

Restructuring School Education in Rural Nigeria: Issues and Challenges

Abdulkarim Alhaji Isa^{1*}, Mohammed Lawan Bashayi², Shettima Alhaji Umar³, and Ahmad Babayo⁴

¹Lecturer, Department of General Studies, Mai Idriss Aloomo Polytechnic, P. M. B. 1020, Geidam, Yobe State, Nigeria

²⁻⁴Lecturer, Department of Social Development, Mai Idriss Aloomo Polytechnic, P. M. B. 1020, Geidam, Yobe State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author

Abstract:- The poor state of the rural schools and their predicament accompanied by unfavourable government education policies towards the rural area was the key factor that attract this research. Nigeria, as one of the largest economy among the African countries, is still a developing nation, this indicates the need for reforms that will bring about technological development. For Nigeria to become a developed nation there is a need for improvement in the quality of education especially in the rural areas where a large chunk of the Nigerian population resides. The schools in rural areas lack the necessary infrastructure, such as teaching aid, conducive atmosphere, qualified teachers and other necessary needs for improving this sector. This made the residence of the rural areas feel neglected and consider education as waste of time. The present study makes a cursory reading of the national policy on education and makes a comparison with what is actually happening in the rural areas by making an interview with the stakeholders and recommends an urgent need of special educational policy to be formulated, the government should modify its policy on education so as to improve education in rural areas. The colonial system of education should be abandon or modify to suit the current need for technological development everywhere.

Keywords: rural, areas, developing, nation, education, qualitative and policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in the rural Nigeria mostly is on the disadvantage side because it is an activity carried outside in the city or the possibly privileged area, all the stakeholders in the rural areas are facing one problem or the other, and these include the structure, the job satisfaction, the background, and lack of maximum co-operation from student and their parents. These and other factors bring about some negative influence on the smooth running of system of education in rural areas. The Nigerian education system is based on colonial education system. According to Imam (2012), "over the years, it has been criticised for being too theoretical to be able to make meaningful impact on the life of Nigerians. The subjects taught in various schools reflect the taste of the colonial education officials; thus, school curricula were built around the existing colonial values. Students were supposed to mimic their teachers in subject like English Language which involved demonstration of competency. The same problem which informed dependency on past colonial education relics seems to have continued till date." The present situation of schools in rural Nigeria is almost the same

in every zone of the country. The common issues of rural schools in Nigeria are inadequate number of teachers, teacher absenteeism and improper supervision of schools. The well qualified teachers mostly live in the city and they are scared of moving to rural areas due to lack of infrastructural facilities.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present paper is developed on the basis of secondary source data such as policy records, books and journals. Interview with key informants in the field of education sector has been conducted and observation method has been employed to elicit the conditions of rural education in Nigeria.

III. SCENARIO OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

The situation of rural schools in Nigeria is nothing to write home about, from the side of the host communities seems to be not fully ready to accept the western schooling system, they prefer their local way of life. Some do not even have seats in the schools, while some buildings are even collapsing. In most times the effort of any government to improve this rural education sector become a mere paper work without actual implementation. The objectives of current policies like Universal Basic Education, National Policy on Education and the Sustainable Development Goals are to improve the situation of education system but the execution of these policies seems to be in favour of urban areas.

IV. NIGERIAN POLICY ON EDUCATION

The main aims and objectives of Nigeria's education policy arising from the 1977, 1981 and 2004 editions are "the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity, the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individuals and the Nigeria society, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Preparation for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education."

Looking at the above aims and objectives in one hand, and make a critical view on concept and position of education today, one can conclude that there is a lot of homework to do before achieving these aims. However, in the process all hands must be on deck, it is the responsibility of all. All the

stakeholders have to work hard towards achieving these objectives. These include; the pupils, the teachers, the administrators, the parents and the government. Many Nigerians have been complaining about the falling down of education generally, more especially in the rural areas where they lack all the resources. And, to be specific the education in rural areas has some peculiar challenges that need to be address before getting the qualitative education for the rural communities.

V. CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

Whereas the problems of education in Nigeria is perceived to be general, it is said to be more severe in the rural areas. Anyaebu et al (2004) and Haruna (2015) “noted some of these challenges are lack of zeal and interest by teachers due to poor and delayed salary and poor condition of work, frequent strike action by teachers, lack of curricular and other materials such as textbooks, libraries, instructional materials and at times classrooms, desk and chairs.” According to Dike (2004), “about 2000 (mostly primary) schools existing in the rural areas in Nigeria are said to have no classrooms, lessons are received under trees or thatched houses.” It is observed that instability of the government institutions and infrastructure that is transportation, communications, and utilities. Many primary schools in the rural areas are not even connected to the power supply grid and are therefore unable to take advantage of new development in educational technologies. Low community participation in education planning and policy implementation, poverty, corruption, cultural challenges, psychological challenges, socialization challenges, insecurity and political crisis and poor implementation of plan. Due to this situation and personal reasons, many teachers reject posting into rural areas while those that do not, treat their presence in such areas as a part time assignment. Yet, effectively educating the rural population that make up over 60% of the country is a necessary precondition for national development.

Anyaebu et al (2004) thus opined “rural education is key to rural development and an essential building block of national development; that poverty cannot be eradicated without eliminating illiteracy among the rural populace and without finding a systematic way to raise their level of knowledge.” According to Olayide et al (*cf.* Fabunmi 2003), “there is the general consensus that the rate of agricultural development and rural transformation is directly related to the educational standard of the rural communities. Such rural education programme will widen the rural populace’s horizon and predispose them to greater receptivity of new ideas.” The need thus arises for appropriate reforms and policies to address pertinent issues affecting the development of our educational system especially as it concerns education in the rural areas.

VI. PROGRESS OF RURAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

- About 25.3 million students at all levels of education are out of school in the country;

- With 11.4 million pupils affected, Nigeria has the highest drop-out children from schools in the world;
- About 63 percent of children who live in rural areas cannot read at all;
- There is inadequate teacher training and support;
- There is near absence of reliable data to support education administration and planning;
- There is a lack of support for girl-child education.

VII. PROSPECTS OF RURAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

- Proper funding of the Ministry of Education to actualize its task
- Create well-articulated program for rural development, which will reduce the variation in the administration and performance of rural development program in Nigeria
- Provide adequate teaching staffs that are properly trained and certified
- Provide teaching aids for imparting the quality education
- Incorporate in curriculum our traditional education which are the cardinal goals for development of the latent physical and intellectual skills
- Inculcating respect for elders and those in a position of authority. Acquiring specific vocational training and develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour, and understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of the community at large
- Increasing state and local government commitment and participation
- Establish parent rural directorate to make the parent conscious about education and encourage them to send their children to school
- Government should have political consciousness to deal with parent that does not send their children to school
- Establish police force that will arrest the children of school age that are roaming around during school hours and punish their parent accordingly
- The ministry will make collaboration with state so that schools should be visited to make sure teachers are discharging their duties (page 59 Special education reform in Nigeria, prospect and challenge)
- Technical vocational education and training (TVET) should be made available in schools (Shirley, Chijioke, & Chukwumaijem, 2015).

VIII. CONCLUSION

It is found that the rural schools are in a poor condition. The academic performance of the rural schools is poor compared to the urban schools. The government policies on education towards rural educational development are inadequate in Nigeria. Government policies in improving the quality of education in the rural areas has not been successful. The rural schools face more challenges than schools in the urban centres due to government biased policies that is skewed towards

benefiting the urban centres. Rural students face more challenges compared to their urban counterparts due to unfavourable government policies against the rural areas. The teachers in the rural schools face more problems in the rural areas than the teachers in the urban centres because of policies that favours teachers in the urban centres. The government face both institutional and implementation problems in trying to implement policies that might improve rural education. The government education policies are not geared towards the improvement of rural education. The education sector has suffered from neglect over the years, especially in the rural this made the rural residence refuse to take education as priority.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Towards improving the system of rural educational development in rural areas it is recommended that the government should to revive the interest of the rural populace in education, positive reforms that address the current problems have to be put in place. Special educational policies directed to improve the rural areas should be formulated, monitored and implemented with proper supervision. Training for teachers and the provision of teaching aid in schools situated in rural areas. Evolvement of an arrangement for training of specialist teachers in rural education and subsequent professionalization of same. The provision of an improved reward scheme for teachers in rural areas. The rural inducement allowance can be enhanced or improve in order to attract the best hands to the rural areas. Also, the basic amenities should be made available in the schools. Extensive awareness creation and parental programme for rural dwellers

on all aspects of rural education should be designed by the government to improve the present condition of rural education system in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Anyaegbu R, Christman, D.E and Jingpu, C. (2004). The Challenges of Rural Education in Nigeria: Potential Lessons from China. *EJournal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Setting*. 1 (2)160-174.
- [2]. Dike, V. (2004). The State of Education in Nigeria and the Health of the Nation. www.AfricaEconomicAnalysis.org.
- [3]. Fabunmi, M. (2003). Social and Political Context of Educational Planning and Administration, Ibadan: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- [4]. Haruna, M. J., & Liman, B. M. (2015). Challenges Facing Educating Nigerian Child in Rural Areas: Implications for National Development. *Proceeding of the 3rd Global Summit on Education GSE (E-ISBN 978-967-0792-01-1)*.
- [5]. Ibukun, W. O., State, O., Aboluwodi, A., & State, O. (2010). Nigeria's National Policy on Education and the University Curriculum in History: Implication for Nation Building. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 1(2), 9–17.
- [6]. Festus, E. O. (1998). Special education reform in Nigeria: prospects and challenges. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 13(1), 57–71. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0885625980130106>
- [7]. Imam, H. (2012). Educational Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence Period. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1: 181–204.
- [8]. Kayode, E., Innocent, T., and Charity, R. (2015). Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria: An Analysis of Reforms, Challenges and Prospects. *Education Journal*, 4(3), 111–122. <http://doi.org/10.11648/j.edu.20150403.14>
- [9]. Serumu, I. (2015). Challenges of Implementing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Curriculum in Delta State Colleges of Education. *Journal of Educational Research and Review*, 4(5): 72–80.