

The Relevance of Early Childhood Care Education in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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Abstract: - All countries across the world crave for sustainable development goals that will free them from confronting challenges that have past a threat to their people and global environment. This led to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were adopted in 2015. Education was recognized globally as the key to overall development. This paper focus on the relevance of early childhood care education toward achieving sustainable development goals word agenda. All children have the right, as well as a responsibility, to be educated for sustainable development and it is the early years that children have the greatest capacity to learn. It is also in early childhood that foundations of many of our fundamental attitudes, behaviour and values are put into experience in early life and the environment in which young children live shape their brain architecture thereby their ability to understand stereotype and biases hence becoming to healthy and productive member of the society. Nigeria with difference diversity, ethnicities, live side by side, learn to respect and appreciate diversity, ethnicity, cultures and believes should begin early through parent, community members and early education should help children to acquire an identity grounded in culture close to them. To achieve this early childhood education is necessary to incorporate in early childhood education programme. Therefore, government should increase fund allocated for education, especially increase investment in early childhood education in order to expand access to quality early childhood education. So that can build a sustainable society and give the opportunity to develop as strong foundation for developing wellbeing and life-long learning in order achieve global agent.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Early Childhood care, Sustainable Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a light that shows mankind the right direction to surge. Education is as old as the beginning of human existence. Since the dawn of humanity on planet earth, man has been striving to impart new ideas and knowledge from generation to generation in different forms. Education remains the major instrument for national development for many countries. That is the reason most nations of the world spend huge sum of money to provide education for their citizens. Agi and Yellow (2013) cited by Ishaq and Abdullahi (2016) explained further that education is regarded as a means of achieving culture of peace, gender equality and positive value. It is therefore, the understanding of many that education leads to national transformation and development, through

reduction in poverty which ensured peace and security, self-reliance and development.

In view of the benefits of education enumerated above, Nigeria has provided education for decades with abundant available manpower. However, what keeps agitating the nation endlessly borders on the slow and inefficient economy, near primitive democracy and violent social co-existence in society (Needs, 2004). Education for sustainable development (ESD) major thrust requires action by the formal, non-formal and informal sectors of the education community through improving access and retention in quality Basic Education, reorienting existing educational programme to address sustainability and increasing public understanding and awareness of sustainability as well as providing training to all sectors of the workforce thereby curbing educational problems (Isah, 2016).

II. CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Education is the process of facilitating learning, knowledge, skills, values beliefs and habits of group of people. It is transferred to other people through teaching, training and discussion. Webster (2016) view that any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or act may be considered education. However, sustainable development in human society is not a one sided process rather multisided issues, individuals perceive development as increase in the skill and ability. Adebayo (2010) stated that the concept of sustainable development is the effort at improving the environment or natural resources for the purpose of improving the quality of human life in such away that the needs of the future generation are not jeopardized.

The Sustainable Development of Goals (SDG) are the goals that take off from millenniums development goal (MGD) on the 25th of September, 2015, therefore, the general assembly of the United Nation adopted the 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) and 169 targets at the United Nation headquarters in New York. The SDGs are the successors of the millennium development goals (MDG) which expired on the 31st of December, 2015. Like the MDGs that had a life span of 15 years (2001-2015). They will sustain the “remaining business” of the MDG and pay more attention to sustainability, universality and inclusiveness (Nasiru,

2019). Sustainable Development Goals consist of three dimensions according to Worship Manual. These dimensions integrate all the seventeen SGDs, i.e social, economic and environment.

Social Dimension

This dimension contains the following steps

- i. End poverty
- ii. End hunger
- iii. Good health
- iv. Quality education
- v. Gender education quality
- vi. Reduced inequality

Economic Dimension

The following item are the composition of economic dimension;

- i. Access to energy
- ii. Good jobs and inclusive economic growth
- iii. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- iv. Sustainable cities and communities
- v. Sustainable consumption and production

Environment Dimension

The items in this dimension includes

- i. Water and sanitation
- ii. Sustainable consumption and production patterns
- iii. Climate action
- iv. Conserve water and marine resources
- v. Sustainable use of land resources

This concept of sustainable development aims to maintain economic advancement and progress while protecting the long-term value of the environment, it provide a framework for the integration of environment policies, bringing fundamental and sustainable changes in the society, and encompasses growth and embarrasses the quality of life as social justice, equality of opportunity for all citizens, equitable distribution of income and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

III. EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

The sustainable development goals have serious concern for education in Nigeria. The sustainable development goals emphasize the need or stimulating a holistic, integrated and interdisciplinary approach to developing the knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future as well as changes in values, behaviour and lifestyle (UNESCO, 2016).

This require to reorient education systems policies and practices in order to empower every one, young and old, policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents to make decisions and act in culturally appropriate and locally relevant

ways to address the problems that threaten our common future. The overall goals for education and sustainable development in Nigeria as put by Ikechuckwu et al (2014) in Itari and Ughe (2018) are the integration of the principles, values and practice of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. The authors posit the following objectives;

- i) Facilitating, networking and collaborating among stakeholders in education for sustainable development
- ii) Fostering greater quality of teaching and learning in education and sustainable development.
- iii) Help countries make progress towards and attain the millennium development goals through ESD effort.
- iv) Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform effort.

Meanwhile, the implication of sustainable development goals for education in Nigeria focuses attention on the mentioned goals below, as ensured in the 2017 SDGs workshop manual for primary schools teachers. These goals are:-

1. Embrace the SDG and incorporate them in their medium and long terms development planning
2. Create awareness around the 17 SDGs
3. Integrate the 17 SDGs and 10 targets into the school curriculum and classroom instruction.
4. Provide access to quality education that is inclusive and life-long
5. Promote functional literacy, numeracy and Civic Education
6. Promote vocational and environmental education
7. Encourage cooperation collaboration and partnership among individuals, schools, institution and communities'
8. Increase the supply of teacher in quality and quantity
9. Progressive improvements must be done from now till the terminal date of SDGs 2030.

IV. THE RELEVANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE EDUCATION TOWARD ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL IN NIGERIA

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is explicitly recognized in the sustainable development goal (SGDs) as part of the target area, at the same time, it is important to emphasize. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is indeed importance in the contributory effort to achieve the SDGs. Education at early childhood aims at the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and board foundation for lifelong learning and well beings. Early childhood care education had the possibility to nurture caring, capable and responsible future citizen (UNCESCO, 2017).

The experience in early life and the environment in which young children live shape their brain architecture thereby their ability to understand stereotypes and biases

hence becoming to healthy and productive member of society. Nigeria with difference diversity, ethnicities increasingly live side by side, learning to respect and appreciate diversity, ethnicities, cultures and believes should begin early through parents, community members, and early education should help children to acquire an identity grounded in culture close to them. To achieve this, early childhood education is necessary to incorporate in early childhood programme.

The families are the child first educators; they have the greatest responsibility in shaping young children attitudes, values, behaviours, habits and values which are accepted in a society. As such, they have a great role to play in educating their children for sustainable development. Early Childhood Care Education for sustainable development can therefore be effectively undertaken by parents, siblings, grandparents and other external family members. So that children emerge as important change agent to push and influence sustainable development.

Where formal early education programme are not available, non formal education can set up as an integral component of community programme or otherwise to provide parents and grandparents with opportunities to discuss what could be done differently in daily life in order to become an effective agent of bringing about sustainable development (Greete, 2017). To ensure the full potential of children in line with sustainable development, there is a need to express a vision for early childhood education along with other essential measures so that could contribute to 2030 world agenda. In a country like Nigeria, early childhood care education should be consider as a fundamental right to ensure quality nutrition, health care and education provision for all children should be provided.

The best investment of a country like Nigeria can make to promote human resources development, gender equality and social cohesion, and to reduce the cost for later remedial programme is early children care education. Investment in this phase plays an important role in compensating for the disadvantage in the family and combating education in equalities.

Majority of children from deprived communities lack exposure and quality stimulation during childhood both at home and community level. Their lack proper health care, early learning opportunities, the right food, clean water and sanitation in their most critical years especially in rural communities. The absence of the essential requirement can not only have an irreversible impact on the child development, but also undermine the country future economic development in general. It is believed that ensuring access to education in the early years can raise adult wages drastically. Therefore, early childhood care education for sustainable development requires multiple inputs and engagements, health, nutrition, protection in order to achieve 21st century global agenda.

V. CONCLUSION

Education is seen as the key that will allow many other sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be achieved (Adegban, 2018) cited by (Azi, 2019). Early childhood education for sustainable development is the process of equipping the learner with the knowledge and understanding, skill and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environment, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and or future generation (Lanchurt, 2014). Early childhood care education is more than preparation for primary school, it had the possibility to nurture caring, capable and responsible future citizen (UNESCO, 2017) children taught at an early age usually benefit in social skill, better grades and enhanced attention spans.

Likewise some researchers have conclude that young children enrolled in pre-school programmes usually graduate from high school, have fewer behavioural problems and do not become involved with crime in their adolescent and young adult age

VI. RECOMMENDATION

In consideration of the conclusion reached the following recommendation hereby offered.

1. Government should incorporate education for sustainable development in the early years. Because early childhood is a highly appropriate period in children development in which to introduce concepts related to education for sustainable development
2. The government should increase fund allocated for education, especially increase investment in early childhood education in order to expand access to quality early childhood education. Sustainable societies cannot be build if children are not given the opportunity to develop a strong foundation for development, wellbeing and life-long learning
3. Public enlightenment should be made by the government. Awareness about the powerful role of early childhood education in realizing a sustainable community. Effort should be made to increase awareness at all levels and in all sections of society that early childhood education had an important role to play in laying the foundation for active and responsible citizenship.
4. Workshops and seminars should be organized for teacher in order to be equipped for effective teaching and learning about education for sustainable development.
5. Educational planners should review early child care education curriculum to suit aim of sustainable development goals that can help toward achieving sustainable development in the country.

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