

# The Role of Basic Education in the Attainment of Vision 20: 2020

<sup>1</sup>Lawal, A. A.; <sup>1</sup>Ojo, O. J. & <sup>1</sup>Murtala, A. T.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

## Abstract

*Education is said to be an indispensable instrument for not only economic and political advancement but also for progress in all human endeavours. This paper examines the role of basic education in the attainment of vision 20:2020. The concepts and objectives of Basic Education are looked into. The concept of vision 20:2020 and its antecedents are discussed while the bottlenecks to the attainment of vision 20:2020 which include corruption, politicking within education system, Niger Delta crisis, and inconsistency in government policies. How Basic Education could help in the attainment of vision 20:2020 was also discussed, and finally, recommendation was made which include: adequate funding of Basic Education, strategizing measures towards attaining the vision 20:2020.*

## Introduction

Education, the world over is acknowledged to be the most powerful and indispensable instrument for not only economic and political advancement, but also for progress in all human endeavours. It has also become a social process in the maintenance of society since the creation of human beings; Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument has led for nurturing productive citizenry and fostering national development (FRN, 2004). This lead to the re-introduction of free education at lower and code named Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 by the Obasanjo administration. The scheme is aimed at bringing education to the door step of every Nigeria as well as making it affordable, accessible and compulsory to all children of school going-age (FGN, 2006). This is so, because, it is believed that human resources are the greatest resources that can turn around other resources for the betterment of every individual and for national development, and if human resources is to perform this role, education serves as a facilitating factor through which it can be achieved.

In the Nigerian educational system, with the introduction of Universal Basic Education, basic education lays the foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. This by interpretation means that basic education holds the key to success or failure of the whole education system of the country.

## **Basic Education**

Federal Government of Nigeria officially launched the Universal Basic Education in September 1999. This basic education is the foundation for sustainable life long learning. It provides reading, writing and numeracy skills. It also comprises a wide variety of formal and non formal educational activities. It is a programme designed to enable Nigeria children to acquire functional literacy only.

Basic education in Nigeria context includes primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult literacy. The education aims at equipping which also aimed at equipping individuals with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to:

- live a meaningful and fulfilled life;
- contribute to the development of the society;
- derive maximum social, economic, cultural benefits from the society, and
- discharge their civic obligations completely.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is broad in focus as it is meant to address the educational needs of children from age six to fifteen years.

UBE broadly aims at laying the foundation for life-long learning. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2000) this could be achieved through the inculcation of appropriate learning, self awareness, citizenship and life skills.

The scheme covers the following:

- 6 years Primary School
- 3 years Junior Secondary Education
- Non-formal Education
- Nomadic Education

(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000).

The specific goals of Universal Basic Education (UBE) shall be the same as the goals of the level of education to which it applies. Universal Basic Education is one of the strategies the Federal Government hopes to use to stem the low level of education in Nigeria within the shortest possible time. This programme which include primary, junior secondary, nomadic as well as adult education has the following specific objectives:

- to develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;

- to provide free, compulsory Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school age-going;
- to reduce drastically the drop out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency;
- to cater for drop out and out of school children through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education;
- to ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skill (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying the foundation for life long learning).
- The programme, according to Tijani (2000), is intended to be universal, free and compulsory. The introduction of the scheme is borne out of the conviction that the sure path to meaningful individual development, enduring peace and sustainable prosperity of emerging nations is functional literacy, a productive ability to engage in efficient reading and creative writing.

### **Vision 20:2020 and its antecedents**

It is an indisputable fact that the Umar Yar'Adua Administration decided to make Nigeria one of the top 20 Economic by the year 2020. This led to the introduction of Vision 20:2020 aimed at making Nigeria to join the League of developed countries of the world by the year 2020. Vision 20:2020 is a futuristic plan of action with the intention of transforming Nigerian economy into a viable and top 20 economic in the world by the year 2020.

Attempt to transform the Nigeria economic to a viable one could be traced back to the period of austerity measures and Economic Stabilization Acts of the 1970s and early 80s to the infamous Structural Adjustment Programme. (SAP) of the era of General Ibrahim Babangida. It has been a long festival of slogans. In the last 30 years, every regime/administration has talked about one reform or the other. In Nigeria has making the country to be on permanent state of socio-economic and political transition. The nation has been turned into a laboratory for all kinds of wild socio-economic and political experiences using different slogans. The slogans have turned out to be grand deceptions as people's hopes are falsely raised and dashed about serious development efforts.

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004), the nation's education sector must be improved and health care delivery system strengthened in order to build an effective human capital to drive economic development.

Nigeria has always been fantastic in policy formulation but the implementation has always been the problem. The Nigerian Vision 20:2020 is a

laudable policy which if fully implemented, is capable of making Nigeria one of the 20 top economies of the world. However, certain factors have been obstacles to the attainment of the vision. These factors include:

**Corruption:** This has always been the bane of Nigeria development. Corruption has eaten deep into the Nigeria fabric. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and material resources which can be easily transform to meaningful development, but corruption remains an obstacle toward meaningful socio-economic development of the country. Corruption is a scourge of shame, enemy of progress and a major catalyst to national crisis and under development. This is evident in our battered economy, decayed infrastructure, massive unemployment, high crime rate, frequent violence, ethno-religions conflict, moral decadence and other vices in our society as well as other indices of systematic social disintegration. (Akanbi, 2005). There has never been a sincere effort by the government to stems this scourge and it has to be curbed in order to attain the vision.

**Politicking:** Another factor that stands as an obstacle to the attainment of the vision 20:2020 is politicking within the educational system in Nigeria. Nwaogbo (2006) observed that education has been manipulated to advance personal, group and sectional interest, which has resulted in lowering of education standard. If education is the instrument to attain the vision 20:2020, then it should not be toyed with: Hence there should be limit to politics in education.

**Niger Delta Crisis:** This another factor that stands in the way of attaining vision 2020. No development can be achieved in crisis ridden society: Therefore, there I need for the Government to take drastic measure aimed at finding lasting solution to the problem. The amnesty granted the militants appear not to have solved the problem as the militants continue to attack oil installations. The Federal Government should solve the problem by looking into the root causes to nip the problem in the bud.

**Policy Inconsistency:** Inconsistency in our policy is another obstacle that may hinder the attainment of the vision 20:2020. Nigeria has been metamorphosed from one economic policy to another without waiting to reap the dividends or otherwise of these policies. Vision 2010 fashioned out by Abacha administration did not see the light of the day when another vision named vision 20:2020 was fashioned out by another administration.

### **Basic Education and Vision 20:2020**

Education, all over the world, remains an instrument for national development. Looking at the developed countries of the world, their development could be traced to the level of their education. Realizing this,

Nigerian government has resolved to make Basic Education free and compulsory with the intention of bringing education to the door step of every Nigerians. It is therefore believed that, if every citizen of the country is educated this will no doubt eradicate poverty and hunger which is one of the objectives of vision 2020. Universal Basic Education aimed at equipping the recipients with the skills, knowledge and attitude that will enable them to live a meaningful and fulfilled life. This ordinarily should lead to the eradication of poverty.

Also, Universal Basic Education aimed at providing equal opportunity or access to education to irrespective of their sex, tribe or socio-economic background. This invariably should promote gender equality which is another objectives of vision 20:2020. Menace of war against ADIS and other deadly diseases, which has been rampaging African continent, is one of the cardinal objectives of vision 20:2020. The war against diseases can only be achieved through mass education. A nation with high rate of illiteracy can not successfully wage war against diseases. Universal Basic Education, also aims at educating every citizenry as a means of waging war against AIDS and other deadly diseases which is one of the cardinal objectives of vision 20:2020.

In order to attain the objectives of 20: 2020, human resources in particular need to be harnessed towards this vision, and human resources can not be utilized expect when they are fully equipped, while education serves as an instrument through which these resources can be utilized to perform their roles in the attainment of vision 2020. Basic Education makes education free and compulsory in order for every citizenry to have access to education in order to develop their innate talent that could be useful in the attainment of vision 20:2020.

## **Conclusion**

Vision 20:2020 is a laudable government policy which can be achieved using education as an instrument. However, for education to serve the purpose of instrumentality to this vision, every individual should have access to education and it should be affordable. Therefore, Universal Basic Education as introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria if properly implemented is a right step in the right direction as it would serve the purpose of making education affordable and accessible to every Nigeria in order to develop their potential and contribute to the attainment of vision 20:2020.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendation are made:

- Basic Education should be made affordable and accessible to every Nigerian in practice and not in policy statement alone.
- Government should strive to tackle all the factors that could hinder the attainment of the vision 20:2020.
- Strategy should be put in place to ensure the success of the measures that could lead to the attainment of vision 20:2020.
- Basic Education should be adequately funded since it could lead to the success of the vision 2020.

## REFERENCES

Akanbi, M. (2005). *National values curriculum*. Abuja: National Education Research and Development Council, Abuja.

Federal Government of Nigeria. (2000). *Implementation guideline for universal basic education*. Abuja. Universal Basic Education Commission.

Federal Government of Nigeria. (2006). 40 frequently asked questions (FAQs) on Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme (revised). Abuja: Universal Basic Education Commission.

Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria*. Abuja: Ministry of Information.

Nwaogbo, M. (2006). *Politicization of education*. Daily Sunday May 1, pg. 9.

Obasanjo, O. (1999). *UBE: Restoring dignity of learning*. An address delivered by the President of the federal republic of Nigeria on the occasion of re-launching of the UBE Programme in Sokoto, Nigeria.

Tijani, A. K. (2000). *UBE: National integration and cohesion*. A conference paper presented at Federal College of Education, Okene, Nigeria.