

MANAGING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR FOSTERING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined quality education as a panacea for national security. The essence was to x-ray how quality education can help foster national security. Quality education was seen as the type of education that conforms to the stipulated specification as contained in the education blueprint. Such education promises to equip recipients with the right attitudes, values, skills, traits, capabilities and competences that are necessary for them to become useful and functional members of the nation. On the hand, national security means absence of any form of threats to citizens of any nation. The paper made a case for quality education as it relates to national security. Quality education provides the nation with qualified manpower for scientific and technological developments. Also, quality education helps to liberate citizens from poverty of the mind and other obscurity enabling them to see the numerous opportunities in their environments and equally equip recipients with knowledge to discover and harness their innate potentials for better and useful living in the society. Some of the hindrances to quality education include inadequate funding, poor reading culture and poor learning environment. It was recommended that government should comply with the UNESCO regulations as funding education system.

Keywords: Educational Management, Quality Education, National Security Sustainable Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

Education has been defined as an instrument par excellence in achieving national objectives (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). It is equally a potent tool for addressing numerous challenges that face human existence. Many countries of the world have used education to pilot the affairs of their nation smoothly and navigate to success. Education that is quality is the type that meets the desired standard or stipulations. Quality education liberates individuals from ignorance, falsehood and superstition (Alemika, 2015). Quality education correlates well with security. This is because quality education enables individuals, groups and human race to explore, appreciate, understand, develop their potentials, physical and social environments for the satisfaction of their needs and for empowerment which leads to security. Education has the propensity to empower citizens by liberating them from ignorance, prejudice, bias and manipulation. In the presentation, the focus is to examine how quality education can lead to national security.

Conceptual Clarification

To get a good glimpse of the issue discussed in this presentation. It will be imperative that the basic concepts be clearly defined.

Quality

The term quality refers to the degree of excellence or the extent to which a product, process or procedure complies with or meets the requirements or standard set for acceptance (Mike, 2005).

Quality Education

Quality education is the type of education that conforms to requirements or the purpose of its existence. It is the type of education that enables people to develop all of their attributes and skills to achieve their potentials as human beings and members of the society (Unite for Quality Education, 2017).

National Security

This refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power (Freebase, 2011). It is equally the absence of threats to the core values and the prevention of public disorder (Atoyebi, 2003).

Measures of Quality Education

Education is the process of providing information to the individual for him to develop physically, mentally, socially, economically, spiritually, politically and emotionally (Nnaka, 2002). It is a vital tool for the total development and emancipation of man. This is because education is a means whereby individuals are helped to acquire relevant skills, competences, abilities and traits needed for meaningful living and positive contribution to nation building. It is due to the undeniable importance of education to national development and meaningful existence that made education to be one of the human rights of any citizens of Nigeria.

According to Alemika (2015), education serves intrinsic and extrinsic purposes. The purposes of education include settling the minds of students, widen their horizon, influence their intellects, and teach them to think straight. In addition, enabling one to sift and weigh evidences to discern the truth from false, the real from unreal and the facts from fiction.

The type of education that will produce the right calibre of citizens who will be acquainted with knowledge and skills needed for productivity, governance and success in the nation must be of quality. It is on this note that Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) (2015) stated the six basic elements that make for quality education. The six elements are:

- a) The teacher and the teaching method: How well-trained is the teacher, does he or she have access to the necessary teaching materials and does he/she use effective teaching methods that stimulate teaching?
- b) Educational content: This refers to the relevance or appropriateness of the curriculum and teaching materials. Are the basic skills of hygiene, nutrition knowledge about HIV/AIDS, gender equality and other national issues emphasized in the education curriculum?
- c) Learning environment: Is the learning environment healthy, suitable, conducive, protective or safe for both genders? Is there provision for inclusive education for the minority groups or children with disabilities?
- d) School management: How well is the school being run or managed. Are the administrators transparent and do the teachers have clear parameters of how to teach and treat pupils and colleagues?
- e) Pupils' preconditions: What experiences do pupils bring from home? Have they been traumatized, distressed or exposed to child labour or any form of abuse, etc.
- f) Funding and organization: Are the schools adequately funded and well organized to effect quality education.

In a similar line of thought Thom-otuya and Inko-tariah (2016) noted that quality education is a dynamic concept whose indices may vary according to the need of the country. Continuing, Thom-otuya and Inko-tariah noted the following indices of quality education.

Proper funding, Effective quality control, Conducive and appropriate teaching and learning environment, Sufficient staff quarters and classrooms, Adequate and proper equipment and staffing .Good quality and well-motivated staff who are committed. In the view of Obasi (2010), quality education can be typified through: Effective and efficient performance of graduates in society, industries and other work places, Employability of products/graduates. National and international mobility of generated manpower, Market value or demand level of research products and other services, High level of discipline and patriotism of graduates, International transferability/admissibility of graduates for higher states. High absorptive capacity at all levels.

Dimensions of National Security

Security simply refers to the state of being free from attack, harm or any form of threats as well as the measures taken to ensure that one is safe and protected from any form of danger. Security is needed in all aspects of our human existence – physically, socially, economically, educationally, morally, financially and others.

In the view of Odekunle (2012), security means protection or defence of people against all kinds of victimization including protection from external military attack, economic want,

poverty, illiteracy, diseases or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation among others. Alemika (2015) on his part saw security to mean protection from danger, violence, fear and want that impair, or capable of impairing the full development and existential well-being of citizens.

From the foregoing, one can say that national security refers to the measures put in place or taken by a nation to prevent fear and want and protect its citizens against foreign aggression and internal insurrection. The political, economic and social systems of a country create conditions for security and insecurity. Secondly, is one of the basic needs of human beings as theorized by Abraham Maslow. In this regard, security is a vital condition to based on this understanding that United Nations (UN), 2009) defined national security as a state at which countries think that there is danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion so that they can develop and make progress freely. Lack of security leads to insecurity which causes disorder to any nation. That may be the reason why Atoyebi (2003) averred that national security is the absence of threats to the core values and prevention of public disorder. Insecurity leads to threats and the insecurity is a two-dimensional thing which is at both individual and national levels.

In the submission of Alemika (2015), national security can be concerned as the absence of threats to:

- a) The sovereign powers and territorial integrity of the nation.
- b) The capacity of a country's government
- c) Safety of the person and property of citizens
- d) Freedom of citizens from oppressive rule, economic exploitation, discrimination and exclusion, diseases, homelessness, starvation, ignorance and illiteracy, environmental degradation and all other forms of structural and criminal violence.

Accordingly, Adefisan (2017) noted that national security borders on incidences that endanger human existence or welfare. In essence, national security refers to protection of the lives, rights, dignity and property of citizens. Continuing, Adefisan contended that the sole aim of national security is to secure the just and equitable living conditions for all the citizens of the nation.

In another line of discourse, Anan (1998) noted that national security has many dimensions. This means that security must be guaranteed for all citizens in all major aspects of human endeavour. Based on this assertion, Anan, Alemika (2015) attempted to make a classification of security and he outlined six most significant dimensions of national security as:

Physical security, Public security, Economic security, Social security, Human right security and Political security. Alemika equally added that these dimensions of security are interrelated and cannot be separated.

Role of Quality Education in Fostering National Security

Quality education is a very essential ingredient that can help foster national security. This is because education is the means through which citizens are trained, made to acquire relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes, competences and values which will enable them to become

functional members of the society and to contribute their quota to national development. In the same vein, Ozoemena (2016) noted that poor quality education which is synonymous to educational failures pose five threats to economic growth and global competitiveness, physical safety, intellectual property, Nigeria global awareness, and Nigeria unity and cohesion. In the same manner, Alemika (2015) averred that the present insecurity witnessed in Nigeria today could be traced to a literary of poorly educated graduated and mass illiteracy. Many people have passed through school, but unfortunately did not allow school to pass through them, hence the country is filled with many educated illiterates.

However, there is a great connection between quality education and national security. Quality education has the capacity to produce competent high skilled graduates (manpower) who will promote scientific development and economic well-being of the country. Quality education is needed to raise a generation of responsible citizens who can take up leadership positions in the various facets of the nation's economy to ensure stability. Accordingly, Inyamah (2010) did not hide his feelings when he contended that national security can only be achieved via the instruments of quality education of its citizenry.

In addition, Offorma (2009) submitted that quality education is a do-without because it illuminates the minds of recipients of every obscurity and helps them to see and utilize the numerous opportunities available in their environment that could be harnessed for self-reliance. In the same vein, Ozige and Ocho (2011) supported Offorma by stating that education heals poverty of the mind and also empowers citizens.

Education that is quality helps one to be critically aware of one's reality in a manner that leads to effective action upon it (Oniye, 2004). An educated person understands his or her world enough to deal with effectively. The world is ever-changing and as such it takes quality education to train the mind of citizens to adjust to the ever-changing environment. It is equally through quality education that the young acquires the necessary knowledge information that enables citizens to realize and harness their innate potentials and to be able to utilize them effectively to achieve self-actualization.

Commenting on the indispensability of quality education to national security, Ozoemena (2016) stated that quality education is expected to help preserve and refine society so that it will be a congenial place for individual members to live and work happily in peace to ensure sustainable development, security and stability of the nation.

Education is equally a means of transmitting, preserving and improving the culture of any society (Ozige & Ocho, 2011). Thus school is seen as a means to familiarize members with physical features of the society, together with their norms, cultural patterns values, skills and practices, religious differences, political atonement, and also means to communicate the effect of these on individual behaviour and competences (Ozomena, 2016). As times are changing, demands of society change accordingly. Hence, it is expected that members of the society change their behaviours, attitudes and mindset to suit the changes. It is the duty of education to help citizens develop the needed new attitude, behaviour disposition, acquire relevant traits, mindsets, values and techniques needed to effectively operate in the new dispensation or age as the old methodologies do not hold water any longer.

Factors Militating Against Quality Education in Nigeria

Considering the indispensability of quality education to national security, one would expect that Nigeria government would have made frantic efforts to present quality education in the country. Though the government has made frantic efforts to promote quality education, yet some factors have been crippling the efforts of government. Some of the factors are highlighted in the succeeding paragraphs.

Poor Funding: Education that is qualitative is capital intensive. A lot of financial resources are needed to effect quality education. That is the reason why United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005) recommended that 26% of the national budget be allocated to education. However, contrary to UNESCO directive only 10% of the budget goes to education. Even at that due to high rate of corruption, not all the 10% are actually used up for education, about 3% are misappropriated by the managers.

Poor reading culture: ‘Readers are leaders’ is the popular slogan. Most Nigerian citizens lack reading culture. Reading is a kin to literacy, hence a non-reader cannot excel in education. This is the reason why Oyetunde (2002) called on parents and teachers to start early to imbibe reading culture in young children to certify quality education.

Poor learning environment: Quality education can only thrive in a quality conducive learning environment. Most learning outlets in Nigeria, especially government schools, do not have quality and serene environment (Azeez, 2002). Many schools have dilapidated structures, inadequate classroom structures to accommodate the teaching students’ population and poor quality learning facilities. A lot of learners are forced to learn under trees and sheds with exposure to harsh weather conditions. It is very obvious that no meaningful learning can take place under such conditions.

Poor remuneration of teachers: Teachers are the implementers of education curriculum. The teachers are the one that transmit the body of knowledge to the learners. However, in Nigeria, teachers are among the poorly paid workers. Mbah (2016) noted that teachers are not given their due right in Nigeria. The meagre salaries of teachers are sometimes denied, delayed or short-changed. These ill treatments of teachers cause discouragement to the committed teachers. Also, it has led to the brain drain lately witnessed in teaching profession – whereby some teachers leave teaching for greener pastures.

Other causes as identified by Iwundu and Thom-otuya (2014) include incessant strike actions, politicization and abuse of the education system, bribery and corruption, poor quality teaching force, unemployment and lack of emphasis on entrepreneurship education.

Suggestions

It has been established from the preceding session that quality education is a necessary condition for achieving national security. The onus lies on all stakeholders to join forces to ensure that quality education is actualized in Nigeria. Thus, the underlisted could help in fostering quality education in Nigeria.

1. The government should comply to the UNESCO (2005) directive on 26% of total budget allocation to ensure that the education system is well funded.
2. The Federal Ministry of Education should set mechanism in place to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of educational procedures and processes across the nation to enhance quality assurance.
3. Teaching should be professionalized: The teaching profession in Nigeria is somewhat open to all and sundry. Everybody feels that he or she can join teaching especially as a last resort when there is no job in field of training. This problem has led to influx of many untrained teachers in the various schools. Such untrained teachers cannot deliver effectively.
4. Training and retraining of serving teachers is indispensable and should be done on regular basis. This is necessary to acquaint teachers with necessary skills and up-to-date knowledge on the art of teaching and latest development in education pedagogy (Thom-otuya & Inko-tariah, 2016).
5. There is equally need for upgrading of teachers salaries, allowance and bonuses to serve as a motivator to the committed teachers.

Conclusion

Education is a veritable tool that nations of the world have used to transform their society and to improve the living conditions of their citizens. Every nation needs national security. The citizens need to be safe and protected for them to be in the right frame of mind to work and to contribute to the development of the nation. When security is lacking, insecurity becomes the order of the day. No nation can record any meaningful progress or development when the citizens are insecure. Based on this need, every nation tries to see that the education provided to its citizens is of quality in order to derive the needed dividends which include but not limited to national security.

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