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EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

The aim of the paper was to address socio-economic challenges and way forward through education in Nigeria. The paper tried to identify varied socio economic challenges affecting Nigerian education with a view to preferring way forward. Ineffective leadership and corruption over reliance on oil, inflation, unemployment, government policy, monetary policies, inadequate infrastructures and power supply, inadequate health facilities, Insecurity were identified as the major causes of the challenges of Nigeria's economy and some way forward were identified from the study. The paper has the following sub headings: Background to the study, Causes of Nigeria economic challenges, theoretical framework, Conclusion, Way forward to the economic challenges of Nigeria and Suggestions. Although education has the potential to address most of the current socioeconomic challenges bedeviling Nigeria today based on the reviewed literatures, a successful implementation of the education programme, therefore, requires sustained demand for the technical and vocational skills from economic and industrial growth, in addition to increased private and public sector partnerships. It was concluded that addressing the socio-economic challenges of Nigeria through office technology and management teachers, professional competencies should be properly practiced and given the adequate attention it deserved by lecturers to assists them in solving Nigeria socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality among others. It's been suggested that Government needs to look beyond oil and start the production of other essential commodities which will be a future idea on the growth of the economy.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Challenges, Education, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria's economic potential is well recognized; it's the biggest economy in the West African sub-region. Given the country's considerable resource endowment and coastal location there is potential for strong growth. Yet Nigeria has realized very little of this potential. Previous efforts at planning and visioning were not sustained. The history of economic stagnation, declining welfare and social instability, has undermined development for most of the past 30 years. But in recent years,

Nigeria has been experiencing a growth turn around and conditions seem right for launching onto a path of sustained and rapid growth, justifying its ranking amongst the 11 countries.

The country is endowed with abundant natural resources ranging from solid minerals (crude oil, gold, tin, iron ore, mobium, lead, zinc, lime stone, salt etc.) to arable land with varieties of agricultural produce such as palm oil, cocoa, groundnut, beans, melon, corns, rice, among others. The hub of Nigeria economy before the advent of Oil in commercial quantity was agriculture, but with the emergence of oil, there were focus shift from being agricultural dependent Country to crude oil dependent nation. Since the era of oil boom in the 1970's, Nigeria has been a victim of monolithic economy and since then have been enjoying crude crash without adequately evolving a sound policy that will put the nation's economy on a firm foundation for steady growth. Today, oil revenue accounts for almost 90% of the nation's gross export revenue, leaving a paltry 10% to other commodities such as agricultural produce and solid minerals. From the 1970 oil boom era in the country, to date, heavy reliance was on oil revenue and with the fluctuation of oil prices and a subsequent sharp decline in the world oil price in the recent periods, it is obvious that over dependence on oil as major source of revenue could fail the country as it can't finance the budget as usual (Ikpor, 2015).

It thus becomes imperative that the main problem confronting the growth development of Nigeria and governance and that is due largely because those charged with

responsibilities of the country have failed to manage it for the good of the people. The expectation since the attainment of independence is that an independent Nigeria will present and opportunities equal expand social and economic, cultural advancement of the people; but a critical analysis of the indices of development points to the fact that these expected benefits have been undermined by successive Nigerian leaders (Wike, 2016).

The Nigerian economy in the last few vears has been going through some turbulence. A country that recorded an average GDP growth of 6.5 per cent. one of the highest in the world less than a decade ago, is now projected to grow at about 2.3 percent in 2016. It is no longer news that Nigeria's economy is experiencing total collapse and if nothing is done to put the peg in the right spot something worse than what we are witnessing may soon be on sight. Based on some of all these issues. Nigeria was said to be technically recess (Adeosun2016). Recession is a situation where the country's state of economy declines. there is widespread decline in GDP and per capital income, decline in employment and trade lasting from 6 months to a year. If Nigeria must maintain its current status as the largest economy in Africa, then drastic measures must be put in place to address this drastic situation. The paper will try to identify socio economic challenges affecting Nigerian education with a view to preferring the way forward.

Theoretical Framework

Marx Theory of Class: For the purpose of this paper, we have decided to use the Marxist Theory of Class to explain

socio-economic dilemma the educational achievement in Nigeria, Karl Marx (1818-1883) gives a complex and profound analysis of the class system under Capitalism. In Marx's view two primary classes exists under capitalism. The capitalist classes are those who own the production and the working classes are those who sell their labour for wages. These two classes were further divided in to two classes: The Petty bourgeoisie - small business owners, managers - those who can be identified or named as middle class. Those people associated with the interests of the capitalist class but who do not own the means of production. The second was lumped-proletariat; they are the workers who sell their labour for wage. In present day Nigeria they are known as underclass, the homeless. Reflecting on Marx. Andersen & (Taylor, 2003) noted that with the development of capitalism the capitalists and working class would become increasingly antagonistic of each other - referring to as class struggle. When class conflicts become more intense, the two classes would become more polarized the petty bourgeoisies become deprived of their property and dropping into the working class.

This analysis is still relevant in present day Nigeria and the point is when the classes become more polarized then the rich get richer and everyone else worse off. Marx therefore saw the capitalists are the basis for other social institutions (e.g. law, education, the family etc.) Thus, according to Marx the law supports the interests of capitalists, the family promotes values that socialize people into appropriate work role and education reflects the interest of the capital class. The question is why do people support such a system? Here

ideology plays a role. Ideology refers to belief system that supports the status quo. According to him the dominant ideas of a society are promoted by the ruling class, because through their World Educators Forum 7 control of the communications industries in modern societies the ruling class is able to produce idea that butters their own interests. Then, the underclass was under the ruling class and this is still the case in present day Nigeria. This is so because the underclass is still dependent on the capitalists and is exploited by it, because it does not own the means of production. Marx, further pointed out that the more stratified a society, the less likely that society will benefit from the talents of its citizens. because inequality limits the life chances of those at the bottom, preventing their talents from being discovered and used. Marx analyses has proven true as the tendency of wealth remain long in few hands and majority worked only to make ends meets. This wealth that has remained in few hands affects educational achievements for the majority.

Causes of Socio Economic Challenges in Nigeria

The causes of socio economic challenges in Nigeria include the following:

1. Corruption: Corruption is a big cankerworm that has really eaten deep into the fabric of our nation. The malaise of corruption is a threat to the survival of the Nigeria economy, no doubt (Dangote, 2016). The political, socio-cultural and economic crisis the country is witnessing today is borne out of a system influenced by bad or ineffective leadership and corruption. While the various policies and programs of successive

- government have become the source of deprivation, frustration, poverty and hunger to the poor majority, the few ones in government leadership positions channel resources meant for the provision of basic facilities and services like good roads, water, heath, education etc., into their private pockets, (Usman, 2016). Corruption is the root of many Nigeria's problems. It takes many forms and infiltrates all political institutions and economic sectors. Transparency International deemed Nigeria one of the most corrupt nations in the world, ranking as 14th in Corruption Perception Index out of the 177 countries measured (Darwine, 2016). According to (Sanusi, 2015) Nigeria loses \$1 billion (over N260 billion) Monthly through various ways of corruptions.
- 2. Over Reliance on Oil: Nigeria's over reliance on oil has comes back to haunt it 'unexpectedly'. (Analysts have always predicted this though!) Over the years, we have paid lip service to the development of the non -oil sector. A significant drop in oil prices has depleted our revenue earnings and the effect is visible to all; less money for the Government to spend and undue pressure on the available foreign exchange! As a country heavily dependent on imports, this has been our albatross. Nigeria's exports dropped about 40 per cent in 2015, pushing the current account from a surplus of 0.2 per cent of GDP to a deficit projected at 2.4 per cent of With foreign portfolio GDP. inflows slowing significantly, reserves fell to \$28.3 billion at end-2015.

- 3. Foreign Exchange Policy: The new CBN's foreign exchange policy is worthy of note. However, the time taken to do the needful cannot be overlooked. Considering the dearth of foreign exchange available to manufacturers and business people. there was an urgent need to announce a flexible exchange tate regime aimed at making foreign currencies more accessible (Abe, 2016).
- 4. Unemployment: Unemployment is a great and pervasive problem in Nigeria, but the point must be made that it is not peculiarly a Nigerian problem. All over the world, there growing issues unemployment. And what we are saying is that the government can achieve a remarkable success in this regard if it declares an emergency on unemployment and tackle it decisively (Dangote. Unemployment is a hot issue in Nigeria, and many people are frustrated with widespread joblessness. Unemployment Nigeria is like a disease that the 18 not yet discovered According to official statistics, 24% of Nigerians are unemployed. These numbers are worse for young people. Official Nigerian statistics shows that 38% of those under 24 are unemployed, but the World bank estimates this number to be closer to 80%. In March 2014, 16 people were killed in stampedes when 500,000 desperate job-seekers rushed to apply for under 5,000 vacancies Nigeria at the Immigration Service
 - 5. Inflation: Inflation climbed to 11.4 percent in February 2016. The multilateral agency noted that the recovery in economic activity was

- likely to be modest over the medium term, but with significant downside risks. It stated that Nigeria's growth in 2016 was expected to decline further to 2.3 per cent, with non-oil sector growth projected to slow from 3.6 per cent in 2015 to 3.1 per cent in 2016 before recovering to 3.5 percent in 2017, based on the results of policies under implementation-particularly in the oil sector—as well as an improvement in the terms of trade (Chima2016).
- Insecurity: Nigeria is presently faced with a lot of security challenges such as the kidnappers, Farmers/herdsmen clashes, Boko haram insurgency, conflict, robbery cases and even road accident as a result of bad road. All these do not encourage investors coming into the country to invest (Aregbesola, 2015).
- 7. Inadequate power supply infrastructural development Nigeria: This is also an issue infrastructure may seem a trivial issue following other problems. The Nigeria power sector has been thriving to survive over the years some unknown due to has circumstances it been mismanaged, and many workers in electricity sector are not equipped with the proper skills or production training. Domestic suffers in these conditions, but many foreign companies also find it difficult to conduct business in Nigeria because of frequent power failures. The problem of bad road networks has also made a lot of businesses suffer in Nigeria as the roads are not dependable. This problem keeps Nigeria a Third World country from year to year (Nwadinobi, 2016).
- 8. Inadequate Health Facilities: A healthier Nigeria will be a wealthier Nigeria. For those who do access healthcare, it's expensive. According to the World Bank, roughly 750 out of every 1,000 Naira spent on health in Nigeria comes directly from Nigerian citizens' pockets, (Compare this to smaller economies and poorer African countries like Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania, where citizens spend roughly 250 out of every 1,000 Naira spent on health.) Especially for those without extra Naira to spend, these high costs mean oftentimes people either won't seek treatment or are forced to sell belongings or forego other essentials like food for their family feeding into the cycle of poverty and poor health (Majange, 2016).
- Socio-economic Status Achievement: Empirical findings from different studies have shown that students from different SES groups have different facilities at home and schools. Furthermore, it is universally true that a class has three types of students the high achievers, average and achievers. Although they learn in same class, but the learning outcomes are different according to their personal experiences. (Graetz, 1995) carried out a study on social economic status in education research and policy found that social economic background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality and adds that one's educational success depends very strongly on the social economic status of one's parents.
- Poor Students or Poor Schools: Two fundamental questions remain valid when comparing achievement and SES. And this questions are (1) is

achievement due to the student's family income level? (2) is low achievement due to the child being at a low achieving or poor quality school? The previous section has addressed the first question. Hence, we shall attempt to answer the second question. Starting in preschool, poor and lowincome children were more likely to attend early childhood programs of lower overall quality(Klein &Knitzer,2007) found classrooms with 60% of the children from low-income homes possessed significantly lower quality indicators of teaching, teacher-child interaction, materials for learning classrooms with fewer low-income children. An in-depth analysis reviewed 103 effectiveness studies (Opdenakker, Van Damme, De Fraine, Van Landeghem Onghena, 2002). According to this analysis, 18% of variance in achievement resulted from differences among schools, and after holding constant student ability and SES, an eight percent variance still existed (Opdenakker et al.). Still, the poor quality of schooling is an important factor in student achievement. (Grissmer et al, 2000). A study conducted by Action Aid showed that the reason why pupils do not go to primary schools include costs of schooling, opportunity costs, illness hunger, limited economic costs of education and low quality of schooling (Action Aid, 2003).

Conclusion

Conclusively, education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic

growth. This study has examined the growth. The conomic challenges in Nigeria and the way forward. The eleven major causes of Nigeria economic challenges identified by the study include: Ineffective Leadership and Corruption, Over Reliance on Oil, inflation, unemployment, government policy, monetary policies, Inadequate infrastructures and power supply, Inadequate health facilities, Insecurity, socio-economic status, poor students or poor schools, funding in schools, Marx theory of class. In this paper, we found socio-economic status has continued to affect student achievement and while there is a gap in achievement, there is also a difference in the growth rates for children who are economically disadvantaged versus those that are not. The conclusion can be drawn that children learn the same amount of information, but m actuality. economically disadvantaged children start out behind and remain behind and can only go forward if the socioeconomic dilemmas of educational achievements in Nigeria are removed and some way forward were identified from the study which are Development of both Private Sector and Small Businesses, Unity, Implementation of the right monetary policy, Provision of employment opportunities for the youth, Provision of adequate security, Improvement on housing and home ownership for Nigerians Diversification of economy the Improvement of the economy is collective responsibility of all Nigerian so all hands should be on desk 10 promote the economy.

Recommendations

Based on the above discussions, the following were recommendations made:

- Development of both Private Sector and Small Businesses: Government need not be deceived on the right solutions to economic recession. These solutionswould be valuable in shaping economic direction and tackle the problems of unemployment in Nigeria.
- ii. Diversification of Nigeria economy: We can recover from the current economic crisis if government diversifies the economy and repair refineries so, the impact of drop in crude oil prices which is having a toll on the economy will be cushioned.
- iii. Improvement on housing and home ownership for Nigerians: This is quite important because, many Nigerians have to undergo years without a mortgage plan and this is hurting the economy. Provision of adequate security.
- iv. Provision of employment youth: opportunities the for Absence of profitable job for our young people should likewise an unmoving personality they say is fallen angel's workshop. Unemployed young people are perilous species as they can be controlled by deceitful components and used to do accursed acts (Joecity, 2016).
- Adequate resources should be made available which will be needed to build new schools, train more teachers etc.
- Implementation of the UBE Act and ensuring that all forms of user fees are abolished.
- vii Deal with the quality issues including size of classes, student-teacher ratio and provision of materials. Tutoring, after school programs, and summer school are necessary components to "catch up" a child in poverty. For example,

- reading remediation. The formulation and implementation of the Accelerated Reading Initiative is very important in order to improve the reading habits of students from low SES. Furthermore, setting expectations for students prior to certain national examinations causes teachers to be more accountable.
- When families lack resources for extracurricular instruction and other educational resources, schools and communities have been able to compensate by providing these resources. Thus, to prevent the social and economic consequences of academic failure among poor Nigerians, local, state, and national policies should provide funding for additional educational resources in schools serving low-income families. Alternatively, resources could be given to families directly.
- ix. Proper governance of schools and implementation of Schools Management Committees (SMCs)
- x. Tracking of resources to ensure proper, adequate and accountable utilization of resources budgeted for education
- xi. Improvement of teacher quality through employment of professional and qualified teachers, in service training and retraining and implementation of the teacher salary structure.
- xii. Implementation of the right monetary policy: For the Nigeria budget to stimulate economic growth, it must be backed up with the right monetary policy and it is pertinent to point out that so long as Nigeria continues to depend on oil exports for the bulk of its revenue, the value of the naira will continue to affect the price of oil, so there is obvious need to diversify the



economy. One of the ways out is to create the enabling environment for the productive agricultural sector which must be developed to produce goods and have agro-based industry as well as enough to feed and export, .

XIII. Government needs to look beyond oil and start the production of other essential commodities which will be a future idea on the growth of the economy.

XIV. Government should everything possible to solve the problem of power generation in Nigeria. Timely implementation of the nation's budget should be ensured by all agencies in charge of the budget implementation.

xv. Government should focus on. agriculture as 3 means diversifying the economy and also creating employment for youths interested in agriculture.

The Federal government should XVI. come up with a formidable economic policy that would arrest the continuous decline in the economy of the nation to forestall the present hardship experienced in the country.

Nigeria should lift the ban on the importation of some essential commodities. There is nothing too bad in importing what we don't have. In international trade context for instance, countries depend on each other. Using Adam Smith theory of absolute advantage and Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage, Nigeria has concentrate in the production of goods for which she has absolute advantage.

xviii. All security agencies should work together for a better and secured Nigeria.

Corruption should be eliminated XIX. completely; Corruption should be reduce if not eliminated by joining hands together to a better position.

xx. Adequate resources should be made available as well as to build hew schools, train more teachers among

Implementation of the UBE Au XX1. and ensuring that all forms of user fees are abolished. Quality issues including size of classes, student, teacher ratio and provision of materials should be put in place.

XXII. formulation implementation of the Accelerated Reading Initiative is very important in order to improve the reading habits of students from low SES. extracurricular instruction and other educational resources, schools and communities should be able to compensate by providing these resources. Thus, to prevent the social and economic consequences of academic failure among poor Nigerians.

xxiii. Alternatively, resources should be given to families' directly, proper governance of schools and implementation of Management Committees (SMCs), tracking of resources to ensure proper, adequate and accountable, utilization of resources budgeted for education, improvement of teacher quality through employment of professional and qualified teachers. in service training and retraining at well as implementation of the teacher salary structure.

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