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**ISSUES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EDUCATION AT DIFFERENT
LEVELS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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Introduction

This paper focused on the gains of education to national growth. It stresses the fact that a nation's growth is proportionate to its success in education. Hence, the motive why contemporary international interest has focused on education as a tool for propelling nations into the world of science and technology with significant confidence on human improvement in terms of living conditions and development of the society. This is rightly so, because, education is the life wire of industrialization and also the basis of moral reawakening and renaissance of a nation. It is has the power for fortification of any nation's defense system. It has also been observed that no nation rises above the level of its educational system. Seeing education in this viewpoint calls for adequate funding from federal, state and local governments in order to ensure that the sector produces the needed outcomes which will stimulate national development.

The acquisition of education help to improve the capabilities of individuals and the capacity of institutions, and has become a catalyst for the closely interrelated economic, socio-cultural, and demographic changes that is defined as national development. The social and economic development of a nation is fundamentally an education processes in which people learn to create new institutions, utilize new technologies, cope with their environment, and alter their behavioural patterns (Adams, 2002). Education has been identified as a crucial sector and a major investment in human capital development in any nation: as it plays a critical role in long-term productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels (Orji & Job, 2013). Adams (2002), noted that there are substantial evidences proving the fact that schooling and other forms of education can, in a supportive environment, make meaningful contributions to the complex processes of technology transfer, economic productivity, individual earnings, reduction of poverty, development of healthy families, creation and sharing of values, learning the responsibilities of citizenship, and enhancement of the quality of life.

Ilhan (2001) & Mohammad (2016), saw education in every sense as one of the fundamental factors of economic development as it provides a basis for development, the base on which majority of our economic and social well-being are built. It is the key to growing economic productivity and social consistency. By increasing the value and effectiveness of their labor, it helps to raise the poor from poverty. It increases the overall output and rational flexibility of the labor force. It helps in ensuring that a country is competitive in world markets now marked by changing technologies and production methods. By increasing a child's integration with dissimilar social or ethnic groups early in life, education adds meaningfully to nation building and interpersonal tolerance.

No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution (Mohammad, 2016). This explains why the declining state of education in Nigeria continues to form part of our national discuss at all times and at all levels. Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of education at all levels has far reaching negative impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural and economic sustainability.

Concept of Education

Etymologically, the word 'education' is a derivative of two Latin words 'educare' and 'educere'. 'Educare', means to train, to form or to mould; that is to say the society trains, forms or moulds the individual to achieve the social needs and aspirations. On the other hands 'Educere' means to build, to lead, or to develop. This is mostly favoured by the humanists who argue that the function of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the child to enable him function in the society according to his abilities, interests and needs. (Amaele, 2011). Normally, education is solely used for the growth of cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psycho-productive domains of individuals. It comprises a desirable approach in human behaviour through the process of teaching and learning. Education is defined as what each generation gives to its younger ones which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which are the positive values to the society in which they live. It is the total development of the individual child through acceptable methods and techniques according to his abilities and interests to meet up the needs of the society and for the individual to take his rightful place and contribute equally to the enhancement of the society (Fafunwa, 1974. & Amaele, 2011).

Concept of Sustainable National Development

National Development as an aspect of the general development process is the need and capability to use what is accessible to constantly advance the value of life and free people from the vicious circle of poverty. A developed society is the one that has succeeded in providing a source of living for the majority of its inhabitants and that in such society; premium is attached to elimination of poverty, provision of food, shelter and clothing to its members. This view agrees with the definition of development by Todaro and Smith (2006), from the modernization paradigm which sees development as a multidimensional process which involves the sustained

elevation of the entire society and social system towards a better or humane life. They identify three basic components for understanding development. These components are sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. These represent common goals sought by all individuals and societies. Sustenance as it were is concerned with ability to meet basic needs. Self-esteem is concerned with a sense of worth and self-respect, while not being used by others as tools for their own needs while freedom is concerned with freedom from servitude; that is servitude to nature, ignorance, other people, misery, institutions and dogmatic beliefs especially, that poverty is a predestination.

Igbaji, Miswaru & Sadiyya, (2017), believed that National Development is synonymous with self-reliance which requires the capacity to learn how to improve one's well-being without resorting to others. They opined further that National Development ... involves the ability to act and apply knowledge, the ability to use underlying activities to improve the knowledge of the process of development and of knowledge itself. Paultey (2011), observed that every state in the world is in the race for development, since it is the singular criterion by which states across the globe are categorized either as first, second or third world/ developing countries. He noted that Countries that have attained a certain degree of success in the way of development are denoted to as developed while the others on the other side of the divide are either labeled underdeveloped or developing countries otherwise called the third world countries: Which is where Nigeria currently finds herself.

Sustainable national development which is a subset of the whole process of development covers a wide range of positive and progressive changes in human activities and endeavors in the life of a people. It is the entirety of the combined efforts made by individual nations to overcome weaknesses by obtaining increasing control over the forces of mother nature via progressive elimination of centuries long scourge of poverty, ignorance and disease while simultaneously making life more worth living on earth (Nduka 2006). The concept of national development is not just an increase in quantity but a qualitative transformation of people's living conditions. It is the stages through which a state passes through while taking a positive march towards quantitative and qualitative self-actualization in tapping its human and material resources and using same to their maximum competencies (Efemini 2002, and Okorosaye-Orubite 2005).

Igbaji, Miswaru & Sadiyya (2017), summed it up by saying that sustainable national development is symbolized by the presence of sustainable high literacy rate, qualitative and functional education, availability and provision of adequate medical facilities, food, housing, cultural perpetuation, respect for social justice and the laws of the land, commendable social behaviour, socio-political integration, cohesion and cooperativeness, political stability characterized by democratic reasonableness, rational mass political participation and representation, sensitivity to the yearnings and sufferings of the people, political efficiency, improved standard of living of the populace as well as a healthy and stable economy. Some of these indices In the Nigerian context, most of these indices are lacking thereby frustrating the national development effort of the country.

Role of Primary Education in Development

Primary education is a right of every child. Ensuring its accessibility to every child is the duty of both government and of parents. It is aimed at bringing awareness among the children, opens up frontiers along with self-development and diminishes perennial poverty. Primary

education is key in making the welfare of our society and it is an out-and-out pre-requisite for uninterrupted development. Primary education ensures children develop their social, cognitive, cultural, emotional and psychomotor skills according to the best of their abilities. In order to achieve a good primary education, it is imperative one attends a good primary school which usually makes more impart academically when compared to our family background or gender differences. Education at this elementary level serves to raise leaders, thinkers, and innovators for future generations that will in turn lead the development of their nations. The task for educators at this level is to painstakingly prepare young minds using the knowledge of the curriculum materials to develop instructional strategies to keep pupils involved. Thus the educators in our Primary schools have the responsibility of delivering standardized learning in order to meet laid down standards of education.

Objectives of Primary Education

The key objective of the primary education in Nigeria according to the National Policy on Education (FRN;2004) is to teach children to think analytically, to achieve high living standards, to face the challenges posed by technological development and advancement of citizenship and basic values. Hence, Primary education providers should provide safe and positive environments where effective learning can take place. This aspect of education is aimed at making available a chance to have a team that is balanced to interrelate. Early education provides the opportunity for pupils to make friends who assist in the acquisition and development of needed talents in effective communication as children attend school.

Furthermore, early education is also designed to identify those kids who are not academically sound and who may perceive things late. It is the stage where pupils may be swayed positively or negatively. The kind of primary education a child receives will to a great extent determine the future of that child and the national development they may witness.

Primary education will boost your kids' self-confidence and offer your child the skills they need for the long success in this competitive world (<http://www.locusassignment.com/solution/>).

The Role of Secondary Education in Nation Building

Preceding Independence on 1st October 1960 and shortly till 1970, Nigeria, secondary school products were looked upon with much regards and greatly esteemed because of the candidness of their training in school and the competency they exhibited in places of work after graduation. Perhaps the astuteness of the SSCE graduands as observed then must have resulted from limited opportunities, manageable size of students, parents concern; care and love for their children, judicious use of scarce resources and the availability of talented and well trained teachers. Graduands of senior secondary schools served in the administrative, commercial and educational sectors. They got involved in editorial jobs in media places and made genuine contributions towards the political, social and economic development of Nigeria. They explicitly played significant roles towards political liberation and got involved in teaching in spite of the fact that trained teachers were not enough. The conviction that educational standard in those days were very high and probably higher than what obtains currently in schools is controversial. Whether the standard was high or higher than the standard of these days, the praises or blemishes were majorly traceable to teachers (Oloyede, Adesina, & Dauda 2014).

Secondary schooling in Nigeria comprises public and private secondary schools at the state and federal levels. The unity schools are examples of Secondary schools in Nigeria. There are 104 unity schools in Nigeria. One of the reasons for the creation of the unity schools is to guarantee national integration and nation building among Nigerian children, if given an opportunity to live and learn together in a conducive academic environment (Budgit 2018).

It was reported that the demand for post-primary education started with a Nigerian clergyman, Rev. T.B. Macaulay, the founder of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) Grammar School Lagos, in 1859. Following the success of C.M.S., other post-primary schools were also founded in the Southern Nigeria region between 1859 and 1914 and were based on the Lagos Grammar School pattern except Hope Waddell Institute, founded in Calabar by the Church of Scotland Mission in 1895. The Hope Waddell Institute was a singular departure from the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) Grammar School Lagos, as it added practical courses such as printing, carpentry and mechanics to its literary curriculum (Oloyede, et al. 2014). Most of the early secondary schools were boarding schools, for both the missions and the government thought that for children to develop along civilized lines, their day-to-day living must be monitored, controlled and directed along 'proper lines'. It was argued that hypothetically if a 'room' of an African is to be transformed into a civilized 'room' westernized black European", he must be insulated and set apart from the evil impacts of his ancestral past (Fafunwa 1974).

The aim of secondary education in a developing nation like Nigeria should be to develop the abilities in youth, such as: to think effectively and efficiently, communicate thought unmistakably, make germane judgments; play his part as a useful member of his home and family and to understand basic facts about health and sanitation, understand and appreciate his role as a citizen of a sovereign country; understand and appreciate his cultural heritage; develop economic efficiency both as a consumer and as a producer of goods and to acquire some vocational skills. Secondary education is also geared toward making the students identify that there's dignity in labour, cultivate ethnical character, fathom the world outside their surroundings, develop a scientific approach to live and act as a well-integrated individual. (Oloyede, Adesina & Dauda, 2014). In specific term, secondary education shall:

- Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background
- Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
- Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.
- Develop and provide Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage.
- Inspire its students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.
- Foster National unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity.
- Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feedings of other, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens.
- Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development ((Fafunwa 1974).

Role of Tertiary Education in Nation Building

Tertiary education is an essential tool for Nigeria's sustainable socio-economic growth. It is an influential means for manpower training and development. A person acquires tertiary education once he/she is done with senior secondary schooling in order to obtain particular skills and proficiencies in specialized areas that will empower such individual partake actively in socio-economic activities of the society (Ohia, 2018). Tertiary education is given after post-basic education in institutions such as the universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, monotechnics and other specialized institutions (FRN, 2013). The goals and objectives of tertiary education include contributing to national development through high level manpower training, providing accessible and affordable quality lifelong learning opportunities and career counseling in formal and informal education programmes, which inculcates into students the requisite skills for self-reliance in the world of work. Tertiary education therefore produces skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market (FRN, 2013).

Udoh and Akpan (2014), observed that functional tertiary education should be capable of bringing into being Nigerians who can produce raw materials, machines, and tools needed for local and global markets, originate new designs, manufacture drugs capable of curing illnesses previously incurable and catapult the nation from consumption to a manufacturing status. A well-designed tertiary education will therefore take cognizance of the yearnings and aspirations of the individual and society, and should be able to meet the needs of all levels of development, which also makes it a necessity for sustainable national development (Edo, 2000 and Ohia, 2018).

Any functional, effective and efficient tertiary educational system should be able to ensure the improvement of the economic development of the nation. Suffice to say that one of the major economic functions of education is to ensure that the needed manpower for economic development is trained. This can help the society to reduce poverty among its people by enabling them to employ effective tools of production. Also education aims at nation building and industrialization. Hence, turning out citizens with prerequisite professional skills and knowledge to plan and manage the economy efficiently through education can lead to improving the status of the nation's economy (Ako, & James, 2018). According to Agbo (2014), human resources constitute the critical basis for the wealth of nations and that human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development.

The standard of living in a developing country like Nigeria largely depends on the level of educational attainment of its citizens, aside chance factors and inheritance of wealth. This is because much emphasis is placed on paper qualification rather than on creative ability, quality of knowledge and skills acquired by students in the schools, and resourcefulness during job placement. This has led to examination malpractices among students of secondary and tertiary institutions who graduate with "flashy" certificates they cannot defend. Gbenda (2008), postulated that examination malpractice had reached an unimaginable height because of undue emphasis on paper qualification as criteria for selection of candidates for higher education and employment. Such a situation compels some students preparing for examinations to engage in certain extra activities that would fetch them better grades. This gives rise to poor academic performance, which has plagued the society. It has also led to

inefficiency in public life of the products of schools. Many students would want to be awarded certificates without passing their examinations. The obvious effect is that, the graduates of tertiary institutions roam the streets in search of just any job because the training they received did not equip them for the realities of life (Ako, & James, 2018).

Role of Science Education in National Development

The Federal government of Nigeria and the government of other nations across the globe realize the role of science and its bye product-technology in matters of national development. It is based on this understanding/realization that science education promotion is enshrined in Section 18(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN. 2004), the goals of science education is to:

- Cultivate inquiring, knowing and rational mind for the conduct of a good life and democracy.
- Produce scientists for national development,
- Service studies in technology and the cause of technological development;
- Provide knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the physical world, the forms and the conduct of life.

The National Policy on Education (FRN: 2004), in emphasizing the place of science and technology for the country's developmental agenda states that:

A greater proportion of expenditure on... education shall be devoted to science and technologyspecial provisions and incentives shall be made for the study of the sciences at each level of the national education system. For this purpose, the functions of all agencies involved in his promotion of the study of science shall be adequately supported by government and that: Government shall popularize the study of the sciences and the production of adequate number of scientists to inspire and support national development.... not less than 60 percent of places shall be allocated to science and science oriented courses in the conventional universities and not less than 80 percent in the universities of technology? The reason for this is to launch Nigeria into the technological age so as to stimulate the development of the country through the exploitation of her natural resources with the help of knowledge got from science education.

In discussing the role of science in the development of a nation, Iheoma (1983), cited in Igbaji, et al, (2017), submitted that science had laid the foundation for modern technology which has enabled modern man to achieve an unprecedented control of his environment and to enjoy a high standard of living unknown to his ancestors. Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India from 1946 to 1964, in emphasizing the role of science in the developmental agenda of a country stated that it is sciences alone that can solve the problem of hunger and poverty, insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people. Who could afford to ignore science today? At every turn we have to seek its aid. The future belongs to science and those who make friend with science as posited by (Fubara, 1998).

The assertion of Nehru (Prime Minister of India) is another way of re-echoing the order God Himself, the Master Scientist, gave when He decreed: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the

earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Science, therefore, is the foundation of man's knowledge of life and the universe. It is only through science which begets technology can mankind obey this order of God and fulfill God's ordinance for sustainable development of the earth, the environment of mankind (Igbaji, et al, 2017). In the past, India was one of the most backward economies, but today the story is different. India's transformation did not happen by chance; rather it is the outcome of that nation's leadership vision on science education as a gateway to the development of its human capital. India as a nation is doing exceptionally good in the medical field. This success is due to the country's leadership genuine commitment to science education. It is a known fact that currently India is one of the leading countries in the Information and Technology (IT) revolution flagged off in the 1990s.

It is the use of science on national issues that makes the difference between the developed and the underdeveloped states of the world as we have seen. For instance, the major cause of the competitive gap between our country Nigeria and the developed countries of the world is the creation and application of scientific knowledge. The tenet of the competition today depends mainly on the natural capabilities to exploit resources, rather than just revel over owning them. It is a fact that many of the industrialized countries of the world today are less endowed with natural resources and less friendly weather conditions. Yet they have attained leadership in the world economy, essentially through the effective application of scientific knowledge gotten from science education. Ironically, the least developed countries are those with favourable climatic endowments but due to less genuine emphasis on the development of science education, such countries have found themselves in the backwaters (Ekpiwhre, 2008). A country's innovative capacity (that is, the ability to create and/or apply new knowledge to solve practical problems) majorly depends on four indices namely: The country's level of technological capability; the formal and informal institutions, as well their supporting systems; physical infrastructure; and an advanced knowledge infrastructure (Ekpiwhre, 2008).

Science Education and National Development

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The Role of Education in Cultural and Social Development

The ethics of behaviour in most societies are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is the duty of every well-designed education to transmit the culture of the society from one generation to the next. Education will be worthless if it is not focused at solving societal problems, conserving the cultural heritage, inventing and discovering new ideas and technologies that are critical tools for cultural development. Hence, education should be the vehicle of economic, cultural, religious, political, military and social development of the state. Via the instrument of education, children acquire the customs, traditions, beliefs and lifestyle of their people through subjects like literatures, history, civic education, social studies and so on. School activities like drama, and religious instruction enable youths learn how to act certain traditions and at the same time develop into morally correct citizen who is loyal and submissive to the rulebooks and authority leading to social development (Denga, 2011. and Ako, & James, 2018). Based on the above discuss, one may ask, has the educational system in Nigeria been able to bring about cultural and social development which could lead to national growth? Because reports show that our country is presently witnessing a lot of maladaptive behaviours from young people that put the integrity of the nation at stake as observed by Abekhale (2009). The attitudes of young people in Nigeria has become worrisome and fast eroding, requiring urgent and decisive actions. Ako, & James, (2018), noted that a large percent of Nigerians no longer have dress code, nor exercise moral decorum in their day-to-day life, our music has changed and become meaningless, while respect for the elderly is at its lowest level.

Insecurity is the order of the day in our dearly beloved country. News of kidnapping for ransom and ritual killing floods the pages of our national newspapers. There is palpable fear in the streets as both the rich and the poor appear to be very unsafe. Furthermore, the academics are helpless and have hesitantly become submissive to the winds and caprices of cultists in our university campuses because their security cannot be guaranteed by the law enforcement agencies. "Child abuse, child labour, and child trafficking, which were hitherto aberrations in our culture have been embraced as the fastest means of getting rich. Youth's restiveness is growing unabated and student desire better grades without hard work. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the educational system in Nigeria had not been able to sufficiently address the issues of cultural and social development" (Ako, & James, 2018).

Contributions of Education to National Development

The contributions of education to national development cannot be over emphasized. Some of these contributions include:

- a. Education supplies the needed manpower for national development. Afolabi & Loto (2012), opined that a developed or educated polity is the one that has enough manpower and each person occupies his or her rightful position to enhance the growth of the society. This was the views held by Ajayi & Afolabi (2009), when they remarked that education is largely perceived in Nigeria as an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization. Orji & Job (2013) holds that education trains an individual to be useful in the society and to meet up the need of the society for national development. The foregoing discusses makes it

clear that without education, a nation cannot get the needed human resources for the physical development and training of the citizenry. The professionals (e.g engineers, teachers, medical doctors, lawyers) are all the products of education. This explains the sentiments from some quarters that the quality of a nation's education determines the level of its national development.

- b. Education stimulates social and group interactions. Education trains individuals to relate to and interact meaningfully with others in the society and to appreciate the importance of effective organization for human progress (Obasanjo, 2012). The school brings individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds together for a common goal. This enhances mutual co-existence among the pupils and students within the educational system. Learners who strongly identify with their school are thought to have a more positive attitude towards teachers, other learners and the entire educational enterprise. The ability of these learners to co-exist and work together with others will go a long way in promoting national unity and peaceful co-existence which will lead to national development.
- c. In discussing the contributions of education to national development, Obasanjo (2012), further stated that education promotes the principle of productivity by empowering persons to discern the creative abilities in them and apply same in the improvement of the existing skill and technique of performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of their personal societal efforts. Education teaches and train individuals to be useful to themselves and the society they live.
- d. Learning helps develop values in individuals which make for good citizenship. Some of these values are honesty (trustworthiness), selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard-work and personal integrity, all of which provide the rich ground from which good leadership potential is groomed. The foregoing discusses makes it is clear that education gives moral training. Apparently if majority of those involved in arm banditry, gun weighing, herdsmen, kidnappers, and the Boko Haram had received quality/sound education, they would have abstained from violence. It is hence obvious that education has a critical function and role to play in national development.

Challenges of Education in Contributing to National Development

Education has not been able to drive national development fully in a developing nation like Nigeria because of certain inherent problems in the educational system. First among these problems is insufficient funding of the nation's educational system. Orji & Maekae (2013), submitted that "education is no doubt, directly linked with the processes of nation building and development". They stated that education in Nigeria has not been properly funded and that this poor funding leads to poor infrastructures in our universities, secondary and primary schools, which consequently makes the environment very hostile. This explains why highly placed Nigerians like Senators, State Legislators, Chief Executives, and highly placed government appointees send their children abroad for study. In our country Nigeria, the educational sector is not yielding the desired results expected due to inattention on the part of government, corruption, policy disjointedness and somersault, inter alia. In order for the nation to achieve maximum dividends from this sector, valuable suggestions were made.

As recent as the mid-1990s, Nigerian universities, especially the first generation ones, attracted students from Cameroun, South-Africa, Kenya and Ghana, among others, as well as foreign lecturers. Today, the reverse is the case. Apart from lecturers, in large numbers, leaving Nigeria for greener pastures in what has come to be referred to as 'brain drain,' thousands of students are also leaving the country to study abroad even in neighboring countries like Ghana and Benin Republic (Clifford, 2018). The Director, Centre for Open, Distance and e-Learning, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Musa Aibinu, was quoted saying that about 23,000 lecturers leave Africa every year with Nigeria accounting for the bulk of the number. Poor funding has been identified as the major reason for the rot and challenges in the education sector, especially tertiary education, which has led to frequent strikes by teaching and non-teaching staff since the early 1990s (Clifford, 2018). The table below shows Federal Government percentage budgetary allocation to education from 2009– 2018.

FG Budgetary allocation to education (2009-2018)

Year	Budget	Educ Allocation	% of budget
2009	3.049 trn	N221.19 bn	7.25
2010	5.160 trn	N249.09 bn	4.83
2011	4.972 trn	N306.3 bn	6.16
2012	4.877 trn	N400.15 bn	8.20
2013	4.987 trn	N426.53 bn	8.55
2014	4.962 trn	N493 bn	9.94
2015	5.068 trn	N392.2 bn	7.74
2016	6.061 trn	N369.6 bn	6.10
2017	7.444 trn	N550 bn	7.38
2018	8.612 trn	N605.8 bn	7.03
Total	55.19 trn	N3.90	7.07

Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/education-free-fall/>

Indeed, the Federal Government's allocation to the education in the last 10 years has been miserly. Out of a budget of N55.19 trillion, only N3.90 trillion or 7.07 per cent (see table above) was allocated to the sector. The table above shows how insufficient Nigeria's allocation to education has been. The products of this underfunded educational sector will be the production of poor graduates across all levels of education, while the teachers will not be adequately remunerated to perform their duties effectively. The most immediate result of this under funding is incessant strike actions embarked upon by Academic Staff Unions of the various institutions. This explains why pupils and students in the school system sit on bare floor and under mango trees to learn in primary and secondary schools. As the sector is not properly funded, it cannot efficiently contribute to national development.

The second challenge hindering the educational sector from not driving national development is unsteady political environment and policy somersault. Counting from independence till date, the developing nations (e.g Nigeria) have witnessed several administrations. These successive political leaders: either military or civilian often suspend the existing educational policies and replace them with the newly fashioned ones which typify their own political agenda. These

policies somersaults make it unattainable for educational policy to run their life span as planned by the curriculum planners. Hence, curriculum planners are compelled to jettison a plan still on the drawing board and take up new policies which must be geared towards meeting the current political demands. The end result is the inability of education to drive and achieve national development (Afolabi & Loto, 2012). Educational policy decisions in Nigeria are highly political orders, directives, and assertions bereft of synergy. This happens when the envisaged educational plans and objectives are being politically manipulated to suit the whims and caprices of policy formulators. This explains why some political appointees are given portfolios as commissioners and ministers which they are least qualified. It is sad to note that political appointments in most universities evade due process to the detriment of stakeholders (Orji & Job, 2013).

Afolabi & Loto (2012) rightly observed that, incessant change of educational policies impacts negatively on national development. They identified the fact that a policy requires adequate time to advance from planning phase to implementation phase and finally to review or evaluation phase. For instance, a policy that affects the secondary level of Nigerian educational system would definitely require twelve years to have just two complete cycles that is Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). This is the reverse in the Nigerian context as the usual practice is to jettison such policy, drastically modify or completely abandon it for reasons obvious to the policy makers who are political leaders in power.

Lastly, corruption is another major factor that hinders the positive contributions of education to national development. It has been alleged, and in most cases proven that budgetary allocation to the sector is always embezzled by top government functionaries. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in its fight against corruption, has recovered large sums of looted funds by politicians who use their offices to misappropriate, embezzle and accumulate more wealth for themselves at the expense of the sector. For example, it is recorded that Nigeria had spent over N1.1 trillion only on National Assembly alone for the past eight years. With this kind of huge budgetary allocation to the National Assembly alone, much will not be allocated nor spent on education and it cannot contribute more to national development. These identified problems explain why the crises in the educational sector have lingered for a long period (Clifford, 2018).

Way Forward

The argument so far clarifies the key place of education in plotting the path of national development. The predicament which has bedeviled the educational system in a third world country like Nigeria basically centered on the neglect of government to adequately fund education, over politicization of education, unstable political atmosphere, incessant policy somersaults in our educational policies and high level corruption in the sector. Outlined below are ways or solutions to the persistent challenges of the educational system not being able to contribute meaningfully to national development:

- ❖ Proper funding of education; government should be resolute in making budgetary provision for adequate funding of education. The Government should strive to earmark one-quarter (25%) of her total budget for educational development as proposed by the United Nations Organization. Going forward, the private sector should also participate in funding educational programmes by providing research grants to researchers, offering scholarship to pupils and students, provision of critical infrastructures amongst others. Enabling laws should also be promulgated making it obligatory for multinational companies operating in the developing countries to set aside a minimum of 5% of their profits to finance education and associated projects.

- ❖ Political leaders should ensure stability of educational policies by allowing policies run through their life span in order to achieve the desired results. Education should not also be politicized as identified above and there should be a steady political environment to ensure continuity and maturity of educational policies.
- ❖ The fight against corruption should be all encompassing and dogged in nature: convicts should be made to serve maximum jail terms (Severe punishment) in order to serve as deterrent to would-be offenders in the educational sector.

Conclusion

Education at all levels seems to be one of the major factors of economic development. No nation can achieve sustainable economic development without significant investment in human capital. Education improves people's appreciation of themselves and the world. It betters the value of their lives and leads to wide communal benefits to individuals and the society at large. Education increases people's output and resourcefulness and encourages entrepreneurship and technological advances. More so, it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and enhances income distribution. However, in order to achieve the above, the sector must be adequately funded and policy formulated and allowed to take their full course, while ensuring that the political environment is made less tensed.

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