

Education as a Key to National Development in Nigeria

Ogbonnaya, Esther Abosede PhD

National Open University of Nigeria, Mushin Centre, Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract:

Purpose: This paper examined education as a key to National Development in Nigeria. It highlighted the fact that a nation develops in relation to its achievement in education. This explains why contemporary world attention has focused on education as an instrument for launching nations into the world of science and technology resulting in human advancement, in terms of living conditions and development of the environment.

Design/Methodology & Approach: the methodology adopted was a contextual analysis that involved the review of materials ranging from publications, textbooks, and relevant internet sources.

Implication: Education is the life wire of a nation that leads to great growth and development, as no nation rises above its standard of education. Therefore, Nigeria needs to appraise its present educational system and introduce innovations that would ensure it competes favorably with global standards.

Originality/Value: This paper concludes that when the present challenges in the educational sector are addressed, a cutting edge educational standards established in all learning institutions, and political will of the government for equity, Nigeria would be launched into steady, and unprecedented national development.

Keywords: Education, National Policy on Education, National Development, Nigeria National Development Plan.

Paper Type: Conceptual research.

a nation would experience astronomic socioeconomic growth in a short time. However, for a developing country like Nigeria, there is the need to realize how education can be used to improve the economy. When illiteracy is eradicated, the citizens become enlightened and this results in the right actions expected by a good citizen. It is noteworthy that once the citizens live aright, the country will be in better shape. Also, an educated person, who is transformed, cannot be found in the act of robbery, murder, kidnapping, rape, and other vices, thus making the nation a place of peace and comfort where economic development thrives (Lochner, L., and Moretti, E., 2004) . This study intends to clarify the concepts of education, and national development with the intent to present the reciprocal benefits of one to the other.

National development is a comprehensive term used to refer to the development of every area of the lives of individuals and their nation. It is the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a nation which is achieved through strategies mapped out by the government (Bawa, B. 2016). This holistic development includes the development and reconstruction of areas such as education, agriculture, culture, sports, science and technology, and many others for the development of the individuals and the nation at large (Lawal and Abe, 2011). Thus, this is paper examines the relationship between education and national development in the 21st century in Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a tool that avails people with knowledge, skill, technique and information which empowers them to know their rights and duties toward the family, society, and the nation. Education has helped in no small measure to improve the quality of life in any society. This could be seen in features exhibited through education which include removing poverty, safety and security against crime, prevention of wars and terrorism as well as commerce and trade. Others are maintenance of law and order, women empowerment, communications, and upliftment of economically weaker sections of the societies. One of the most important benefits of education in a society is that it improves the standard of living and assist individuals to contribute to the development of the nation/society (Adam Sibuyi 2016),

Education is a very important key that can be used to unlock many closed doors in a country. When a nation understands the imperative of education as a catalyst to development, such

II. CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Education has been defined by various educationists, philosophers, and scholars from different fields. Education also comes in various forms with its unique features and importance. The system of education varies across the globe; in Nigeria, the system of education differs from that of America, Japan, Brazil, Australia, and other nations of the world. Etymologically, the word education is derived from two Latin words “Educare” and “educere” (Amaele et al., 2011). Accordingly, “Educare”, means to train, to form, or to mould. In other words, it means the society trains, forms, or to 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 favored by the humanists who argue that the function of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the child to enable him to function in the society according to his abilities, interests, and needs (Kingdom, Orji and Job 2013).

Beside, education is entirely used to develop human beings in their cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and psycho productive domains. It involves a pleasing approach in human behavior through the process of teaching and learning. Fafunwa, (2004) defined education as what each generation gives to its younger ones which makes them develop attitudes, skills, abilities, and other behaviors which are the positive values to the society in which they live. Also, Amaele et al. (2011), buttressed the aforementioned definition of education 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.

Furthermore, education is the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms values. One of the most important benefits of education is that it improves personal lives and helps society to run smoothly. Education is a tool that provides people with knowledge, skill, technique, information, enables them to know their rights and duties toward their family, society as well as the nation. It develops the capabilities to fight against injustice, violence, corruption, and many other bad elements in society. It is the most important element in the evolution of the nation (Rajesh Parihar 2017). This buttressed by Bhatta, (2009) who opined that “healthy society was not possible without educated individuals”. She believed that the educational framework which targets the purpose of personal development is a good basis of human ethics. Thus, without education, one will not explore new ideas and development would be stalled.

In the context of this paper, education is the process of acquiring knowledge or undergoing training in every aspect of life; physically, mentally, academically socially, spiritually among others to enable one become self-reliant, self-sufficient as well as a prominent member of the society that would contribute to the development of the economy. There are different types/forms of education all of which are integrated to enhance human capital development a panacea for national development.

Forms/Types of Education

Education goes beyond what takes place within the four walls of the classroom. A child gets an education from his experiences outside the school as well as from those within the school system. Based on these factors, there are *three (3) main types of education*, namely: formal, informal, and non-formal (Yuri Vanetik 2019).

Formal Education

Formal education or formal learning usually takes place on the premises of the school, where a person may learn basic, academic, or trade skills. Small children often attend a nursery or kindergarten but often formal education begins in elementary school and continues with secondary school. Post-secondary education (or higher education) is usually at a

college or university, which may grant an academic degree. Formal education is associated with a specific program of teaching and learning activities and is provided under a certain set of rules and regulations. Formal education is given by specially qualified teachers who are supposed to be efficient in the art of instruction. It also observes strict discipline. Both the student and the teacher are aware of these facts and engage themselves in the process of education. Formal education is structured hierarchically, it is also a planned and deliberate system of education, Scheduled fees are paid regularly, and it has a chronological grading system. It has a syllabus and it is subject-oriented; the syllabus has to be covered within a specific period. Examples of formal education include learning in a classroom, school grading/certification, college, and university degrees (Yuri Vanetik 2019).

Informal Education

Unlike formal education, informal education is not organized by an institution such as school or college and has no fixed timetable or schedule. There is no set curriculum required as such education consists of observed experiences and informal instructions, within the family, community, or among social groups. Informal education, therefore, refers to all learning activities outside of the school environment, without the use of any particular learning method. People can also get an informal education by reading many books from a library or the internet. It may be learned at the marketplace, playground, at home, or among friends. In this type of education, conscious efforts are not involved. It is neither pre-planned nor deliberate. Informal education may take diverse forms. For example, a parent teaching a child how to prepare a meal, or ride a bicycle, or some spontaneous type of learning such as operating an electronic bank door, the use of an electronic device, and so on (Yuri Vanetik 2019). Hence, informal education is independent of boundary walls, has no definite syllabus, not pre-planned and has no timetable, requires no fees, awards no certificates, engages a broad list of sources/media, and is a lifelong process in a natural way without stress. It can be gotten from any source such as media, life experiences, friends, and family (Yuri Vanetik 2019).

Non-formal Education

Non-formal education includes adult basic education, adult literacy education, or school equivalency preparation. In non-formal education, individuals can acquire literacy, other basic skills, or job skills. Home education, individualized instruction (such as programmed learning), distance learning and computer-assisted instruction are other possibilities. Non-formal education is imparted consciously, deliberately, and systematically. It is organized for a homogeneous group and programmed to serve the needs of the identified group. This necessitates flexibility in the design of the curriculum and the scheme of assessment. Non-formal education is planned and taken outside the formal school system, the timetable and syllabus are adjustable. Unlike theoretical formal education, it is practical and vocational-based education. Non-formal education has no age limit and is likely to charge fees and

award certificates of attendance, takes the form of full time or part-time learning of professional skills. Examples of non-formal education are Boy scouts, Girls guide, and sports programs like swimming, fitness programs, community-based adult education courses, vocational courses, and free courses for adult education developed by organizations (Yuri Vanetik 2019). Hence, the importance of education in national development cannot be overemphasized.

III. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

The imperative of education is expressed in the fact that it serves as a tool to enrich an individual's knowledge and develop his potentials as well as develop a sound moral character for the benefit of the society. Education develops national consciousness and political awareness in people and it helps us to alter our ways of thinking, and our attitude to people, events, and situations. Education is a powerful instrument in the advancement of individual and national goals. According to Nelson Mandela, education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. Again, Martin Luther King Jr opined that the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Education is an important aspect of the modern industrialized world. Education is needed for survival in the present competitive world. The modern knowledge society is based on people who have high living standards and knowledge which allows them to implement better solutions for their challenges like twenty-first-century Nigeria. Education facilitates quality learning all through life among people of any age group, caste, creed, religion, and region. It plays a great role in career growth as well as in personal growth. Thus intelligence plus character is the true goal of education (Onwuka, 2014).

The features of the education include empowerment resulting in poverty alleviation as well as the safety and security of individuals who are less susceptible to being cheated or become victims of violence. Other features are the prevention of wars and terrorism which lead to a safe and secure life. Individuals take active part in various educational activities. These types of productive activities provide knowledge to live a better life, and promotes **commerce** and trade in the country. A good education does not simply mean going to school or college and getting a degree. Education helps to become self-dependent and build great confidence among the citizenry to accomplish difficult tasks. Another important feature of education is the internalization of law and order by the citizenry to enable the process of the nation's fast development.

Further still, the relation between education and communication is apparent. A good education helps to communicate better with other people. Education is the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, cultural norms and values. As social beings, it is our responsibility to give back to society and make it a better place for the next generation. An educated person is aware of his personal as well as social responsibilities. Proper education teaches a

person to think beyond his interests and also provides him the ability to give back to society. Education could also mean innovation. Innovation and creativity can only occur when people are skilled enough to know how to operate with different technologies. Educated people always find a solution to their problems with the help of better techniques. It is no secret that a good education has the power to change a life. What is new is the demand for that change. Governments are investing more than ever before on educating their citizens, eager for them to compete in the global workforce. A growing global middle class is spending more of its own money on educating their families. Employers are looking for a new sort of colleague - someone with the skills to flourish in the 21st century. Combined with technologies that continue to develop at breakneck speed, the result is a world that has the want, and the means, to learn at scale (Onwuka, 2014). From the foregoing, it is necessary to examine the current national policy of education in Nigeria and ascertain its impact on the national development.

Current Policy on Education in Nigeria

Nigeria's educational system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study). According to Nigeria's National Policy on Education in 2013, basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education. At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The latter is composed of polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunities for undergraduate, and vocational and technical education. The academic year typically runs from September to July. Most universities use a semester system of 18-20 weeks. Others run from January to December, divided into 3 terms of 10-12 weeks. These educational institutions have helped in the achievement of the general features of education enumerated earlier in this study.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria in 2013 is an important document that has attractive plans for the educational system of the country in general and, in particular, for persons with a disability. It is anchored on Nigeria's philosophy on education as enunciated through the nation's objectives (FRN: National Policy on Education 2013).

Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria

A nation's policy on education is the government's way of realizing that part of the national goals which could be achieved, using education as a tool. However, no policy on education can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation. The overall philosophy of Nigeria is to: live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, an indissoluble, democratic, and sovereign nation founded on the principle of freedom, equity, and justice;

promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. The five main national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education, are the building of; a free and democratic society; a just egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nations; a great and dynamic economy; a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (Adiele, E. E. 2006).

In Nigeria's philosophy of education, education is an instrument for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education. Education fosters the worth development of the individual, for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around. This is through the acquisitions of appropriate skills and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Consequently, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating the following values; respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, faith in man's ability to make rational decisions, moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations, shared responsibility for the common good of the society, promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children/learners, and the acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance which is the hub of national development (Evang, H. M. Molagun 1999).

IV. CONCEPT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The word national, according to the Longman dictionary of contemporary English, refers to a phenomenon that embraces a whole nation. The term national development is very comprehensive. It includes all aspects of the life of an individual and the nation. It is holistic in approach. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and the development of individuals. It includes full-growth and expansion of our industries, agriculture, and education, social, religious, and cultural institutions. Moreover, national development implies the development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation viz. political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and material (Bhawna, B. 2016)

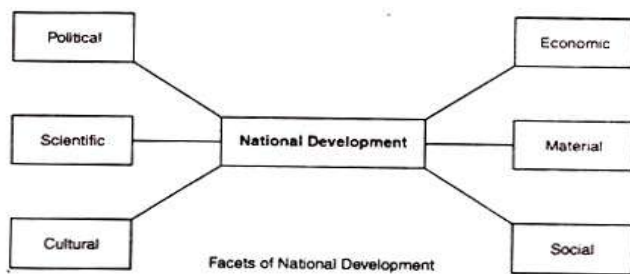


Figure 1: Facets of National Development

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United Nations Decade Report (2018-2027) has defined "National development as growth plus change. Change in turn is social and cultural, economic, qualitative and quantitative" Broadly, development of the nation encapsulates such parameters as: (i) Development through a planned national economy, (ii) Increase in agricultural production through application of modern technical know-how, (iii) harnessing industrial production, (iv) Development of human resource, (v) Application of science and technology in the production sector, (vi) Provision of mass education and (vi) Provision of various facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of disadvantaged, deprived and poorest of the poor segments of the population (Lawal, T. and Abe, O. 2011).

The above assertions on the concept of national development are buttressed by Todaro, and Smith, (2006) who opined from the modernization paradigm that development is a multidimensional process that involves the sustained elevation of the entire society and social system towards a better or humane life. They identified three basic components for understanding development namely; sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom. In the context of the paper, national development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country's collection of strategies mapped out by the government through a blueprint known as a national development plan. Nigeria like any sovereign state has had several development plans whose objective is national development.

V. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN NIGERIA

The problem of economic and social progress has been a major concern of many nations in both the developed and developing countries of the world. Thus, different nations adopt varied strategies in achieving economic and social progress (Raheem, Isah, and Adedeji, 2018). Development planning was the main strategy used by many governments and organizations to set their visions, missions, goals, and effective means of realizing development. Development planning has been a consistent phenomenon in Nigeria since 1946. The Nigerian government has aspired to achieve development through the use of various types of plans, namely short term (Annual Budget), medium, and long term plans. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which is the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is the latest in the history of medium-term plans for the country and promises to surmount some of the problems that marred the success of previous plans (Marcellus, 2009).

Development planning in Nigeria can be classified under three eras. These are the Era of Fixed-Term Planning (1962-85), the Era of Rolling Plan (1990-1998), and the New Democratic Dispensation (1999 to date). The Era of Fixed Medium Term Plan (1962-1985) witnessed four successful plans in Nigeria.

These are the First National Development Plan (1962-1968), the JORIND Second National Development Plan (1970-1974), the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980), and the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985). The first plan covered the period 1962-63-1967-68 and provided for capital expenditure of 2.2 billion Naira. The implementation of the plan was extended to 1969-70 due to the Nigerian civil war. One major employment promotion scheme in the First National Development Plan was the establishment of the National Manpower Board (NMB) in 1962. The Second National Development Plan covers the period 1970-1974 with a capital expenditure of about 3 billion Naira. The Plan witnessed attempts to rectify some of the shortcomings of the first development plan. The planning machinery was strengthened, the need for public input was recognized by preceding the plan preparation by a national conference on economic development and reconstruction, and the need for inputs from various levels of government, ministries, and agencies especially relevant planning agencies like the National Manpower Board and Federal Office of Statistics, and an Advisory Body made up of representatives drawn from the universities, trade union, other ministries, and the private sector.

The Third National Development Plan began in 1975 with a plan total capital expenditure of 30 billion Naira. This was later revised to 43.3 billion Naira. In terms of sheer magnitude, the Third National Development Plan represented a major departure from its predecessors and constituted a watershed in the country's planning experience (Federal Ministry of National Planning, 1981). However, the government could only spend N29.43 billion out of the projected expenditure of N43.3 billion as reviewed. The Fourth National Development plan covers the period 1981-1985. The overriding aim of the plan is to bring about an improvement in the living conditions of the people. The Plan is the first plan to be formulated by a democratically elected government under a new constitution based on the presidential system of government. Again, with a projected capital expenditure of 82 billion, the plan is considerably bigger than all its predecessors. Thirdly, it is the first plan in which the local governments participated in its design and formulation (Federal Ministry of National Planning, 1981).

The Rolling plan era (1990-1998)

The First National Rolling Plan covered the period 1990-1992. The main objective was to consolidate the achievements made so far in the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and address the pressing problems still facing the economy. One of the key priority programmes of the First National Rolling Plan was the strengthening of the on-going programmes of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). The Second National Rolling Plan (1993-1995) marks the beginning of the second cycle of a three-year Rolling Plan. The general policy measures of the Second National Rolling Plan include tackling the observable lapses and inefficiencies in the

operation of monetary and credit instruments, low level of capacity utilization of industries, and the rising trends of unemployment. The 1994/96 and the 1997/99 Rolling Plans have employment generation as its priority programmes (National Planning Commission, 2000). With the return to democratic governance in Nigeria, the new administration started development planning in 1999 with the initiation of a four-year medium-term plan document, the National Economic Direction (1999-2003). The plan had the primary object of pursuing a strong, virile, and broad-based economy with adequate capacity to absorb externally generated shocks. While being a new plan document, the objectives and policy direction was not significantly different from that to which the country has followed since the introduction of Structural Adjustment Plant (SAP). NEEDS is described as Nigeria's plan for prosperity. It is a four-year medium-term plan for the period 2003 to 2007. NEEDS is a federal government plan, which also expected the states and local governments to have their counterpart plans- the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively (Marcellus, I.O. 2009).

From the above review of government development planning from 1970 to date, it is obvious that employment creation has featured prominently in all the plans. This underscores the importance attached to employment by successive governments in Nigeria. The impact of these employment promotional schemes on the unemployment levels in Nigeria requires periodic assessment with a view to determining the extent to which the plans meet stated development objectives. Beside, the potential contribution of education to national development in Nigeria in the 21st century cannot be overemphasised.

Potential Contribution of Education to National Development in the 21st Century

The core aim of the study is to understand the contribution of education to national development particularly in Nigeria. One of which is the need for manpower for national development through education. Afolabi and Loto (2012) 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) 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 economical aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization. From the definitions of education and its importance enumerated earlier in this study, it is clear that education trains an individual to be useful in society and to meet up the need of the society for national development. Therefore, without education, a nation cannot acquire the needed manpower for national development. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors

are products of education and this explains why the quality of a nation's education determines the level of its national development.

Also, the 21st century is characterized by information explosion based on science and technology. Without education, information, and knowledge needed for national development cannot be shared via information and communication technology facilities like the world wide web through the internet. In this regard, Obansanjo (2012) states that education trains individuals to relate to and interact meaningfully with others in society and to appreciate the importance of effective organization for human progress. Here, the school system within the educational system fosters this development. The schools have a way of bringing people from diverse places and different cultural backgrounds, together for a common purpose. This encourages and increases mutual co-existence among the different students and this has a way of developing the nations globally in the 21st century where the building of relationships can help promote unity.

Again, in the school system, there are official clubs and organizations in existence. Learners who participate in these organizations and clubs gain experience in working and relating with others outside the individual organizations and to some extent in working competing with outside groups with minimum friction which goes a long way to promote national unity and peaceful co-existence that would lead to national development. Education also inculcates much to learners beyond the prescribed academic curriculum and also encourages the development of social behaviour that will be useful to them in adulthood; by this, the nation will develop in individual those values which make for good citizenship, such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work, and personal integrity, all of which provides the rich soil from which good leadership potentials is groomed. Education also promotes the culture of productivity by enabling individuals to discover the creative potentials in them and applying the same to the improvement of the existing skill and technique of performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of their societal effort in national development (Obansanjo, 2012). Unfortunately, despite the features of education and opportunities it presents for national development, education has not imparted in an appreciable measure on Nigeria's national development as is the case with other developed nations. This is because Nigeria as a developing nation is faced with several challenges in the implementation of the various national development plans promulgated since independence till date and the inherent problems in the Nigerian educational system (Okoroma, N.S. 2006).

Challenges of National Development in the 21st century in Nigeria

From the above, it is clear that education has a critical function in national development but in the Nigerian context, education has not fully played its roles in the regard. This is as

a result of certain inherent problems in the Nigerian education systems which are; inadequate funding in the educational system, low quality in our educational programmes, poor remunerations of the teachers, and poor credibility of academic qualifications obtained in Nigerian Universities today. Also the unstable political environment which compels educational policy planners to jettison a plan still on the drawing board and take up new policies which must be geared towards meeting the current political demands has been the bane manpower development required for national development. This has become a serious bottleneck to education in terms of achieving national development. This also explains the lack of continuity in educational policy formulation. Another challenge is, that education in Nigeria is politicized (Afolabi, and Loto, 2012). According to Adesina, (2005), Nigerian politicians would rather advocate unrealistic populist educational programmes than risk their constituency through technically derived, realistic and productive educational programmes. It is sad to note that political appointments in most universities evade due process to the detriment of stakeholders. Nevertheless, incessant changes in educational policies also impact negatively on national development.

Again, in Nigeria, several challenges in the implementation of the various national development plans promulgated since independence to date include but not limited to (i) Tardy economic growth in terms of Gross National Product (GNP) and standard of living. (ii) Large scale unemployment and under-employment. (iii) A large pool of illiteracy. (iv) The rapid growth of the population. (v) Challenges of national and emotional integration. (vi) Inertia to change process. (vii) A slow process of modernization. (viii) The problem of evolving a democratic, socialistic, and secular order. (ix) Incidence of poverty and poor standard of living(x) Phenomenon of urbanization and its allied malaise. (xi) Lethargic attitude of people to the core value of work and unwillingness to take responsibility. (xii) A mismatch between moral and scientific values. (xiii) Rise of the phenomenon of brain-drain.(xiv) Useless and low-quality products of institutions of higher learning (Bawa Bhawna, 2016).

Furthermore, Nigeria with all its human and natural resources could be one of the greatest nations on earth with the right people piloting its affairs. Unfortunately, Nigerians have not allowed those that are willing and capable of leading a right to do so regardless of their ethnicity and faith and thereby work against the development of the nation. Political appointments are fraught with sectarianism and ethnicity, to the detriment of national development (Fadugba, 2017). The solution to genuine national development in Nigeria is restructuring and an overhauling of the system; the faithful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by committed politicians and the inclusion of the youth in key political sectors. Lawal, T. and Abe, O. (2011) noted that most of the past development plans failed because of the absence of committed leaders and implementation problems. It is therefore pertinent

that Nigerians get it right when voting to ensure that those to occupy the seats of power are there to serve the people and not themselves. This kind of people dedicated to the greatness of Nigeria will see a well-developed plan through to completion. Nigeria needs leaders who would think of the next generation and not the next election. At the centre of government policies must be the development of human capital to make the large population an asset that will drive the economic state of the nation to prosperity (Ekundayo, W.J. 2015).

The combination of the challenges of national development plan implementation and the problems that have bedevilled the national educational systems have made it near impossible for education to take its place as a key to national development in the 21st century in Nigeria. Therefore the need to holistically address these encumbrances for Nigeria to enjoy steady national development through standard educational policy is imperative.

VI. CONCLUSION

The role of education in national development cannot be undermined globally as evidenced in the astronomical growth of the developed nations in Europe and America. Sadly, developing nations in Africa like Nigeria is encumbered with myriads of challenges in the educational system which has adversely affected national development. These challenges include inadequate funding in the educational system, low quality in our educational programs, poor remunerations of the teachers, poor credibility of academic qualifications obtained in Nigerian Universities today, and the unstable political environment which compels educational policy planners to jettison a plan still on the drawing board and take up new policies which must be geared towards meeting the current political demands among others. Also, the challenges perennial to the implementation of national development plans over the years to date which are the lethargic attitude of people to the core value of work and unwillingness to take responsibility and the mismatch between moral and scientific values. Also the rise of the phenomenon of brain-drain as well as useless and low-quality products of institutions of higher learning have been the bane of progress in Nigeria's national development in the 21st century. Thus, the solution to genuine national development in Nigeria is restructuring and an overhauling of the system; the faithful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by committed politicians and the inclusion of the youth in key political sectors as well as adequate funding of the educational sector. This would enable education to assume its position as the key to national development in Nigeria in the 21st century.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations could serve as a solution to the perennial crises that have bedevilled the educational system and national development in Nigeria:

1. The Federal Government should endeavour to earmark 26% of the total budget for educational development as recommended in the United Nations Organization.
2. Education should be an affair and responsibility of federal, state and local governments in terms of funding.
3. The private sector should also be made to participate in funding by providing research grants, awarding of scholarships, and endowment of professorial chairs in universities.
4. An enabling law should also be enacted making it mandatory for multinational companies operating in Nigeria to set aside a minimum of 5% of their gross profit to finance education and allied projects which must be tax free.
5. The government should also have strong political will among the leaders to ensure continuity of educational policies and doggedness in the fight against corruption in the country.
6. Severe punishment should be meted on financial crimes and other corrupt practices in the educational sector.
7. There should be a steady political environment to ensure continuity and maturity of educational policies.

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