

Vocation Education Reforms and Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals MDGs in Nigeria

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Abstract

The need for reform in the education sector in Nigeria is inevitable judging from the decline in the standard of educational. Educationist self is a systematic training, which could be in school, college or trade centers to reform is to form again. Therefore, educational reform towards national development is that education that should make Nigeria grow larger, more mature and organized. To achieve this set target, the author is of the opinion that vocational education as an instrument for self-actualization and development is strategically significant. There could be other areas where this could be achieved but the focus of the writers is centred on art. Different area to achieve this are discussed, their impediments and solutions and recommendation proffered. Education is a commonly used term which has various meanings to various people; yet it is a very important concept to the society. Therefore, education cannot be definite as it means different things to different people depending on their perception of what it is. Education can simply mean “knowledge” “enlightenment” or “wisdom”. So, education is the process of transmitting social lore, values and desirable attitudes from one generation to another: Education seeks to socialize individuals so as to equip them with the desired mode of behavior that is in conformity with the way of life of the society in which they live. It is the process of teaching, training and learning in schools and college for the development of knowledge and skills so as to prepare individuals’ to live happily with themselves and others in the society where they live. Mill (1931) state that education includes “whatever we do for ourselves and whatever is done for us by others for the express purpose of bringing us nearer to the perfection of our nature. In comprehends even the indirect effects produced on character, and on the human faculties, by things of which the direct purposes are quite different by law, by form of government, by the industrial arts, by mode of social life, even by physical facts not depending on human will, by climate, soil and local position.

INTRODUCTION

Chanhan (1976) defines education as the process of shaping individuals’ behavior for adequate adjustment in the society.

Fafunwa (1974) sees education as “the aggregate of all the process through which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to society”. The above definition focus on the purpose of education is to imbue the individual with knowledge, abilities, skills or behaviour to enable them function in their immediate environment and society at large.

Adiele (1975) defines education as a desirable change in human behaviour and Leonard (1967) defines it as “to learn is to change. Education is a progress that changes the learner. These definitions are all one in their stand on a positive change inhuman behaviour as a mark of good education. Professor B. O Ukeje (1973) says education is “the process of education that occurs whenever any influences produces a change in the physical and mental behavior”. Nwagwu (1976) defines “education as the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well being of mankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, at time hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature.

Longman (1995) defines Reform as “to start” to exist again or to make something start to exist again “or to change a system, law, organization e.t.c. so that it operates in a fairer or more effective way or to change a behaviour and become a better person. Therefore reform may refer to a process of modifying a system’s structure or activities (or both) for the purpose of enhancing the attainment of its objectives. Nigerian currently faced with challenge for millennium development goals, such as poverty reduction, environmental sustainability as well as genuine international partnership for development.

Concepts of Millennium Development Goals MDGS And Its Relevance To Education Reform In Nigeria -

According to Oladunni (2004:31) in Onu “The Millennium Developrnents Goals (MDGs), in a nut shell, refer to the international community’s adopted specific targets for poverty reduction globally but specially in developing countries by 2015. The goals are put in place to address specific poverty indices including the following

1. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and women empowerment.
4. Reducing child mortality rate between 1999 and 2015.

5. Reducing by three quarters, the material mortality rate between 1999 and 2015.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, and malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Partnership with developed countries

In line with our topic it may be necessary to explain what is meant by achieving universal primary education and eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

Federal Government of Nigeria defines Universal Basic Education (UBE) as an educational reform programme of the Nigerian Government that provides free compulsory and continuous 9-years education in two levels 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education for all school age children UBE ensures that every citizen enjoys the fundamental access to education. The exact nature and contents depend on the political, socioeconomic cultural and technological know-how of the society

UBE entails the enlarged view of the education to integrate formal and informal possibilities for the development of the human potentials UBE is aimed at giving the citizens of the country/state all round Uniform development and with strong emphasis on learning that as successful in acquiring basic skills an literacy numeracy and essential life skills Therefore, UBE can be viewed in three stages *viz* pre-primary, primary and J. S. S.

The Pre-Primary

This is meant to provide transition from the home to the school. It is therefore given to the children of three to five years in educational institution before their entry into the primary school the Pre-Primary Education has just been introduced to our schools in this contact session.

Primary

This is made up of six years in schooling for children aged six to eleven years This is set within framework of 6-3-3-4 system of education meaning six years for primary education three years for junior secondary school (JSS) and three for senior secondary school This is from the age of eleven years to fourteen years

OBJECTIVES OF PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND J. S. S. SCHOOL

1. Inculcation of permanent Literacy and Innumeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
2. To lay sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking
3. To mould the character and to develop sound attitude and morals in the child.
4. To provide the child with basic tools to further educational advancement including preparations for trades and crafts of the locality e.t.c.

In each Local Government both Universal Basic Education (UBE) and state Universal Primary Education Board (SUBEB) have to build and renovate some blocks of classroom.

Free service: The free service is the process of matching Grant. Matching Grant is fund that is contributed by both federal and state Governments on equal basis. It is 70% or 20% consolidated fund (CRF). The matching Grant is utilized in the implementation of programmes as follows:

- Early Childhood Care Development Education (ECCDE)
- Primary 60%
- Junior secondary school (JSS) 35%

The matching Grant is applied as follows:

- o Construction of classroom furniture etc 70%
- o Procurement of textbooks, instructional material etc 15%
- o Teacher Professional Development etc 15%

Therefore the UBE Act provides that the following should be provided free of charge.

- o Tuition
- o Textbooks in the 4 and 5 of the core subjects areas of primary and JSS respectively.
- o Classrooms and other infrastructural facilities.
- o Four of the core subjects in primary school are: English studies, Mathematics, Basic Science Technology and Social Studies.
- o Five of the core subject 9 in junior secondary school are: English Studies, Mathematics, Basic Science, Basic Technology and Social Studies.

Curriculum

Longman (1995:336) defines curriculum as “the subjects that are taught by School College etc or the things that are studied in a particular subject. The existing curriculum has been changed as a result of the introduction of the UBE programme. A new 9-years Basic Education Curriculum is now in place.

The new curriculum began to be implemented in 2007 with only primary I and ISS 1. The old primary curriculum will be in July 2010. The new areas of emphasis include Value Reorientation, Basic Science Basic Technology, Computer science, Teaching of thinking, Home Economics and Agriculture. Others are Business Studies, Civil Education, Moral Instruction and French.

The mode of assessment in the UBE Programme

School - based, continuous Assessment (C•A) is the dominant mode of assessment of learning under Universal Basic Education Programme. It determines the progress of the child from one level to another such that failure to meet certain conditions will mean that a child will have to repeat a level. Leading to the award of the Basic Education certificate at the end of JSS3 the school based continuous Assessment constitutes 60% of the over all student assessment while an external examination to be conducted by the state ministries of Education and moderated by an approved National Examination body accounts for the remaining 40%.

Under the UBE programme, there is no school admission into JSS. This has been discontinued with effect from 2006 Certificate is only issued at the end of JSS III. This is known as Basic Education Certificate (BEC). –

Achieving universal primary education (UBE):

MDGs has target of ensuring that by 2015, children (boys and girls) everywhere, would have completed full course of primary education. This brought the establishment of the UBE programme in 1999 by the Obasanjo administration as an expression of the desire of government to entrench viable participating democracy and enhance national socio-economic development as a result of free and compulsory basic education.

The major objectives of the programme as conceived in 1999 include:

- I. Developing the entire citizen a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions.
- II. The provision of free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigeria child of school age.
- III. Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from forms system through relevant, qualitative and efficient education system.
- IV. Catering for the learning needs of young persons, who for one reason or another have to interrupt their schooling, through appropriate form of Complementary approach to the promotion of basic education.
- V. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy numeric, Communicative and life skills, as well as ethical, normal and civic values for life long learning.

Universal basic education is the early childhood care and education i.e. the nine years of formal schooling (basic education) adult literacy and non-formal education, skill acquiring programmes: and education of special groups such as nomads, migrants, imageries, street children and disabled groups.

Basic education is the early childhood care and education; as well as the nine year's of formal schooling. It is not as broad as Universal Basic Education described above. Basic Education is expected to be compulsory, free and universal. The nine years of formal education is broken into three sections in the curriculum i.e lower Basic education 1-3 middle Basic Education 4-6 and upper Basic education 7-9 The UBE Act 2004 states that 'the services provided in Public primary and junior secondary schools shall be free of charge

The services expected to be provided free of charge under the Act include books instructional materials, classrooms furniture and lunch (mid day mea) Parents/guardians are therefore also expected to provide Uniforms Learning materials etc The national curriculum for basic education comprises the curriculum for primaries 1-6 and JSI - 3 (Basic Education I 9) This new curriculum developed by National Educational Research and Development council (NERDC) which is expected by the September 2007 and to be used with effect from 2007/2008 school years, is comprehensive, relevant and well articulated It contains new Innovation such as skill acquisition, civic values, moral training, life skill, and vocational skills part from cognitive affective psychomotor, Lower Basic 7-9

Post basic education will comprise the present 3 years of senior secondary school, and about two years of higher school certificate (HSC). The equivalence of 100 level courses of universities shall be incorporated into the HSC curriculum.

Universities will then run 3 years of degree programmes admitting successful HSC applicant, the 9-3-2-3 system/programme replace the 6-3- 3-4 system/programme as federal Government of Nigeria decided.

It has been suggested that the present SSC teachers in secondary school be given vocational training on course contents so that they will be able to cope with the proposed HSC curriculum

The first stages of UBE pupils are primary 6 and to transit to junior secondary school (JS!) (Basic Education 7). There is therefore the need to assess the performance of these pupils, especially as there will be no examination at the end of this level of transition into JS I (Upper Basic Education 7) i.e. there will be no

common entrance examination for entry into pupil secondary schools. There will also be no formal end of course (primary six) examination starting from 2006 till date. There is need to assess primary six pupils to have a bench mark for future assessment/comparison of performance for the first stage of UBE pupils and future primary six pupils (middle Basic Education 6) to determine the impact of UBE interventions in term of pupils and process. The UBE commission thus set up technical working committee (TWC) for national assessment of UBE programme (NATBEP). The TWC of NAUBEP is also to assess the extent to which the goals of the UBE programmes are being implemented and achieved.

Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger

The target of the first goal is the reduction by the proportion of people living on less than one dollar per day between 1999 and 2015. It also advocates the reduction by the proportion of people living in extreme hunger. According to Adamu (2006), in the urban areas, where the educated people tend to congregate, the unemployment rate is high. In the rural areas it was no less severe. The youths and the graduates are the hardest hit of all. According to him, of the unemployed Nigerians (ranging upwards of 3 million), three quarters are under 25 years of age.

With growing joblessness there were growing dependency among youths and their parents. On 26th March 1986, President (General Ibrahim Babagida Rtd.) appointed committee on strategies for dealing with mass unemployment under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Employment, labour and productively. The committee's recommendation brought the establishment of National Directorate of Employment (NDE), which was established on November 22, 1986.

Educational reform Based on Vocational Education

Educational reform directed to was the eradication of extreme poverty, hunger and achievement of the Universal primary Education (UBE) is strategically inevitable to the real Millennium Development Goals. In order to realize the goals Vocational Education is required for self actualization national Youth Employment and Vocational skills development program, emanated from the realization of the fact that the majority of the unemployed are youth without productive and marketable skills. Hence, the three main schemes of this programme are concerned with skills acquisition.

National Open Apprenticeship Scheme

This is aimed at providing unemployed youths with basic skills that are needed in the economy. This is achievable by attaching them as apprentices to companies, ministries, parastatals and professional crafts men and women. Some of them are given admission into vocational training institution to learn a trade. Upon completion of their apprenticeships, these participants will possess the necessary skills that are considered valuable by potential employers why it enables those with enterpreneurial education to go into self-employment.

Under this programme the various artisans in our cities and villages are being organized into co-operative societies to facilitate the provision of financial and other assistance from the government and the organized private sector. Over 70,000 previously employed youths benefitted from this scheme by December, 1987 (National Directorate of employment creating more job opportunity 1987). Vocational education skills learnt included: Welding and joinery Photography/graphics, interior design/painting, Architectural draughtsmanship, Printing and publication and Fashion designing/tailoring. Others were Textile and garment making, Computer operation, Polythene bags and Modeling/sculpture/ceramics.

School on Wheel Scheme

The Director are has recognized that there are few companies in the rural areas capable of offering apprenticeship and therefore the danger of encouraging urban migration via the open apprenticeship scheme. To avert this and give equal opportunity to the rural youths, the Directorate developed the "School on Wheel" scheme. This involves taking fully equipped mobile vocational training facilities to the rural area. This scheme will create a pool of artisans who became a cornerstone of rural employment and development.

Vocational Education and Graduate Employment Programme

This programme is designed to encourage and aid unemployed Nigerians to set up and run their own business. To help the participants translate their business ideas into viable commercial venture, the NDE conduct courses in entrepreneurship prior to making loans available through its job creation loan guarantee scheme.

Challenges of implementation of Educational reform and Attainment of Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria

Change of Policy in Education

Various governments change policy on Education which stop continuation of earlier policies e.g primary schools

tertiary education 6-3-3-4 education system and now to universal primary education and other government may change it tomorrow. *Lack of Learning in some students:* Few students have no interest in learning while some teachers are not dedicated to their primary assignment teaching' which is now attributed to a general decline in education.

Over-dependence on white cola job

After formal Education, the graduates depend on government for employment.

Economic situation and people state of mind

General economic depression, employment and the citizens unhappy State of mind make it difficult or impossible for the government to source revenue for them.

Lack of necessary infrastructure and manpower in education sector:

It is a common experience that some local, state or federal government in Nigeria lack infrastructure and manpower. Where they are provided, these are either not enough or well maintained. These have affected Education policy of the government, which hinder development.

Mismanagement and misappropriation of fund -

Nigeria internally generated fund are lost either to mismanagement or misappropriation. Mismanagement involves diverting money for Education approved projects to a less priority project because of personal gain while misappropriation is simply "fraud" Nwoko(1998) in Onu (2007) attribute the above fraudulent practices to inadequate internal control, mismanagement, embezzlement and misappropriation of government funds by those in the corridors of power may kill people's enthusiasm to fulfill their civic obligation Education.

Suggested Solutions to improve Education in Vocational Education in Nigeria

- Government should maintain policy that will be easier for the learner and their teachers that will provide Educational reform of the Millennium Development goals such vocational skill/education such as Arts and Industrial Design.
- Employment of professional and qualified teachers in vocational training, the government should employ qualified teacher in vocational course.
- Independent and corrupt practices commission (ICPC) should be strengthened statutorily and adequately funded to effectively deal with unlawful enrichment by public officials.
- Research and development Government should cully accept the need to follow up short job creation programmes with long term, viable permanent employment to do this, detailed and extensive research is necessary to property utilize the large labour pool, which the government regards as a potential national asset.
- The teacher should create effective ways of learning, since learning is a continuous process, to stimulate the pupils to learn as follows:
 - i. Create avenues for learnin2 and outside the classroom.
 - ii. Inform the pupils of the educational facilities around them i.e libraries, bookshop, resources centers etc.
 - iii. Give the students assignments regularly He should mark and discuss the assignments with the pupils.
 - iv. Encourage the pupils to develop their area of interest.
 - v. Use problem-solving approach in getting the pupils to learn.
 - vi. Use group and individual method to stimulate the spirit of independent learning among the pupils/students

Conclusion

The conclusion based on the finding on this paper is that Vocational Education plays an important role as the "life wire" of a country and citizen and stimulating the development process and economic growth in Nigeria. Vocational Education is the centre for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria because it helps to create job opportunities and self-reliance.

However, the extent that Vocational Education continue to play the role in the attainment of the Millennium goals depends on Government policy, qualified teachers, parents, the interest of the pupils in school as well as the norms of the society at large.

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