EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA.

A PAPER READ AS LEAD PAPER PRESENTED AT THE 14TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, KANO

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VENUE: PLOUGHOFF AUDITORIUM, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION. KANO

DATE: TUESDAY, 17TH JULY 2012

PROTOCOLS

I wish to start by welcoming everyone to the 14th Annual National Conference of the School of Education, Federal College of Education Kano. I felt highly honoured when I received the letter of notification in which I was invited as a lead paper presenter to this conference. In fact this is a clear testimony that this college has opened its doors for academic ideas to follow in for the academic development of its staff. The theme of this conference "Education Transformation and security Challenges in Nigeria" could not have come at a better time than now when the country is facing its greatest security challenges since independence. Building and transforming a single nation out of the a multitude of cultures and diverse religious, ethnics and tribal groupings encompassed within Nigerian boundaries is not a small task. Nigeria is by far the most populous country in Africa, within her boundaries are over 250 ethnic groups with nearly 400 languages spoken. in addition most of the sects of Christianity and Islam are represented with a wide diversity of indigenous religions. (Bray, Clark and Stephen, 1986)

Since independence the Nigerian political scene have been characterized by the problem of division along ethnic and religious line and government policies have been trying to unify the country. Education has however been seen as the agent that promote that. This culminated into the publishing of National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1977, where the unification of the country was identified as one of the five national goals of the Education system (NPE, 2004:6)

It is clearly stated that:

"Education shall continue to be highly rated in the National Development Plans, because education is the most important instrument of change, any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution"

Education has been seen as the greatest force that can be used to bring about changes Prof. Jibril Aminu (1995). Ones observe that the greatest investment that a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources is that of education. Since Education according to him "Provides us with people possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to win a nation state and to even export brains". Education, especially functional and sustainable education, ideally therefore is meant to promote unity and enhance national development in this country.

Since education has been identified as an important instrument of change and any fundamental change has to be preceded by an educational revolution thus what make successive governments since independence to be conscious of the problems caused by unbalanced development in this country of which wide variation of school enrolment have been both the cause and the symptoms. To reduce this inbalance between ethnics and religious groups Governments have launched a number of education projects. Such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976 and Universal Basic Education, 1999. One of the major criticisms against the UPE projects was that it brought about unconditional and haphazard development of Primary Education in the country consequently, many children of school age could not attend school for many reasons, including instability of parents to pay their fees. That of course meant that Primary Education for some time in this country was inaccessible and unavailable to many Nigerian children. Generally, teachers in short supply, Tahir (2001) was also of the opinion that infrastructure was inadequate in quality, while apathy to education reigned in many

communities. "This was" according to him, definitely an intolerable situation for a country hungry for development.

The Nigerian public looks rather dejected when they analyse the happenings in the country's learning institutions today and look forward a brighter future. The public generally complains of moral laxity, economic depression, unemployment, unstable political life, low education standard and students poor academic achievement. To the public education along the line of schooling seems to be preparing the children for nothing. The teachers, educators, educationist and education managers are not unaware of the public cry for an improvement in the realization of the aims of education.

Based on the above, discontentments from the public on the perception of the performance of education, various governments came up with different kinds of strategies and slogans for the betterment of education in the country. The term SELF EMPLOYMENT and SELF RELIANCE within the last two decades has been and its still in household term which is frightening to the middle level and low level income workers of the Nigerian society. The Murtal-Obasajo regime (1975-1979) introduced the country to self-reliance by encouraging the nationals to take over fairly big sized businesses from foreigners and getting involved in the nations big contacts. The regime helped by introducing release of mobilization fees for the big contracts. The regime also helped indigenious companies and conditions that such companies employ graduates of engineering, constructions and legal disciplines if they are to be patronized by the government. At the end of the day, the companies managing directors faked appointments of graduates and converted mobilization fees to chieftaincy title collection and marriage ceremonies extravanzers. The Buhari-Idiagbon regime (1983-1985) came with the checking of moral laxity in the country, along with reducing the nations external and internal debt through the counter trade financial system with willing countries. The regime

was making self-reliance meaningful to establish industries in the country for the nations young graduates to work there in and further think on how to move away from governments employment, when it was overturned in 1985, the Babangida regime (1985-1993) brought into limelight the participation of individual Nigerians in the petroleum industries. The rich and influential Nigerian who gained from the normal oil lifting kept large chunks of their monetary and material gains in banks outside the country' communities including schools are now turned to beggers in the name of launching asking the society to donate or give alms. Who will blame the education system? The rich ones feel insecured establishing industries and helping the self-reliance scheme to succeed.

The school through the Nigerian Education Policies to emphasize vocational, technical and science education so as to create in the children the love and workmanship. It has always been the hope that these children after graduating from schools will practice these skills and perhaps make a living. One observes that however because of the poor socio-economic background of most of the children, the hope of school becomes dashed. The few graduates who established 'self employment' projects do not receive patronage because "they do not belong". Self employment or self-reliance, no doubt goes along with community development and having a sense of belonging to the community. The self-reliance scheme of the nations education policy became a mirage because of the explosion in science and technology knowledge. It is discovered that by the time a primary school leaver enters the secondary school and graduate from the university, the developed world has introduced new technological materials into the market the knowledge of which was not in curriculum of study.

THE PLACE OF EDUCATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY.

Education is "the aggregate of all the process by which a child or adult develops the abilities, the attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of the passive values to the society in which he lives; that is to say it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to grantee rational direction of society or both" (Fatima 1974:26). From a global view, economic and social developments are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge.

" Successful development entails more than investing in physical capital, or closing gap in capital; it also entails acquiring and using knowledge as well as closing the gap in knowledge" (World Bank, 1999:25).

It is in view of the recognition of the federal government of Nigeria of the importance of Education in the transformation of the society that Education was adopted as an instrument for national development. What then have successive governments been doing to see that the nations education piloted the transformation of the society into national and globally accepted community. Western Education came to Nigeria around 1842 by the missionaries, the aim at the time was to produce shopkeepers, clerks and people who could read the Bible, however Islamic Education predates western education. Nigeria and the aim of which was to create a whole personality who have the fear of Allah and observe the temets of the religion as the way of life.

The colonial masters education policy was to transform the subjects in the colonies to think in their own way, initially there was no plan for development but as the agitation for independence grew, reforms were introduced, Nigerians were appointed into offices and even sent abroad to read but all these was specifically done to make such benefiaries think and act like the white man. Due to the

complex nature of the Nigerian society in terms of culture and religious affiliations, the colonial masters thought of providing education on secular basis where the issues of religion is not considered, this was done because most the northern region are Muslims and a great number of Yoruba also are Muslims. There were Christians and aminists also and people with diverse culture and languages. Instead of the education policy at that time to take cognizance of these religious and tribal and language diversities, the policy was only bent on transforming populance to think along secular lines, thus having a conflict between traditionalist on one hand and religious people on the other hand especially in the Muslim north where in some areas western education was considered as paganism and still considered as such by a cross section of the Muslims. Had it been that at the time the educational policies were been formulated the issues of religious and cultural diversities were considered and taken care of at the pre-independence and post independence educational policies, our society in terms of security would not have been what it is today. The whole policies and systems continued to focuse on either self-reliance or skill acquisition which led to the thinking by citizens of the material aspects of education thus neglecting the spiritual aspect.

This trends on self-reliance and incalculation of sound moral values continued to echo in the nations policies up to the 1970s when the policy on education was drafted where inter-alias stated:

> *"there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive united Nigeria, to this end school programmes needs to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individuals direction in Education"* (NPE, 2004:1)

The question one may pose here is how relevant is our education to our needs and how practical? A look at our technical colleges will reveal to you lack of man power and equipment. In the same policy Sec 7 sub Sec 3 states that:

"The inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for survival of individual and the Nigeria society" (NPE 2004:2)

The type of values referred to here are not specified so one can assume any value he considered right, but the issues of the various communities and what they value is not considered you cannot have a national value which is divorced of religion and culture and expect it to succeed. The mistake that has always committed in Nigeria is when we are designing policies we would close our eyes and ears to some yearings and just term them sentimental and as such the thoughts of a myopic group may be incorporated to mean a national policy and that is why we always have problems of implementation.

It is clear that there is a crisis in nation building from the education sector which is of transforming the society and that education should be a major instrument for dealing this crisis. In the first place, the various strands of the Nigerian Education i.e. Western, Traditional, Islamic and Christian have to be woven together to form a coherent educational whole. At the national level, there is the need to bring all the heritages (pre-colonial, pre-Islamic, Islamic, Christians, Modern day, non formal systems, colonial, post-colonial, other outside influences) together as each of them has something to contribute to the emergence of viable national system.

Bringing all these strands together can best be done as Obanya (2004:52) puts it "By democratizing the process of educational policy making. If every group in the society is made to have a say, to contribute something to the search for appropriate national education system, policies and practices, the chances are that there will be a better opportunity for weaving the experience and the aspirations of each and every group in the society into a common national melting pot".

Since Nigeria is part of the global world whether we like or not, it follows that we have no choice than to prepare ourselves adequately for the eventuality which is already with us, e.g. internet, the various social network, Gsm etc. Education transformation has to take place in Nigeria because it has a key role to play in nations building. This cannot however happen if care is not taken to ensure that education in Nigeria works towards the two mutually supporting goals of conservation, transformation (Obanya 2004).

Conservation relates to the conservation of cultural heritage through educational policies which seek to enculturate Nigerian cultural heritage is as much a web as its educational heritage, but educational practices in Nigeria are yet to respect the golden rule of giving due emphasis to enculturation, which is the primary goal of education.

Transformation refers to opening up to novel ideas and ways of seeking the world with the purpose of enriching that which has been "inherited". Transformation is necessary to open up new vistas and to bring each person and such society into the wider horizon of a fast changing world. Without transformation, most cultures will become mere meseum pieces, as they will be denied enrichment, dynamism and the capacity to adopt to changing time.

For the outside influences to be beneficial, for them to enrich existing cultural heritage and values, they have to be built on what is already on the ground; in the cultural make-up of the person or group subjected to the external influences. Obanya (2004) noted that Nigerian shaky educational achievements can be partly traced to this lack of sufficient attention:

- Consolidating traditional heritage through educational practices that really enculture;
- Fully understanding external influences, discerning exactly those aspects that can be beneficial and;

- Intelligently borrowing from outside sources to ensure that the inherited values are not lost, but are meaningfully enriched by new ideas and built into cohesive force to face future challenges.

Transformation is certainly a worth while goal for all educational systems, all educational policies and practices. For meaningful transformation to take place, however there is need to marry it appropriately with the equally worth while goal of conservation. Nigeria needs to emphasis both ideas, building strongly on conservation so that transformation can be built on a strong foundation of fully ingrained cultural practices.

EMERGENT ISSUES FROM EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

One of the crucial problem of the Nigerian educational system patterned along the British system is its non-relevance to our cultural and social background. The crippling effect of this system is today with us, thus explaining why many educational innovators have criticized the system as unrealistic and unrelated to our needs. Critics of these system see the curricula entirely geared to American or European concepts which serve to alienate the beneficiary from his culture. This is intensified by the ethos of personal achievement, of the competitive materialism, that is strongly embedded in western education. Thus, the system can only be described for what is "a growth oriented education which is selective, competitive and meritocratic" (Bown, 1978:29).

The effect thereof in the promotion of the disunity and inequality and the creation of needs and desires that are inconsequential to development. This observation is well articulated and summarized by Obiogun, According to him:

Children are invariably taught without reference to their individual differences or abilities, interest and needs, nor are the needs of the society taken into their consideration. The result is that the children

acquire wrong attitudes and habits, so that they scorn manual labor and show little or no interest in the country's traditional and indigenous culture, music and art (Obiogun, 1972. Pg154)

Coombs (1968:165) in the reaction to the problem of growth-oriented education condemns the unsuitability of the output of school where he stated that:

> *"Growing inability of the economics of the developing countries to absorb the human output of the educational system, thereby exaberbating the lethal problem of the educational unemployment"*

This stark reality is evident in the Nigerian society today where the number of college and universities graduates that are unemployed almost exceed those in employment. This situation is much more disturbing when one recounts the amount of resources put into producing people that lack the skills that could be devoted for nations building and skills that could make them employable. The central issue lies on the inability of our educated citizens to adapt the knowledge acquired to the solution of socio-economic, cultural and political problems of the complex Nigerian society.

Perhaps, this class of Nigerians may not be absolutely blamed since the context of the educational package right from the primary school to the university is foreign to them and bears no relationship to the local environment and local needs. Much more the curricula content of most courses are not related to the life and aspirations of the people which they are supposed to serve. These inadequacies observed are what caused many young people to be roaming the streets, setting at joints and now joining the abundant social-media since with even their handsets they can access a lot of information that are not useful to them and detrimental to their country with would invariably lead them to think of joining international groups which the likelihood or even joining terrorist groups. By the time they get

fully involved and accepted they could begin to practice from what they received thus causing chaos in the society.

In line with the identified short comings of our educational systems on the present security challenges, the Bauchi State Governor Alhaji Isah Yuguda lamented in the Path New Paper of Wednesday June 20-2012 that "The psyche of many young people has been destroyed through the collapse of governments, we have created these criminals through the collapse of education system". He continued by saying "when I came into office, there were no schools, no hospitals, insecurity was at peek. There was a throng of unemployed youth and to crown it all, I inherited a debt profile of 22 billion naira". This kind of assertion coming from a sitting chief executive of a state tells one that things have not been alright for a quite along time, but the problem would continue persist as long as genuine interventions do not meet genuine actions to resolve the problems. Considering the manner of operation of the people involved in causing the present security challenges in the country one is left with no doubt that intelligent brains are involved; instead of using their thoughts on how to move the country forward, their thought is destruction because the education system has not over the years address the real problems of the society with regards to employment and socio-economic parameters.

Another ugly issue that reared its head through the years and engineered the current security challenges in the Nigerian society is the springing of the elite class who are politically and economically in control of the nation and it is vicious circle and clique that not every Nigerian has opportunity to join. These elite classes continue also to battle themselves for supremacy and control the resultant effect is that, the products of our educational system are lured into their camps, thus causing a lot of harok to generality of the populace. In an attempt by the elite to distract the minds of the citizens from the real socio-economic problems of the nation, then a

lot of diversive techniques are employed which include our current situation of insecurity. In a paper titled "Parts of Whole" on 25th June, 2012 by Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmad of Political Science department of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto were postulated certain fallacies in respect of the current Nigerian security challenges were he asserted inter-alias thus: All the fallacies are rooted in historic tendency of Nigerian elite to revisit the manner in which they compete and the peculiar manner in which ethno-geographical and religious pluralism are manipulated in this competition.

The problem of equity in the spread of educational facilities arising from transformation of educational system led many societies to be left out, for instance the 6-3-3-4 system provided for workshops to be built in all junior secondary schools in the country and be fully equipped with machinery and equipment for the training of young pupils to be self-reliant, the workshops were built but the major sources of using the machinery which is NEPA was no where to be found in these villages, the workshops became locked up and after some times the equipment were stolen and sold to commercial skilled operators. These left those villages far behind and the youth redundant and could not catch up with the moving time and obviously were liable to political thugery and the religious indoctrination which could also be identified as a source of security challenges in the country. Because such youth are vulnerable and can be recruited into any act because they are redundant and have a lot of energy been wasted.

From the discussions so far, the paper attempted to bring light, the lapses in our educational system, which brought about a lot misgiving in the various communities in the country. Addressing the security challenges so far been faced could be done if honest and practical measures are put in place by way of inculcating the religious and cultural beliefs of all people in the country to reflect

as the educational policies. We cannot just afford to be copying systems without considering our own peculiarities.

By the time this conference comes to an end, it is my hope that the various papers that will be presented and the deliberations will show it clearly that education if articulated and given to citizenry will be the greatest tool for national harmony and the restoration of peace and unity.

For that to happen, we should not close our eyes to accept any system of education in our desire to join the committee of the nations in the globalized world, rather we should always consider the yearnings and aspirations of our people to be part of the curricula of education taught in our schools.

I wish you successful deliberation, Happy stay in Kano and journey mercies back to your different destinations.

Thank you for listening.

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