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EDUCATION TOWARDS ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING NATIONS: NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This Research Paper is a contribution towards highlighting the underdevelopment challenges in Nigeria by applying Education as a tool. In the present decades, there has been a Paradigm Shift in emphasizing on Sustainable Development and the way it been practised. All over the country, there is evidence of a failed leadership attributed by a dwindling economic, educational, political and social fortune. All these challenges are due to the incapability of the leadership to effectively plan for development and apply the necessary educational tools that can produce great leaders that can control the helms of Government and the private sectoral industries. The paper suggests, among other things, that there must be a re-orientation of the present education at every level to entail skills, principles and the perceptives of sustainable development. Non-formal, formal, informal and casual education for skills, attitude and knowledge for human development and poverty alleviation must be encouraged

Keywords: *Sustainable Development, Education, Nigeria, Developing Nations*

INTRODUCTION

This research paper is a contribution towards highlighting the obstacles of underdevelopment in Nigeria by applying education as a tool. Precisely, the research paper applies exposition as a technique of emphasizing how education can be harnessed in other to ensure sustainable development. First, a clarification is made between Non-Formal, Informal, Casual and Formal Education where the attributes of each form of education are emphasized. Secondly, the issues of development and sustainability are explained and a connection between the two terms is established. Thirdly, the sub-theme "Education towards Sustainable Development" is explained where it is established that the country including other developing nations requires an Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) to develop. In the end, it is finalized that a great optimistic correlation occurs between Sustainable Development and Education. As a consequence, the encouragement of Non-Formal, Casual, Formal and Informal Education for attitudes, knowledge and skills for human development and poverty alleviation among other things are suggested.

ATTEMPTS AT THE DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

Education: The most enduring and synoptic definition of Education is that which views education as the acquisition of skills, knowledge, experiences and attitudes. From this explanation, three strands of education occurred, one of such that views education as well all encounter acquired in the stages of living. This is the famous definition of education that is so vague. It is thus categorized into four

Formal Education: This is a form of Education that is rigid, highly organized and applies age including other criteria for the admission into the system. It is systematic but it does not give room to the individual capability to learn. It is up to Government and its accredited agencies to know what is adequate for learning

Non Formal Education: It is relatively coordinated learning. First, it must be in-pupillary, that is, it needs to be done outside the formal school and it is majorly a part-time basis since it is usually for staff or those already contributing their part to National Development and it is mostly on voluntary criteria. It is also an educational activity as a result of the presence of the learners, facilitators/teachers, method and content.

Informal Education: Here, there is a technique, purpose and intention as the traditional setting where women learn things and dress regarding their customs. Informal Education is not that organized since



individuals do not tutor on how to do it but you are aware of what to do since learning entails observation and correlation

Casual Education: Learning in this scenario is picked up unintentionally since learning is not intended. It is also in-determinant, it has no method and content but there is usually learner and teacher.

Education plays a significant role in the capability of a developing nation to absorb new technology and to ensure the capacity for self-sustaining development and growth (Smith and Todaro, 2009). In other words, education possesses the major key that opens a Nation capability towards Sustainable National Development and National Transformation (Ilechukwu et al, 2014).

DEVELOPMENT

Development entails the growth and change in an individual's life pattern. It is also an increase or a change in the structural facilities of a community, individual or society (Itari, 1995). But to few scholars, development entails the power of individuals to tackle their problems with their personal knowledge, experiences, wisdom and resources with the perspective to eliminating starvation, pestilence and poverty. Policy measures aimed against man and his development are usually seen as development initiatives (Onunwa, 2007)

Development entails the ability of a society to attain a sustained and rapid increase in productivity of all profitable economic ventures. It was applied to entail the capacity of a national economy to sustain and generate a yearly rise in its Gross National Production (GNP). Emphasis was majorly on how a Society can maximize productivity in its tangible means. As discovered by Onunwa (2007), no similar attention was provided on how justice is to be attained in the allocation of what has been produced.

SUSTAINABILITY

It is the ability to maintain, sustain, and provide for or nourish something for an unlimited period without depleting or damaging it. In the present decades, the comprehension of the sustainability concept has been strongly created by numerous researchers and scholars. The idea of sustainability can be comprehended in different meanings and it is evaluated in numerous contexts as a technical word that is applied in forestry or an ecological word and its modern definition which entails to the development of the human societies and humanity (Di Giulio, 2006)

As a consequence, the present United Nations (UN) documents have indicated a paradigm shift from "Economic Growth" to the "Human Development" determined by adult literacy, life expectancy, individual's average income and access to every level of education which is an important condition of their liberty of preference (Soubbotina et al, 2014)

This idea of development was to incorporate every aspect of the welfare of individuals from economic to their health status and political freedom. Regarding the Human Development report published in 1996 by the United Nations (UN) Development Programme (UNDP), "Human Development entails the end, economic growth is a means"

Also, it is factual that economic growth by maximizing a country's aggregate wealth also accepts its capabilities for solving and minimizing other social challenges. But history provides many instances where economic growth was not abided by similar progress in Human Development, rather, Growth was attained at the cost of higher unemployment, greater inequality, loss of cultural identity, weakened democracy or over the consumption of Natural resources required by the future generation (Soubbotina, 2004). As the connections between environmental and social issues and economic growth are properly comprehended, professionals tend to concur that this type of growth is inevitably not sustainable and that it cannot continue along the same path for long (Soubbotina, 2004)

The idea of development is properly captured by Ilechukwu, et al, 2014 when they discovered that "in current time, there needs to be a paradigm shift in defining development as well as the way it is being practised. This paradigm shift led to the adoption of Sustainable Development (SD)



Sustainable Development:

Paradigm shift has led to the adoption of Sustainable Development (SD) as it is a concept that was outlined in the Brunt land Report and that of the Stockholm Conference of 1972 (UNECA, 2012) According to Hopwood et al, (2005), this shift as quoted by Osei – Kojo and Ahenkan (2014) was conceived out of the worldwide connection between Socio-economic concern and environmental challenges and also the earlier approaches and conception of development seemed to majorly focus on the physical and economic wealth regardless of the complex nature and the multidimensional nature of development (Bellu, 2011):

The Brunt land Report emphasized Sustainable Development as the 'Development' that attains the demands of the current without altering the capacity of the future generation to attain their personal demands". The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011) as emphasized by Osei Kojo and Ahenkan (2014) also explains Sustainable Development as a development path along which the increase of human welfare for present's day generation does not result to the decrease in the welfare of the future generation. This definition emphasized that Sustainable Development considers the demands of the current and the future generations in tandem and it is in-depth in the attainment of the welfare and the wellbeing of the citizens (Osei & Ahenkan, 2014)

Thus, Sustainable Development is concerned with the sustenance and the creation of the conditions of the future and the present generations of humans to inhabit properly on this planet. Therefore, as discovered by Falkenberg & Sims (2013) right from the starting of a multi-prong technique to the notion of Sustainable Society was taken that moved beyond concerns for solely the destruction of the National environment to entail the concern for attaining the fundamental demands of all individuals and those demands are met sustainably in considerations of the wants of the future generation.

Numerous advocates of sustainable development, intrinsically valuing human life and nature have also become an essential aspect of development (Bakar, 2005). And in regards to the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as emphasized by Ilechukwu et al (2014), Development is sustainable if "it attains the demands of the present without comprising and altering the capability of the future generation to attain their personal demands. Sustainable Development can actually be otherwise referred to as a “balanced and an equitable” development (Soubbotina, 2004)

Although, the functionality of the principle of sustenance had over the decades becomes so challenging particularly in Nigeria and other Developing Nations. In an attempt to attain Sustainable Development, African Nations have initiated numerous strategies. For instance, in Nigeria, there has been rampant poverty reduction initiatives by the governments at various times and at every level, all directed towards human development, economic growth, conservation and economic safeguard. Just as in Nigeria, there have been a maximized number of Sustainable Development strategies being executed across some of the African Nations. These initiatives transpired in the transformation of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) in 2001, the establishment of Regional Economic Councils (RECs) in the sub-region including the establishment of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) (UNECA, 2012 Osie –Kojo & Ahenkan, 2014)

Regardless of these attempts by the African Government, there is a rising motion that Africa could crumble in attaining Sustainable Development. As discovered by (Osie-Kojo & Ahenkan, 2014), this notion is triggered by the proof that the globe is undergoing a rapid transformation.

EDUCATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Political Philosophers since Aristotle and Plato have affirmed the dictums emphasized in the phrases “What you intend to taste, you must put into school”, “As in State, so it is in the School” (Akinsanya, 2004). The Truism that Education is the best way of sustainably developing any society or individual requires no contention. Education as earlier emphasized is the process of acquiring and imparting values, knowledge,



experience, attributes and skills in the institutions of learning while living, at play or work. The so acquired skills are applied subsequently to sustain the future and the present generations in their daily life. It is adequate and better nurturing, application and the transmission of such knowledge and skills that guarantees the sustenance and the development of the society (Abiodun, 2002)

In December 2011, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly ensured a resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, spanning the decades 2005 to 2014 with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the leading agency for the year (Ilechukwu et al, 2014)

The General Objective of the Decade for Sustainable Development as emphasized by Ilechukwu et al (2014) entails the integration of values, principles and the practices towards Sustainable Development into every aspect of learning and education –informal, social, informal and non-informal. The year's four major objectives with regards to the authors are:

- 1 Provide Nations with modern tools and opportunities to incorporate Educations towards Sustainable Development (ESD) in Education reforms motives
- 1 Promoting a greater quality of learning and teaching in Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD)
- 1 Assisting nations in attaining their Sustainable Development Goals (ESD) through Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD)
- 1 Collaborating among Stakeholders and Facilitating Network in Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD)

The political development launched at the Worldwide Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (2002) as emphasized by Ilechukwu et al (2014) emphasizes that Sustainable Development is established on three “mutually reinforcing and independent pillars” of human/social development, economic growth including environmental sustainability and protection.

Chapter 36 of the Agenda 21, known as the 1992 Earth Summit at Rio, discovers four major thrusts of Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) (Ilechukwu et al, 2014). They entail:

- 1 Training
- 1 Enhancement and promotion of Basic Education
- 1 Develop Public awareness and Comprehension of Sustainability
- 1 Reorienting of the Present Education at all levels to emphasize on Sustainable Development

The importance of basic education is to improve and transform the conditions of both community towards Sustainable Development and the Community as well (Associations of African Universities, 2009)

- 1 The Reorientation of the Present Education at every stage entails the educational reforms of skills, principles, including values, which are quantitative, qualitative, relevant and appropriate to the school and socio-cultural curricula (Ilechukwu et al, 2014). To carry this out, there are three aspects of educational processes that are necessary to these reforms.

In-Public awareness and the understanding of Sustainability, Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) entails a population that is conscious of the Sustainable Society goals (Ilechukwu et al, 2014).

The Fourth Principle which is Training presupposes that the environment requires an environmental and a friendly conscious workforce and citizens to assist in guiding the countries in the execution of the Sustainable Development Goals. All the sections of the Society (both in the informal and formal sectors) are motivated to train their workers and leaders in environmental management. Training is different from Education as it is usually precise to a specific job or the classes of jobs (Ilechukwu et al, 2014)



Thus, the role of Sustainable Education on Development can be summarized as follows:

- 1 Educational Institution plays a significant role in creating modern paradigms and building more sustainable societies as they have the mission to encourage development through both research and teaching. Teacher Education can be viewed as an agent of change or an essential factor in encouraging the economic, social and environmental values towards Sustainable Development in the Nation (Johnson, 2007)
- 1 To Improve learning regarding Sustainable Development; various Teaching Methodologies need to be adopted in all areas of educational strata. The methods that will assist in the dissemination of information easily and quickly to learners needs to be applied and must be amalgamated with other methods towards effectiveness. This will ensure learner's involvement, critical thinking and communication skills in regards to issues on Sustainable Development
- 1 Also; Education must provide learners with the perspectives, skills, knowledge and values to sustainably live in their communities. Education brings about leaders of the nation who conduct the helms of Government including the private sector industries that comprise the Sustainable Development stakeholders. The educational system brings about a “vanguard group of leaders in every sector of the society that will take the leading and primary responsibilities in ensuring the values for Sustainable Development (Bedawy, 2014)
- 1 Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) functions to train, educate and carry out research in "contributing towards Sustainable Development of the Nation. For instance, the training of individuals in the monitoring and detection of targets of Sustainable concerns and the graduate with knowledge, skills and attitudes to make sustainability contribution (Bedawy, 2014, Pearson et al, 2005)
- 1 Education empowers individuals for their responsibilities in the Society. Thus, Non-Formal, Informal including Formal Education are the significant factors in Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD). Formal Education cannot solely execute Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD). Non Formal, Formal ad the Informal Education Sectors must work as one to attain the Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) objectives (Ilechukwu et al, 2014). It is essential for adult and young individuals to be trained for Sustainable Development since they are the future generation. This will provide them with the privilege to start to value the globe's cultural diversity and appreciate the issues faced by the present globe and of the impact that they will have on these issues (Davidson, 2003).
- 1 Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) entails learning how to ensure decisions that will be considered for the long term future of the Nation, equity and ecology of every community. UNESCO emphasizes that education has an important obligation to generate the knowledge required and also communicate this knowledge to the public and decision makers at large (UNESCO, 2001, 2003).
- 1 Education is referred to as an instrument for socio change that can transform society in tremendous manners. Education is so necessary when intending to ensure a change in values and attitudes towards sustainability. The report of the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) of (1987) identified that "Sustainable Development entails changes in the attitudes and values towards development and environment and that Education plays a major responsibility in attaining those changes in attitudes and values (Falkenberg & Sims).
- 1 Contemporary Sustainable Development Education is anticipated to be centered on the above issues and it needs to be oriented on the future development and ensuring a better quality of the future and the present life. Also, the issues and concepts of Sustainable Development must be informally and formally taught so much such that they form part of the major aspects of the lives of the people and that the people develop the necessary skills for Sustainable Development.
- 1 Education towards Sustainable Development rises from different sources and it is delivered through formal, non-formal, informal and casual strategies. The topics of Sustainable Development majorly emphasized here entail but not restricted to, human rights, conflict resolution, gender equity, ethics, peace, poverty alleviation, citizenship, human security, democracy, health, energy, governance, water, urban and rural development, corporate and socio responsibility, environmental and social effects of Globalization, consumption and production patterns, biological diversity, cultural diversity, ecosystems, ecological principles, management, natural resources and the prevention of disaster (Bedawy, 2014)



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This Paper glanced at Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) in Nigeria including other Developing Nations. Therefore, this paper can be summarized as follows:

- 1 Development cannot be divorced from the educational structures and institutions that have set in place.
- 1 Informal, Formal, Non-Formal and Casual Education Sectors are all provided in the Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD). A Sector cannot execute Education towards Sustainable Development (ESD) alone.
- 1 Development Paradigm has migrated from economic growth to human development and presently, sustainable development.
- 1 A Maximum Positive Correlation thrives between Sustainable Development and Education.
- 1 The Educational System of Nigeria has numerous outlets that entail informal, formal, Non-Formal and Casual Education.
- 1 Education is the primary objectives of Sustainable Development and an essential end itself. Education remains the appropriate ways towards Sustainable Development in any Nation.

Conclusively; Education towards Sustainable Development is the process of attaining Sustainable Development be it human development, economic growth, environmental conservation and protection.

Also, the Paper recommended that:

- 1 The Promotion of Non-Formal, Formal, Informal and Casual Education for knowledge, skills and attitudes for human development and poverty alleviation by optimal investment in quality and basic education in line with UNESCO's minimum standard of 26% yearly budgetary allocation.
- 1 The Professional and Educational Development of those that are in charge of executing Sustainable Development.
- 1 Contemporary Sustainable Development Education must concentrate on different issues such as conflict resolution, human rights, gender, ethics, poverty alleviation including environmental sustainability to mention but a few.
- 1 People – Community members, students, practitioners and professionals must be motivated to develop the necessary skills towards Sustainable Development.
- 1 Sustainable Development Concepts/issues must be informally and formally taught in schools in a way that they will become basic to the lives of individuals.
- 1 The Orientation n of the present education at every level to entail skills, principles, values and the perspectives of Sustainable Development

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