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## GAINS OF EDUCATION IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Ibrahim Akanbi **BOLAJI**, David Bamidele **ODERINDE** & Abdulkareem **AMUDA-KANNIKE**  
Kwara State College of Education Oro, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The notion that education is the wheel that drives a nation to greatness has been confirmed by the western world and attested to by nations like Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the other Asian Tigers as well as the High Performing Asian Economies (HPAEs) that have achieved economic buoyancy, political maturity and technological breakthrough through purposeful investment in their educational sector. With a comparative analysis of the gains of education between these economies and Nigeria, the paper examines the sincerity of purpose of the Nigerian leaders in social administration. The analysis of the educational policy objectives reveals the failure of the Nigerian government in an upward drive of the economy through purposeful policy implementation. In conclusion, the paper recommends that there must be strict enforcement of the rule of law on both the leaders and the led being the only antidote that can cushion the effect of corruption that has been hampering the realization of socio-economic development cum educational gains.

**Keywords:** Education, Social Administration, Socio-Economic Development, Corruption, Federalism

### Introduction

**E**ducation since the beginning of time has been at the nucleus of humanity and the major illuminator of the human society. It is an orderly accumulation of factual knowledge and progressive ability to interpret and apply that knowledge in human needs (Uzoamaka, 2018). It is a means of fostering accelerated economic growth and modernization which has a strong and powerful link with liberation and real political independence and socialization (Seweje & Ayodele, 2010). Interpretation of knowledge for societal benefits by able men in itself is educating because the ability in question is education. Kumar in Enem (2018) views education as a purposive, conscious, or unconscious, psychological, sociological, scientific, and philosophical process which brings about the development of the individual to the fullest extent. It is the maximum development of the society in such a way that both enjoy maximum happiness and prosperity. Education according to Dickson (1985) is the process of acquiring new values and skills for the purpose of effective functioning in the society. It involves a

pedagogical process which if properly carried out should lead to the maturing of the person to the extent that he is in a position to think and act meaningfully and in relevant interaction with members of the society for their mutual benefit. Ideally, no gain is realized without pains, but societal educational achievement is relative depending on the societal system and sincerity of purpose. Order as noted by Morrish (1980) is the first requirement of the diverse, specialized, interdependent activity of modern man, and this order the state alone can maintain. Without such 'state' order and regulation, it is impossible for a society to make any concerted effort at progress. Education is the syllabus for orderliness. Series of research such as that of Onu, Obiozor, Agbo and Ezeanwu (2010) and that of Anaduaka and Okafor (2013) have proved that no other institution of life has assisted and supported human beings in discovering their potentialities and conversion into useful citizens than the educational institution. This usefulness is best exhibited in the participation of social administration coordinated at that level by high class education for socio-economic benefit of the entire society.

This having being achieved by the western world through purposeful educational promotion, thus meaningful governance resulting in developed economies and political stability are lessons to be dissected for Nigeria's gain by this paper.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education is regarded globally as a potent instrument for introducing and sustaining social change in human societies. It is simply one inevitable aspect of socialisation (Ukeje, 1978, Haralambos and Holborn, 2013). Politics (Government) and education according to Alabi (2010) are two very important elements of any society that no one can brush aside with a wave of the hand. These two elements determine the existence of any society. They make or mar the existence of any society. A healthy and positive relationship between the two make for positive growth and development of a society, whereas, the reverse is the case if the relationship between the two is messy. Cordiality and understanding between the academia (Education) and politics (Government) will yield positive result for the society. This paper attempt to identify Problems associated with the Nigerian educational policies. The major theme of these policies is to ensure the proper management and implementation of our education system in all areas of the society, however there are so many problems currently faced in both managing and implementing necessary policies in the system. A major implementation problem is the gap that often exists between policy formulation and implementation which constitute constraint for operationalization (Okoroma, 2006). Education is very important for an individual's success in life. It provides pupils teaching skills that prepare them physically, mentally and socially for the world of work in later life. It is generally seen as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability (Jain, 2012). In the analysis of problems of translating education into gains by the federal system of governance, insincerity of purpose, corruption and excessive attention accorded politics at the expense of education pose a major concern. The paper ascertains the sincerity of the system of governance (Federal

system) for socio-economic development of Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives are stated for the study:

1. To diagnose the problems of the federal system of governance which has been hampering harnessing the gains of education
2. To specify strict compliance with the rule of law to checkmate Nigerian leaders from social maladministration
3. To equally recommend steps which Nigeria can follow in achieving socio-economic development?
4. To recommend reasonable investment in education for socio-economic development.

### **Methodology**

The research is qualitative in nature and adopts descriptive analysis, relying heavily on secondary data consisting of textbooks, current journals, magazines, dailies and so on.

### **An Overview of Federal System of Government in Nigeria vis a vis Education**

The federal system of governance as a way of administering the society is a by-product of education. Scholars engaged in the study of Nigerian government and politics went through the academic terrain and policy frontiers of governance with a mixture of confidence and frustration. It is arguable that they are always conscious of the fact, and are indeed strengthened by the belief that their analysis of federalism and specifically their intellectual journey through the difficult landscape of intergovernmental relations would be assisted by and indeed benefit from the wealth of experience of other countries engaged in the similar business of operating a federal system of government (Akindele, 2001). Moreover, Ignoring the fact stated by Elazer (1987) that "(n) ineteen of the world's independent states are, by their constitutions federal, and they contain some 40 percent of the world's population" and that while "[t]wenty-one additional states are not formally federal .....[they].....have, in some way, introduced federal arrangements,

principles, or practices into their political systems to accommodate the heterogeneity that has given rise to the introduction of federalism in many countries in the first place. Thus, without doubt, there is an avalanche of information, a treasury of comparative data and a considerable worldwide experience in the operation of federal experiments, particularly since the American Constitution of 1787. With the aforementioned adduce, we can conclude that federal system of governance abhors great deal of good considering the composition of two separate levels of government recognized by the constitution that critically evaluate issues before execution. Two good heads they say are better than one, the avalanche of countries that have embraced the system universally is the greatest testimony. The negative result which this same system has been yielding for Nigeria was due to insincerity of purpose. According to Suberu in Omotoso (2010), given the concentration of resources and real powers at the centre, the competition for control of the federal government has tended to be vicious, corrupt, politically and ethnically explosive. These constraint the interpretation of educational gains into socio-economic development for Nigeria.

Singh (2007) elaborated that the word "Education" is derived from the Latin root as *educatum*, meaning to train, act of teaching or training. *Educere* means to lead out, to draw out and *educere* refers to the act of bringing up. The Latin word *educatum* means to train "E" means from inside and "Duco" means to draw out, to lead out or to bring up. To combine the two will amount to drawing from within. Developing this concept further translate education to a process which draws from within. To be clearer, each child is born with some innate tendencies, capacities and inherent powers. Education is to draw out these powers out and develop them to the full. In its wider sense, education is not the communication of information by the teacher or the acquisition of knowledge by the child. It is a lifelong process of growth and development.

Oyediran, Nwosu, Takaya, Anifowoshe, Badejo, Ogboghodo and Agbaje (2002) opined that a federal system of government is one in which all the existing government derives

power of existence from the constitution rather than from the central government. A federal system provides for an actual division of powers between two or more independent government, each of which exercises control within its scope of authority over the same people. Federal system of government is one where the functions of government are divided among levels of government-central, state or regional. In these ways, matters of common interest such as defense, external relations, currency control are allocated to the central government specified in the exclusive legislative list, while things of local interest such as language, culture and education are usually under state jurisdiction.

Yaqub (2004) advocated that the Nigerian federal system rested on at least four absolutely decisive wrong assumptions from the outset, namely;

- i. That no one regional government would be sufficiently powerful to dominate the entire federation;
- ii. That each region would develop a multi-party system;
- iii. That the constitutional machinery at the centre would be well structured to create effective national governing institutions; and
- iv. That there would be no discrepancy between political and economic powers and should there be any, the new federalism could balance and integrate the powers

Graf in Yaqub (2004) has shown with facts and figures that these assumptions were wrong as evidenced by the following: there was the odiously regional imbalance, where by the Northern part then was more than 70% of the landmass of the entire country. In population too, the North was officially stated to have more than half the country's population. This most probably explained why, in electoral terms, this Particular region dominated the politics of the first republic. Finally, the pattern of decolonization, where by the regions became autonomous before the central government, gave the former a head start in instituting a more or less formidable governmental machinery or

institution than for instance, the central government.

The second assumption which the Nigerian federal system rested on would have supported education, but all things being equal, if opposition were allowed to operate freely, education would be well attended to, but political opponents are silenced and destroyed by all means thereby debarring the criticisms that would have influence the good out of government for educational gains.

Dare and Oyewole (2002) established that the relationship between the federal and the regional government was provided for in the constitution. There was the exclusively legislative list of items over which the federal government alone has power to legislate. Oyediran et. al (2002) asserted that education in a federation falls into the con-current list of which both the federal and the state government can legislate on. In a situation where there is clash of interests, the federal laws prevail. Abdulkareem and Oduwaiye (2010) noted that the Nigerian indigenous government in an attempt to bring about uniformity in policies, philosophy, purposes, programmes, procedures and general management, therefore decided to take over the control of schools all over the country.

According to Yoloye (1998) the most comprehensive vision of education at the national level, however has been that provided by the national policy on Education (NPE) first promulgated in 1977 and revised in 1981. For approximately two decades, this vision with a few modifications has guided educational development in this country. It is therefore appropriate to regard it as contemporary repository of the Nigerian national vision of education. In 1965, the joint consultative committee on education (JCCE) adopted a proposal to hold a National Curriculum Conference in which a broad cross-section of Nigerian society will be brought together to discuss the problems of education in Nigeria and make proposals for evolving a truly relevant system of education for the country. The conference was held in 1969 and the report was published under the title, "A philosophy for Nigerian education" (Adaralegbe, 1972).

In 1973, a national seminar was held under the chairmanship of Chief S.O. Adebayo to prepare the draft of a national policy on education based on the recommendations of the 1969 curriculum conference. In 1977, the government came with the white paper on the policy which was entitled national policy on education in Nigeria. In the same year government set up a seven-man panel as the implementation committee for the national policy on education headed by Professor Sanya Onabamiro, to among things translate the policy into a workable blueprint and develop programmes for the implementation of the policy. It was also to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the policy. The implementation committee submitted its reports in 1976 and the white paper on it was issued by government in 1978. The resulting policy proposed the system of education which came to be known as the 6-3-3-4- system indicating the number of years for primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and tertiary education.

Indeed, the policy is based on Government's vision of the Nigerian Federation with the under listed aims and objectives:

1. A free and democratic Society
2. A just and egalitarian Society
3. A United, Strong and Self-reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of full bright opportunities for all Citizen (Yoloye, 1998).

### **Education and Socio-Economic Development**

In his interpretation of the objectives of the Nigerian Educational Policy, Nwana (1998) elaborated thus:

- (a) A free society is one in which individuals can associate with whosoever they like unhampered by others, and in which the country does not operate under the authority of another country or persons outside its geographical and administrative boundaries.
- (b) A democratic society is one in which governance is provided by the people for their own benefit and on their own terms.
- (c) A just society is one in which the rule of law operates and in which laws are freely

- made by the people for their own well-being.
- (d) An egalitarian society is one in which all persons are regarded as equal and treated as such irrespective of their origin, gender, religion, tribe, languages, e.t.c.
- (e) A united nation is one in which all sections and component parts identify with same goals and see themselves as one.
- (f) A strong nation is one which solves its developmental problems using human and material resources predominantly sourced from within its borders.
- (g) A great and dynamic economy is one which is production oriented and which freely exchanges its products and services with the outside world with a reasonable margin of profit or trade balance.
- (h) A land of bright and full opportunities is one in which the individuals (especially the young ones) and groups are allowed to pursue their legitimate productive goals and encouraged to do so without hindrance by the organs of state.

In 1995, these national objectives were presented to a gathering of Nigerian teacher-educators (University, College of Education, and Ministry of Education) made possible by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE); and these educators were asked to assess the nation, Nigeria, in terms of how it had fared in each of them. The assessment was done on a five-point scale. The following table presents the results:

**Table 1: Teacher Educators' Assessments of Nigeria's Achievement of National Objectives**

S/N	Objective	Not	Poorly	Moderately	Highly	Fully	Mean	
		Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		
		S = 1	S = 2	S = 3	S = 4	S = 5	FREQUENCIES	
	Free	16	15	14	2	1	2.18	
	Democratic	24	17	6	1	0	1.67	
	Just	20	21	6	1	0	1.75	
	Egalitarian	20	18	8	2	0	2.03	
	United		7	9	4	0	1.73	
	Strong	9	20	16	3	0	2.28	
	Self-Reliant	19	19	9	1	0	1.83	
	Bold	25	20	2	0	1	1.58	
	Economy							
	Opportunity	20	17	7	4	0	1.89	

*Source: National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Conference, 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1996.*

Analysis of the results shows the following:

- (a) The mean rating of 2.18 for **“Free”** indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.
- (b) The mean rating of 1.67 for **“Democratic”** indicates that the objective had been less than poorly achieved.
- (c) The mean rating of 1.75 for **“Just”** indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.
- (d) The mean rating of 2.03 for **“Egalitarian”** indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.
- (e) The mean rating of 1.73 for **“United”** indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.

- (f) The mean rating of 2.28 for “**Strong**” indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.
- (g) The mean rating of 1.83 for “**Self-Reliant**” indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.
- (h) The mean rating of 1.58 for “**Bold-Economy**” indicates that the objective had been less achieved.
- (i) The mean rating of 1.89 for “**Bright & Full Opportunities**” indicates that the objective had been poorly achieved.

Summarily, it can be said that in the opinion of the teacher-educators, Nigeria of 1995 had hardly achieved its developmental objectives. If this is viewed against the facts that there is little will to achieve these objectives and added to the fact that our Country seems now to be receding politically, then it follows to reason that the country can be classified as un-developing (Nwana, 1998). This study observed that there hasn't been problem with the Nigerian educational policy formulation but implementation and the core of the problem being that there is little will to achieve the set objectives interpreting as inadequate financial provision, misapplication, misappropriation and mismanagement of the little fund provided, above all, lack of communication/gap between the formulators and implementers of the policies. The major problem for managing Nigeria's education is the lack of interest and commitment by government in implementing commission researches conducted by the academia which is hallmark of education that promoted the Western world to their present status. According to Akintunde Captured in Allege, Kareem and Bolaji (2011), the sorry state of the education sector in Nigeria is aptly captured by the absence of any Nigeria University on the list of the top 500 universities worldwide. The 2008 ranking of universities done by the times Higher education Qs named Harvard as the best in the world. While North American Countries dominate the best 100 with 42 Universities, Europe and Asia were also well represented with 36 and 22 Universities respectively. No African Countries made the 100 best universities.

### **Gains of Education and Nigeria's Educational Gains: Comparative Analysis**

On a certain night in September 1960, the people of the United States of America (USA) were awoken to the “Peep-Peep” sound of the Soviet Sputnik, an unmanned space-craft, flying over their territory in the course of its orbiting of the earth. That was during the Presidency of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The shock which that unusual development produced in America was unimaginably traumatic. The American government reacted immediately to the Soviet challenge by sponsoring a legislation to empower it to modify the structure of higher education to give priority attention to technology. Thenceforth, University departments with programmes of research on technology, particularly in areas relating to space science, enjoyed special grants. Even as the Americans were trying to come to terms with the shocking realities of the Soviet technological advancement, a much greater shock gripped them when, in 1961, the Soviet Union achieved their second space spectacular by sending Yuri Gargarin aloft flying over American Continents in the first manned space craft.

That stark reality prompted President Kennedy to announce what came to be regarded as the American dream in 1961. The dream was that the USA would be the first Country to land “a man on the moon”. That dream inspired the Americans giving credence to the Maxim that a Country is a reflection of the dream of one man. Slowly, the tilt towards technology in the Country's educational system started to bear fruits. Although, Kennedy did not live to witness the realization of the dream he inspired (having been assassinated in 1963), the USA truly overtook the Soviet, Union in space science by being the first country to successfully land a man on the moon on December 25, 1968 (Mike, 2010:39). Like Kennedy, President Barack Obama has recognized the Correlation between education and national development. For this reason, he has already set in motion a Machinery to transform the Country's schools, Colleges and the Universities in order to lay a new foundation for America's growth. That growth will take the Country to a new age of his dream. In the new age, according to Obama,

America will harness the sun, the winds and the soil to fuel cars, and run factories. In the new age, Science will be restored to its rightful place and the wonders of technology will be wielded to raise the quality of health care and lower its costs.

Mike (2010) further elaborated that one other great leader who also recognized the place of education in national development was Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore, an Asian Island City-State, which gained political independence from Britain on August 9, 1965. At independence, Singapore was a Third World Country just like Nigeria which became a sovereign nation five years earlier. That Island City State is not endowed with Mineral resources like Nigeria. But when Yew took over the mantle of political leadership in 1959, things started to change in a positive direction. Within 30 years, he was able to realize his dream of moving Singapore from an underdeveloped country to the Prestigious Club of First World or developed countries. Yew was able to achieve that feat because he recognized the importance of education as a veritable tool for accelerated national development and accorded it the rightful place in his administration. Over the years, Singapore has developed a strong public education system with high standards in teaching and learning. As of today, Singapore's public school system is rated as one of the best in the world. Across the world, Singapore's textbooks are used in schools in many countries including the USA, Finland and Israel.

Educational developments and reform in Malaysia have always been characterized by the government's efforts to adapt education to national development needs. The essence of educational developments and reformation as in other developing Countries, has always been (and is) Curriculum development, to provide education for human resource development to meet the needs of the social, economic and political development of the Country. Moral and values education has always been recognized and acknowledged in the Malaysian School Curriculum and held in high esteem in the Malaysian Social administration. A quality

which the Nigerian public service lacks. Curriculum planning and developments were (and is) done at the Federal level and the national education system is centrally administered (Ahmad, 1998).

The structure of public education in Japan is largely based on the American Model of Education which was adopted after World War II. With one of the highest literacy rates in the world, it is common to overlook the dramatic increase in educational attainment, since World War II. Young Japanese are entering the work force with much higher levels of formal education than ever before. In 1950, 45.2% of Japanese lower secondary graduates began working at age 15 after completing compulsory education, while 43% entered upper secondary school. As a result, the Current, Japanese work force is a mixture of older workers with relatively lower levels of formal education and younger workers with higher levels of formal education. Unlike America, Japan has a strong national system of education reviewable every ten years by the Ministry of Education (Murata & Stern, 1993).

In Thailand, the Quantity of Basic Education provided to boys and girls of school age has been consistently higher in the higher-performing Asian Economies (HPAEs) than in economies with similar levels of income. After having achieved universal primary schooling, thereby eliminating the gap between boys and girls at the primary level a decade or earlier than most, the HPAEs rapidly expanded secondary education. Rapid economic growth is the first factor that accounts for East Asia's extraordinary quantity of education. For example, during the decade 1965-75, GDP growth averaged 6.7 percent in Malaysia and 4.1 percent in Argentina. This implies that over the decade a constant share of GDP allocated to education would have double the resources available for education in Malaysia, while in Argentina they would have increased by less than half (The World Bank, 1993).

Juxtaposing the gains harnessed by these nations with that of Nigeria reveals loss by Nigeria from her educational practice in a Federation. For example, after the Soviet

intimidation, the American government legislation for empowering higher education in giving priority to space science quickly materialized, reflecting the cordiality and uniformity in the sincerity of purpose of the arms of government for meaningful social development, and the successful landing on the moon making America the first Country confirms their gains of education. The transformation Lee Kuan Yew brought to Singapore from a backward third world nation to a leading first world speaks volume of the enormous gains the Country harnessed from education. Nigeria is yet to achieve a stable government after 58 years of independent. She is still fighting corruption while corruption is fighting back and yet she cannot still produce the food she eats, the clothes she wears let alone producing her cars. Insecurity, unemployment, infrastructural decay, epileptic power supply and more are Nigeria's gains of education in a Federation.

The poor development status of Nigeria no doubt breeds atmosphere of frustrated expectations and foster widespread indignation on the parts of those that are trapped in the vortex circle of abject poverty. The condition of hopelessness as rightly observed by Ogege (2013) is further aggravated by impotent poverty eradication programmes and conspiratorial neglect by the Nigerian State. In the face of this predicament, individuals and groups respond differently depending on situational factor and capacity. These responses are crystallized and find expression in various shades of anti-social behaviours including armed robbery, kidnapping, insurgency, among others, that stands as Nigeria's gains of education due to the failure of the state. The federal system of governance is practiced on controversial platform between the two tiers (Federal and State) because of corruptive egocentrism and general maladministration. This majorly constitute barricade to socio-economic development.

### Conclusion

All said and done, the result from what Fukuyama cited in Achumba, Igbomereho, and Akpor Robaro (2013) described as the corrosion or breakdown of institutional infrastructures is

what is presently being witnessed. With numerous educational gains harnessed by countries like the United States of America, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Thailand that categorized their development as classical, Nigeria can achieve same if she is guided by sincerity of purpose. Education earlier described as the illuminator of the human society unilaterally co-ordinates human society effectively if properly implemented. For any society to fully harness the gains of education, such society must be knowledge driven. The occupants of the ivory towers who are the processors, custodians, and coordinators of knowledge must be accorded their dues which is the major motivation for the discovery of new strides, ideas and breakthroughs that characterize the academia as the builder of the most developed contemporary societies.

### Recommendations

For Nigeria to harness the gains of education just, like the Countries that have achieved economic buoyancy Political Maturity and technological breakthrough, the underlisted recommendations will go a long way in achieving the cause:

- (1) The government should increase the education budget to the United Nations recommended percentage for quality service
- (2) The government should implement all the research conducted by academia for Socio-economic development like the United States and Singapore for unprecedented development.
- (3) The government should ensure strict enforcement of the rule of law so that the leaders would start leading by practical good examples.
- (4) The Ivory Towers should be accorded the dues they deserve as the custodians of Materials of development which has been attested to by the Western World and the Asian Tigers.

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