

## REVAMPING NIGERIA'S ECONOMY: IMPLICATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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### **Abstract**

*The society is an interconnected web of social institutions; this implies that every institution depends on the other for its survival and effective functioning and utilization of its resources for societal development. This paper examines the organic relationship between the economy and education. This apart, it proposes means through which the economy can be revamped among which is the utilization of local and indigenous natural resources for an alternative economic development, thereby creating and developing alternative economic resources that will enhance educational accessibility. This paper contends that education doubtless receives a high boost when the economy becomes buoyant and this improves the social status of individuals and the society at large. Lastly, the paper recommends that if the global economic crisis should remain the reason for the low or less funding of education, the social structure will suffer the most during the recession. Therefore, education should be adequately funded with a view to providing teaching and learning material, conducive teaching and learning environment as well as adequate supervision and inspection of our schools.*

### **Introduction**

The link between education and the economy is an important one. Whenever the link is effective, the result is improved productivity, development of human resources and the improved potentiality of individuals. It also strengthens the capacity of individuals (including Nigerians) to be able to face emerging global educational and economic challenges. No society, system of education or economy is ever static. Mahuta (2007), noted that, sociologists of education are concerned with the relevance of the economy to education and conversely of education to the economy as well as the ideological interplay of both sectors to the sustenance of the society at large.

One alarming constraint to the present education and economic change in the society is the over-dependence on bookish and certificated individuals as the human resource base to manage our national resources in all sectors of the society and economy in particular. To Otite and Ogionwo (2006), the school is not an authoritative institution of spiritual guidance, but a flexible social institution with the potential of building ones' moral, educational, physical and even spiritual well-being for the continuity of the society. It is against this background, that the school may be considered progressive, especially if it leads to a self-sustaining economic structure or system in the country. Currently in Nigeria, the average person is socially and economically insecure; there is job insecurity. Quite a number of people are underfed while others find it extremely

difficult to acquire the basic necessities of life. This state of affairs makes it necessary for a revamping of the national economy to be considered. It is important to note that sociologists of education are interested in the ideological framework for revamping the economy and its sustenance in Nigeria. This interest emanates from the fact that, societal economic ideology determines class creation and interest. Since the status and position of the national economy open ways for inter-class struggles, this obviously influences the nature of education given to the citizens (Uba and Umezurike, 1993). It is therefore difficult to separate the national economy from education; the former affects the latter in terms of standards, financial and material provisions. But the obvious ideological agenda of education and economy is organic. The relationship between the ideology of a society and its education predict materialistic structures and fundamentals of societal existence.

Virginia (2005), submitted that the totality of educational progress is based on a nation's economic strength and its ability to withstand the constant challenges associated with the upward and downward trends of the economy. This simply means that there is a correlation between the political economy of a nation and the philosophy of its educational system. For this reason, if we hope to improve, sustain and even revamp the economy, we have to focus on education. That is why Adler and Adler (2001), noted that educational institutions are important and vital in determining the strength of other sectors of the economy.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

Sociologists of education emphasize the importance of the economy to the development of educational institutions. The problems of scarcity and choice are essential to the economist, therefore, relevant to education. The distribution of educational information and content vary, from one place to another. The variation could be in terms of societal ideology and the relative emphasis on aspects of the contents. To Otite and Ogionwo (2006), the knowledge and the study of any society will be incomplete without consideration of such issues as the production and distribution of the various goods and services within that society. These goods and services are the basic necessities for human survival. This is the discipline that seeks to focus on individual and institutional means of the maximization of scarce resources. Karl Marx in Haralambos and Holborn (2008), opined that, the economy is the basic structure of every society. On this, rests a superstructure which constitutes other societal institutions and strengthens their relationships and interdependence; such institutions are political, legal, educational and religious in nature.

The economy might be good, but there is currently a worldwide trend toward rationalization of economic standards and the institution of mechanisms for its sustenance and indeed in increasing its reform potentials for societal development. The Nigeria economic system needs to be revamped and strategies for its upward productivity sought to empower individuals to have access to affordable education.

To Rao (2008), the larger society, unfortunately encounters economic crisis, and therefore, might be incapable of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults. Human resources become difficult to manage when prediction and decision for improvement are faulty. If the entire system is found wanting, it becomes necessary for

strategies for interventions to be designed. This will ensure the sustenance and optimum use of the natural and human resources of the nation. Where there is economic instability, the entire society becomes unstable, volatile or even vulnerable. To revamp and sustain the economy of Nigeria does not only mean initiating robust and workable strategies for increased economic productivity, but also initiating and developing sustainable human resource protection as well. The educational policies, resources, and their implementation in any country depend strongly on the economy (UNDP, 1995). This is why a weak economic environment is not conducive for achieving educational goals and poses various kinds of threats to education in general. Hence, education and the economy are very important tools for the socio-economic development of the society.

### **Relationship between Economy and Education**

From the economic standpoint, education is an instrument with which national development can be initiated and sustained. It is also a tool for economic development. In view of the above, Mahuta (2007), contended that education comprises efforts that build individual consciousness and directs societal ability towards the achievement of the aims of development. Mahuta (2007, p.141) also opined that:

*The economy of a nation determines to a great extent the type, content and methods of education a country provides for its citizens. This therefore means that the rich countries of the world have well- designed and planned systems of education because they have resources and funds for effective implementation and delivery of the systems.*

However, in view of the importance of the economy to education and conversely of education to the economy, it can be clearly seen, from the various systems of education that education is ideologically planned. Singh (2007, p. 132) stated that:

*A good educational system may be flower of economic development, but it is also the seed and gross national product per capital is dependent on educational development of the country and vice versa. Economic advancement of the country makes it possible to invest resources in educational development.*

Operationally, education influences the economy and the economy does same to education. The various sectors of the society need well qualified human resources with the relevant managerial skills. This means that education is needed for higher productivity and increased efficiency for the enhancement of the economy and the general development of the nation. Therefore, the relationship between economy and education can further be demonstrated in the following ways:

- i. investing in education is a long-term exercise, which will later pay off by providing an efficient and reliable human resource base for national economic development.
- ii. the education of the individual and the nation depends on the economy. So, where there is a sound economy, we expect a constructive and productive

educational system; this will make the economy strong. At all times, education depends on the economy; this is true for both national and individual economic capabilities.

- iii. education influences the future of individuals and the nation. It also determines the optimum utility of human, financial and material resources.

There are however, problems of unemployed citizens, not only in Nigeria, but in the whole world. This affects the economy and education as well. This is particularly a problem in Nigeria and indeed in many developing nations of the world; there are many unemployed school leavers, certificate holders and graduates of various fields of specialization. This affects the economy in a number of ways. For example, there may be little or no return on educational investments.

Sociologists of education, such as Daramola (2002), Sule (2003) and Mahuta (2007), have argued that, economic problems, which cause financial constraints to individuals, affect the development of the society, the stability of the family as well as the development of the child's personality. When the individual's financial condition is bad or poor, it reduces opportunities for educating the young in the family. Therefore, this leads to poor educational advancement and subsequently causes children from such social milieu to be backward and harbour feelings of dissatisfaction and inferiority.

In view of the symbiotic relationship between the economy and education, the economy is capable of influencing the progress or failure of the educational system. Therefore, poor economic planning and policy implementation subsequently affects educational productivity at all levels. However, according to Rao (2008), it is obvious that:

- i. the economy influences the choice of educational content (nature of curricula) and educational provisions (instructional materials and infrastructural facilities), human resources (qualified teachers and other personnel) to manage the educational institutions.
- ii. several educational problems emanate from economic backwardness resulting in education not being available to many but to only few individuals in the society. Where majority of the people cannot afford schooling, they become illiterates and unproductive.
- iii. the status of the national economy determines the choice between a good but expensive curriculum and a poor but cheaper one. This means that political and economic policies influence the educational quality of a nation and this has a long-term effect on the nation's development.
- iv. economic backwardness results in low educational standards and outcomes due to its lingering effect on various aspects of the educational system. This has long-term implications for national development.
- v. in trying to avoid seemingly costly or expensive educational reforms, educational planners may repeatedly implement the cheaper but ineffective option. This often results in stagnation and eventually reduces the ability of individuals to cope with emerging societal, educational and technological challenges.

- vi. where the economy of a nation depends largely on agriculture (with mainly manual operations), the education of that nation will deteriorate and poverty levels will increase. Therefore modern agricultural practices will enhance educational life chances by means of increased productivity.  
Generally speaking, the economic policies of a country influence its standard of education.

### **Strategies for Economic Improvement through Education**

Employing local resources for sustaining the economy, implies using and exploring indigenous natural resources as means of promoting sustainable economic development. Self-development by individuals requires some amount of knowledge or information, creativity, skills or capabilities. These factors should be fostered by individuals or the society. The formal economic initiatives of society are somewhat replicated in the nature of school programmes. In view of the need for economic improvement for educational development in Nigeria the following strategies should be adopted:

- i. economic resources should be developed and utilized through systematic, informal and formal training programmes as employed by societies, institutions and individual economic institutions. These are strongly influenced in the standard of education, chances of acquisition and probably the future of the nation.
- ii. the working population should be given improved financial incentives, good health services and better living conditions. These directly influence education.
- iii. the economic resources of the country should be derived from diverse sources but not only from agriculture or the petroleum industry. It should include, tapping resources from the land, water and other natural resources. These resources should be exploited to accelerate economic growth and a sustainable educational system.

### **Conclusion**

The economy and the educational system are two important aspects of nation building that promote social security and the well-being of the entire society. These aspects are as relevant to the development of individuals as they are for the socio-economic development of the society as a whole.

### **Recommendations**

Education is an engine for human resource production, as such governments at various levels (Federal, State and Local) should increase spending in the area of teaching and learning. Government should increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our educational institutions. This will positively affect the social structure of Nigeria. In this way quality education will not be monopolized by the wealthy and the bourgeoisie in the society. Thus, this is a long-term economic advantage vis-s-vis the current economic crisis.

If the global economic crisis should remain the reason for the low or less funding of education, the social structure will suffer the most during the recession. Therefore, education should be adequately funded with a view to providing teaching and learning

material, conducive teaching and learning environment as well as adequate supervision and inspection of our schools.

Government should promote the development of joint undertakings between the private and public sectors to promote partnerships and strengthen the educational system in Nigeria. The government must avoid the forces of global economic crisis by taking appropriate remedial actions. The educational system should therefore, be funded with a view to meet long-term goals, capacity building and global competition in all aspects of human endeavours.

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