion. Though her focus is on the efforts of religious institutions, rather than an individual, but the point is that,

individual's character cannot be built along the line of religious values without the instrumentality of religious institutions. In essence, the position here is that, the religious bodies in the contemporary Nigerian society have now developed into a community of faith and dynamism, which have the potential to change people's values and perceptions about life through their teachings.

Through strict adherence to religious values, transformation of individuals can be achieved, and that will give rise to character reformation, leading to national transformation.

One of the major problems of Nigeria today is bad leadership. Many scholars have pointed this out and we will not in any way over flog the same issue but we will create another perspective out of this towards achieving a national transformation. Religion, through the instrumentality of religious organizations must be used to raise leaders who can be relied upon as agents of transformation and the change the Nigerian nation has been waiting for over decades.

The truth that we must not shy away from is that, most of our leaders see the corridor of power as an avenue and opportunity to amass wealth for themselves and families. This mentality eventually gave rise to the privatization of the state in such a way that it became a tool for servicing the private interests of the dominant faction of the elites – leaders (Ake, 1996). The late literary icon, Chinua Achebe was quoted in the *Tell Magazine* to have succinctly maintained that; "Nigeria is what it is because its leaders are not what they should be". This, by extension means that leaders are expected to be educated and morally grounded in order for them to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties and responsibilities. It is quite unfortunate that too many of the leaders are not doing nearly enough to drag we the followers into the 21st century and enable us to enjoy the best possible existence. In the words of Sule Maitama, an elder-state-man in Nigeria, at a workshop, he lamented on the ugly nature of our leaders thus:

The majority of Naija (sic) leaders are blatant thieves, incompetent morons, uninspiring mediocrities...and primitive, vision-less, plan-less or just plain lazy...too many of them squander their energies on ultimately futile political shenanigans or irresponsible partying...even the few who are smart, well-intentioned and willing to control their acolytes are too easily distracted and pretty disorganized and unproductive compared to their counterparts in the western world (Kogbara, 2013).

The recklessness we see in our leaders on daily basis will not allow us to maintain a contrary view to the above expressed view. As a matter of fact, it is too obvious to be contradicted.

Nevertheless, the hope that the Nigerian nation still have is that, the overwhelming religious experience, through the presence of religious organizations across board, leaders of integrity and reputable character can still be raised to lead the nation to her 'Promised Land'. This can be better understood in the words of Herbert when he captures the point most poignantly.

With transformational leadership, a landlocked country can create coastal waters and become a powerful State like Israel. With transformational leadership, Japan, a country devastated by World War II and devoid of natural resources can become a leading industrialized nation. With transformational leadership, a country can convert its desert into an oasis, like United Arab Emirate that is now a world-class tourist destination and international financial centre. With transformational leadership, a country can transit from Third World to First within 20 to 30 years, like Singapoer under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

With transformational leadership, a country can transform from a backwater, commodity exporting country to become one of Asia Tiger's economies, like Malaysia under Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad (Herbert, 2012).

Over the years, all the three major religious, especially Islam and Christianity have done greatly well in the area of rendering of services and provision of social amenities that can enhance the well-being of humanity

in the society. Among these are building of schools (from the grass root level to the highest levels of education), hospitals, construction of boreholes, drainage systems, and some provide counselling system for people either at a lower cost or free of charge. These all we praise them for their good works. However, we wish to call their attention to another dimension on this same point.

Our society can be better transformed if these provisions of social amenities can be carried out in a way to send signal to the government on the need to revitalize the government's own facilities. What we have today now is a complete annihilation of the government system in such a way that the private establishments can thrive. It is instructive to note that, in most cases, the same system that establish and control the religious-based schools, hospitals among others are the same hand running that of the government's.

The mind bugling question remains, why are government's own not working, as they ought to, but that of the private/religious-based establishments thriving at the peril of the state's? In answer this question, all religious organizations must be sincere enough and be ready to help, partner and support government's programmes, policies and projects (3Ps) so as to enjoy a total continuity, consistency and commitment (3Cs).

The Way forward

Much is required to be done to help the plight of those in the rural areas in Nigeria. Many years after, intact, ten years after the introduction of the 6-3-3-4, system of education in Nigeria (that is six years in the primary school, three years in the junior secondary school, three years in the senior secondary school and four years in the tertiary level school structure). Some communities are yet to have school with electricity with which to operate machines that should have been used in the teaching of introductory technology. The educational problems, of the people living in the rural settings of Nigeria, require a great attention.

In fact their needs are beyond that of expanding educational facilities. They need special attention. It has been noted above that teachers and supervisors need good houses to stay in the rural areas and these are not readily available. Government should build modern schools in rural areas and provide staff quarters with electricity, good water and communication network to attract teachers to the rural areas. There should be some forms of inducements granted by the government to staff posted to the rural areas in Nigeria. Government could run a different pay structure for teachers and other staffs in the rural areas. To retain the population in the rural areas, government should provide social amenities that are available in the towns or urban centers in the rural areas. This is not to make the urban centers less attractive, but to make the rural areas as attractive as the urban areas.

Indices of Quality Education

Quality education is a dynamic concept whose indices may vary according to the need of the country. Pigozzi (2008:6) wrote that a quality education is one what welcomes the learner and can adapt to meet learning needs, it is inclusive. A quality education strives to ensure that all learners, regardless of sex, age, language, religion and ethnicity, for example, are reached – that they have the possibility of participating in and learning from organized learning activities. However, for a common understanding, this paper has noted the following as indices of quality education.

- i. Proper funding
- ii. Effective quality control (to enforce standard)
- iii. Conducive and appropriate teaching and learning environment
- iv. Sufficient staff quarters and classrooms in schools
- v. Adequate and proper equipment and staffing
- vi. Good quality and well motivated staff truly committed to undiluted scholarship. According to Obasi (2010) the indicators of quality and functional education are:

- vii. Effective and efficient performance of graduates in society, industries and other work places
- viii. Employability (self, national and international) of products/graduates (Entrepreneurship level)/Graduate employment statistics
- ix. National and International mobility of generated manpower
- x. Market value or demand level of research products and other services provided by the institutions
- xi. Level of discipline and patriotism of graduates
- xii. International transferability/admissibility of graduates/students for higher studies without remedial conditions.
- xiii. High rating of an institution and its products nationally and internationally.
- xiv. High absorptive capacity at all levels
- xv. Quality education according to UNICEF (2000) is characterized by:
 - i. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in by their families and communities.
 - ii. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities.
 - iii. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas in gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDs prevention and peace.
 - iv. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.

Factors Militating Against Quality Education in Nigeria

Nigerian scholars have written widely on the factors militating against quality education in Nigeria. Etesike (2011) identified and

enumerated some of the factors as factors as inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of qualified teachers, problem of poor policy implementation incessant strikes, and examination malpractice. Iwundu and Thom-otuya (2014) observed the following as challenges to the Nigerian education sector: incessant strike action, inadequate funding, politicization and abuse of the education sector, bribery and corruption, unemployment and lack of emphasis on entrepreneurship education. A politician in Edo state, Hon. Aiyamenkhue Edokpolo enumerated challenges facing the Nigeria educational system as: understanding, poor infrastructure, inadequate classrooms, and teaching aids (projectors, computers, libraries, laboratories etc), paucity of quality teachers, poor or polluted learning environment, social vices like examination malpractices, cultism, and infant hooliganism. Iwundu and Inko Tariah (2015) added intellectual dishonesty among teachers, pull it down syndrome, justice ability in the right to education as factors militating against quality education in Nigeria. Writing on the educational challenges in Africa, Achuonye (2004) indicated that in Africa, effort to achieve quantity and quality education have been constantly dashed as a result of several issues related to poverty, underdevelopment, and the prevailing political situation which manifest in form of: debt burden, population rate, general instability, low skilled manpower, and keeping pace with global trends. Obasi (2010) enumerated more detailed factors responsible for lack of quality education in Nigeria as follows:

Socio-Cultural Factors

- i. Moral degeneration in society
- ii. Inverted value system
- iii. Poor reading culture
- iv. Poor family socialization
- v. Low status of knowledge/ education and teachers
- vi. Militarization of society

- vii. Generation gaps between teachers and student parents and children etc
- viii. Truncation of academic calendar due to incessant strikes and student demonstration
- ix. Gender inequality

Institutional Factor

- i. Mismanagement of resources
- ii. Examination malpractice
- iii. Cultism
- iv. Commercialization/monetization of grades, admissions, teaching materials
- v. Inadequate/ poor quality staffing
- vi. Obsolete/inadequate facilities, workshops, laboratories, classrooms, hostels etc
- vii. Poor welfare system
- viii. Irrelevant curriculum
- ix. Inadequate/weak institutional quality assurance (QA) system
- x. Inadequate/weak linkages, etc
- xi. Poor services

Techno-Economic Factors

- i. poor funding
- ii. inadequate/unreliable infrastructural/social amenities
- iii. low ICT knowledge/content
- iv. poor incentive system
- v. inadequate/weak quality control system

Political Factors

- i. Politicization of education and educational institution especially at the state level (e.g politicization of appointment of chief executive and funding).

- ii. Poor/non-implementation of policies.
 - a. Weak anachronistic legal framework.

Students' Factor

- i. Lack of interest
- ii. Get rich quick syndrome
- iii. Exaggerated life style
- iv. Poor mindset
- v. Lack of commitment

Enhancing Quality Education in Nigeria for National Development

The quality of education in Nigeria can be enhanced for national development if there can be a synergy of all stakeholders in education. Our history of education informs us that, the colonial masters bequeathed quality of education and consequently brought the sector to its present deteriorated level. Scholars have suggested the following as strategies to improve quality education in Nigeria: instructional supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of delivery of the programme, adequate planning to cover the expected enrollment, required teachers, infrastructure needs and equipment, funding, regular training of teachers among others. Etesike (2011) recommended the followings for advancing the quality of education in Nigeria. They include:

- i. There should be a massive campaign and public awareness as well as value re-orientation as regards what we want education to be and do for Nigerian.
- ii. Government should pay adequate attention to the sector so that there should be sustainability and improvement in the state of our education.
- iii. There should be adequate funding of the sector and infrastructure rehabilitation of the entire education system in line with what obtains in the technological world. Funding of

education must be based on the 26% of the national budget as recommended by UNESCO.

- iv. To ensure quality of the teaching and learning activities, there should be training and retraining of serving teachers in order to boost their knowledge and methods of curriculum delivery. Teachers should be exposed to computer and ICT education because it is the in thing in modern education.
- v. Education personnel must be well remunerated to enhance commitment and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that substantial urban-rural disparities do exist in the academic achievement of pupils at the basic (primary) education level in Nigeria – a developing country. These disparities tend to cut across grade levels and areas of learning i.e. subjects. In general therefore, rural children tend to lag behind their urban counterparts in all key areas of the curriculum. These disparities are rooted in the quality of the environmental parameters associated with the urban and rural areas of the developing countries. The rural areas suffer abject neglect in terms of social infrastructures and services and are also characterized by severe poverty caused by varying degrees of geographical, social and political isolation. Thus the neglect of the rural areas in Nigeria has created an environment that makes the rural child vulnerable by limiting his/her educational progress.

It is basic that urban centers will continue to attract rural settlers. Deliberate efforts should be made to balance the level of development in urban and rural areas. Educational statistics should now be provided at ward levels so that the true picture of educational development can be seen. The current practice where figures from state headquarters are used to draw conclusions about the level of educational development in the entire state, do not always reflect the true positions. There should be a greater

concern for those in the rural areas, whose problem appears to be terrible in Nigeria.

When policy used, religion has a lot of potentials in transforming the Nigerian nation into an enviable country among the comity of nations. Therefore, religious organizations, leaders and adherents must rise to the task of ensuring that religious values, teachings, and tenets are held in high esteem and highly respected and followed to the letter.

Fundamentally, the mandate to reform and transform Nigeria has been most emphatically communicated in the democratic process.

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