

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

BY

Joseph Kehinde Elizabeth
Department of Economics, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin
Email: callkenny.alabi@gmail.com

Abstract

The first step toward sustainable development is thought to be education, which is also a crucial step in helping a generation of people understand the value of sustainability in the national development plan and an instrument for change. The foundation of a country's growth is its quality of education; and development entails transforming people's lives in a way that eliminates significant distinctions between various societal segments. This paper examined the relationship between Quality Education and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. The paper observed some impediments to the quality of education in Nigeria such as stale curriculum and instructional methods, professional incompetence on the part of teachers, low level of monitoring and evaluation, poor funding of the educational sector etc. Also, an appraisal was made on the determinants of quality education in Nigeria and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 which is based on three major determinants with various sub-factors. They include School-Based Determinants, Socio-Cultural Determinants and Student-Based Determinants. Given the factors that were discussed under each determinant, the implication is that once quality education is assured, the outcome of it is development. In view of the above, it was recommended that there should be a re-organization of curriculum and instructional methods, an agreeable and sociable atmosphere for teaching and learning, a healthy lifestyle and environment for learners and teachers, lecturers inclusive, appropriate evaluation procedure, and provision of proper funding for the development of the education sector.

Keywords: Education, Quality Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as the answer to socio-economic problem of the world. National and individuals look up to education to provide cure for poverty, ignorance, climatic change, joblessness, hunger, inadequate shelter, poor governance, poor communication system and among others (Elujekwute, 2019). The important commodity by any standard of any country is knowledge which in general is called education, which is the cornerstone for sustainable development. According to Etuk, Ering and Ajake (2012), Education, is a basic tool for achieving development at all levels. They further state that education is the process of acquiring new values and skills for the purpose of effective functioning in the society. Ayodele (2007) affirms that development cannot take place in human society without education and conversely, no lasting peace and security can be achieved without development. Education is the greatest investment a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources (Aminu, 1995). Education according to him provides us with people possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to win a nation's state and to even export brains. Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument for change. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution.

Quality education serves as the cornerstone of development of a nation and development involves bringing about meaningful transformation in the lives of the people in such a way that there is no wide Gap between one section of the society and another. Quality education is the process through which an individual is transformed into a participant in the social and economic development of his society (Daura and Audu, 2015). Quality education means excellence or more of societal values embodied in the school curriculum. According to Elujekwute (2019), quality education covers the curriculum content, the instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation policies and procedures which determine the achievement and performance of learners. Ajayi and Adegbesan (2017) defines quality education as the total of the features of a process, product or service on its performance in customers or client perception of that performance.

The imperative of quality education was stressed in Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) where it states that the success of any education lies in proper planning, efficient administration and adequate funding and it expects these management service in education to achieve specified goals which include assurance of quality control through regular and continuous supervision of instructional services, provision of efficient administrative and management control for maintenance and improvement of the system. Education for sustainable development is defined as a learning process based on ideals and principles that prepare people for all walks of life to plan for, cope with and find solution for issues that threaten the sustainability of the system across the globe and contribute to securing a legacy for future generations. Education for sustainable development develops in ways that are locally relevant and culturally appropriate. Sustainable development goals (SDGs) are believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life. It postulates that there are intrinsic links among economic, social and environment wellbeing. These goals aim at meeting human needs while preserving the environment so that their needs can be met not only in the present but also generations to come. It is a development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 2007). It is a way of protecting the environment while improving living standard for all the people in the society. Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) point out that the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development goals should include; improving the quality of basic education, re-orientation of existing education programme to address sustainable development, developing public awareness and understanding and providing training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Regarding the SDGs, since the launch of 2030 Agenda, education has become central to their realization, there are a stand-alone goal (SDGs), education is mentioned in targets of five goals and more important is linked to almost all of other SDGs in one way or another (UNESCO, 2017). Sustainable development according to the United Nations is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. Education is perceived as the first step of sustainable development and a very significant step in improving a generation of people to appreciate the importance of sustainability (Zenelaj, 2013). Full access to quality education at all facets is an indispensable condition for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, gender equality and women empowerment as well as human growth for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals. Education, predominantly the all-inclusive and quality education is the focus of SDG 4 and is critical to all the other SDGs and sustainable development in general (Buckler and Creech, 2014).

Relationship between Education and Sustainable Development

According to UNESCO (2000), “Education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviors”. It is an organized and sustained instrument designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. Education implies the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it. Education has been defined as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society. It deals with mental, physical, psychological and

social development of citizens in a given society (Ebong in Egbure, 2007). Therefore, it can be perceived that education is an instrument or tool for achieving national development.

The most interesting aspect of sustainable development is the fact that it puts into consideration the present conditions of people as well as not compromising those that come later. The Bruntland commission (1997), defined sustainable development as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. In another definition by Munasinghe (2004), “Sustainable National Development is a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental systems.

In all nations, Nigeria inclusive, education remains the instrument for effective national development. Development is championed through education which is often assumed to have significant influence. Education entails the enlightenment of people in their ways of pursuit in life and development is associated with a positive change in the condition of either groups, communities or even a country as a whole (Umoh, 2005). Education and sustainable national development are intertwined, and interconnected while on the one hand, development is geared towards producing or creating something new or more advanced for the society and its members. On the other hand, education is a tool which can enhance the desired sustainable development. The fact that education and sustainable development shows glaring connectivity probably explained why scholars emphasized the need for the purpose of achieving the desired sustainable development. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) concisely expressed that sustainable development is an organizing principle for global development that supports the welfare of both people and planet.

Sustainable development goal 4 is geared towards all-inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all. Education predominantly, the all-inclusive and quality education is the focus of SDG 4 and is critical to all of the other SDGs and sustainable development in general (Buckler and Creech, 2004). SDG 4 is therefore a wise decision because education is the bedrock of any society that is willing to open up employment opportunities for all which help in bringing out individuals from the shackle of unemployment and poverty; reduces societal inequalities and provide the knowledge and skills needed to live supportive lifestyles. The SDGs are established objectives contained in a universal agreement to end poverty, protect all that makes the planet habitable and ensure that everyone enjoy peace and prosperity now and in future (Morton, 2017). The 15-year SDGs framework, with a deadline of 2030, embodies 17 goals and a total of 169 targets linked to five areas of critical importance, namely; people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Fundamentally, the SDGs cover the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection (Morton, 2017).

In the milieu of the international education framework and the 2030 agenda, SDG 4 represents 10 targets, encompassing 7 outcome targets and 3 means of implementation (Global campaign for education, 2019). The targets are; universal primary and secondary education, early childhood development and universal pre-primary education, equal access to technical/vocational and higher education, relevant skills for decent work, gender equality and inclusion, universal youth literacy, education or sustainable development and global citizenship. The ways to implement are effective learning, scholarships, training of teachers and educators.

Conclusion

Sustainable development goal 4 is an educational goal aimed towards dispensing all-inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all. Nigeria is committed to achieving global goals embodied in the UNESCO sustainable development goals, especially goal 4 which emphasizes equitable quality education and

life-long learning for all. Measures to achieve SDG 4 in Nigeria include re-organization of curriculum and instructional methods, sociable and agreeable atmosphere, healthy environment and lifestyle, proper teaching method, professional competence, appropriate evaluation procedure, provision of scholarships and financial assistance, effective communication, elimination of criminal and creative actions.

Impediments to the achievement of sustainable development goal 4 include inability to provide universal education, inability to recruit children into the system, inability to retain students within the system, inability to set and achieve appropriate objectives. Determinants of the achievement of SDG 4 in Nigeria include; school-based determinants such as student composition, school resources, school structure, school policies and practices, discriminatory practices. Socio-cultural determinants include child labour, family beliefs and values, notions of adulthood early marriage, family economic status, educational level of the parents, divorce or death. Student personal determinants include peer group influence and attitudes toward school, pregnancy, availability of materials and equipment and lack of interest.

References

- Abubakar, A. B. (2013). Education and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(8), Pp. 147-152 MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy.
- Ajayi T. and Adegbesan, S. O. (2007). Quality Assurance in the Teaching Profession. Paper presented at a forum on emerging issues in teaching professionalism in Nigeria (14-16, March) Akure, Ondo State.
- Aminu, U. (2006). Issues and Challenges in Nigerian Education in the 21st Century. *Fafaru Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, Volume 1.
- Ayodele, J. B. (2007). Private Sector Participation in Basic Education in Nigeria. Implementation for access and quality assurance. Retrieved from www.medwelljournals.com/fultex/pjss/2007/691-696.
- Bruntland Commission (1987). Development Report on Sustainable Development, New York.
- Buckler, L. and Creech, H. (2014). Sustainable Development begins with Education. *Journal of Learning for Development* 3(3), 3-8.
- Daura, A. H. and Audu, R. (2015). Challenges of the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in Yobe State, Nigeria and the prospects for 2015 and beyond. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3(3), 72-95
- Elujekwute, E. C. (2019). Educational Management; Concept and Theories. Makurdi Destiny Venures.
- Elujekwute, E. C. and Aja, J. O. (2021). Enhancing Quality Education for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 3, Pg. 227-241.
- Etuk, G. R., Ering, S. O. and Ajake, U. E. (2012). Universal Basic Education Policy: A Sociological Analysis. *American Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(7), 179-183.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education (4th Edition). Lagos: Nigeria NERCD.
- Global Campaign for Education (2019) SDGs 10 targets. Retrieved from www.campaignforeducation.org/en/onAugust12, 2019
- Hanachor, M. E. and Wordu, E. N. (2021). Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 9(2), Pp. 10-25.
- Morton, S. (2017). Sustainable Development Goals and their Implementation. *British Medical Bulletin*, 2(4), 81-90.

- Munasinghe, S. (2004). Effective through Dynamic Discipline Ohio, Charle E. Mentil.
- Oguejiofor, C. A. and Ezeabasili, A. C. C. (2014). Imperative of Vocational Education and Sustainability in Nigeria. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 8(1), 32-47.
- United Nations (2015). Transforming our World: The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, UN, New York.
- UNESCO (2016). SDG Four, Education 2030 framework for action. NESCO, Paris.
- UNESCO (2016). Education for People and Planet: Creating sustainable futures for all. New Global Education Monitoring Report Series. UNESCO, Paris.
- UNESCO (2017b). Education for Sustainable Development Goals learning objectives. The Global Education 2030 agenda, UNESCO, Paris.
- Zenelaj, E. (2013). Education for Sustainable Development. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, New York, United Nations.