

Full Length Research Paper

The Nigeria education system and vision 20: 2020: A critical development planning perspective

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The study examines the call for Nigeria becoming one of the twenty most developed economies by the year 2020, as it relates to development planning in Nigeria using the educational system as a unit of analysis. It aims at examining the relevance of this call within the context of existing facilities in the Nigeria educational system both - material and human from the point of view of academic planning. It adopts a historical research methodology of analysis using purely secondary data drawn from statutory documents and other sources. The study observes among other things, a worrisome disposition of the country's educational system in terms of worsening commitments of stakeholders to the maintenance and expansion of existing facilities and poor funding of this sector by the public authorities. This, the study believes has seriously imperil the country's readiness for the Vision 20:2020 as education remains the bedrock of any form of national development. The study therefore suggests, among other planning strategies, an improved funding for education, and a deliberate effort at improving the status, motivation and the overall conditions of service of teachers which it is hoped, will help in reversing this ugly trend in the Nigerian educational system if the vision 20:2020 is ever to be realized.

Key words: Development planning, vision 20:2020, educational management, Nigeria education system, academic planning.

INTRODUCTION

Of the many recent national calls for improvement in the management and administration of the Nigerian state, the Vision 20:2020 stands out as one of the most topical issues in the nation's post-independence life of well over half a century now. The vision is a concept of national development, which aims at moving Nigeria's economy into the league of the world's 20 largest economies by the year 2020. Among other things, it was the thinking of Soludo (2007) that with an average GDP growth rate of 7% recorded since 2003 as against 2.8% in the 1990s

and the average GDP growth rate of 8% for the non-oil sector as strongly led by agriculture, Nigeria could attain the vision 20: 2020 if this average GDP growth rate is sustained; more so as external reserves grew from 4 billion US Dollars in 1999 to 43.5 billion US Dollars in December, 2006. The vision seeks to ensure collateral development of Nigeria and put her economy on a fast track to self reliance, with the main thrust of modernizing the country and raising the standard of living of the people.

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Soludo's vision emanated from the economic projections of an international investment bank - Goldman Sachs (Soludo, 2007) which opined that if Nigeria can sustain the average GDP growth rate of 8% she could become the 12th largest economy in the world by 2050, ahead of Italy, Canada, Korea, etc. This formed the basis for the vision statement, for which Soludo (2007) believes the Nigerian economy has the capacity to sustain over 10% growth rate in GDP in the medium term, thereby becoming the "China of Africa", and achieve Vision 20:2020. It is based on the premise that Nigeria has enough economic reserves to sustain high growth, with a huge untapped arable land for agriculture (60 percent still uncultivated) and the availability of huge deepwater oil reserves. It is believed that, all things being equal, Nigeria's vast and largely youthful population can be a major source of labour supply, together with the about 17 million Nigerians in the Diaspora whose foreign income remittances and potential supply of skills will help to sustain the growth rate, and provide for poverty reduction, employment creation and the diversification of the economy away from primary sector and dependence on oil.

Indeed, the Vision 20:2020 envisages a prosperous Nigeria that is capable of breaking away from its current status of a natural resource, rent-dependent and infrastructural deficient state through hard work into one with high productivity, entrepreneurship and sound value system, achieving a high level of poverty reduction, employment generation, and wealth creation, which are the cardinal objectives of one of the nation's development programmes - National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It anticipates the consolidation and sustainability of the gains from the macroeconomic reforms such as reduced domestic inflation, favourable exchange and interest rates for the economic transformation of the nation by 2020. It is important to note however, that since the pronouncement of this visionary statement, there have been legions of criticisms. The obvious fact is that the Vision 20:2020 remains a laudable dream yet to be implemented for reality. The final documentations of the Vision 20:2020 were concluded in August 2009. Then President Umaru Yar'Adua was interested in a document that could be the development roadmap for Nigeria. The Vision 20:2020 covered twenty-nine (29) themes identified as encompassing Nigeria's opportunities for the envisaged growth - Agriculture & Food Security; Business Environment & Competitiveness; Corporate Governance; Culture, Tourism & National Re-Orientations; Education; Employment; Environment & Sustainable Development; Finance; Foreign Policy; Health; Housing; Human Development; Information Communication Technology; Judiciary & Rule of Law; Manufacturing; Media & Communication; Niger Delta & Regional Development; Political System; Science, Technology & Innovation;

Security; SMEs; Mining & Steel Development; Sports Development; Trade & Commerce; Transport; Urban & Regional Development; Water & Sanitation. It took nine months and more than 5000 Nigerians to prepare it (Vanguard, 2012:18). Yet after being launched, the greatest challenge ahead, which has remained unresolved over the years, is that of implementation as the federal government continues to sit on the report of that magnitude which it commissioned. The Vision 20:2020 which in many respects coheres with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has, like the latter, suffered serious reverses in terms of non-implementation. Global progress reports on the MDGs as at 2011 point to Nigeria as lagging behind in all the eight goals and is not likely to achieve any by the target date of 2015, more so that the recent global economic recession makes it elusive.

As the decision year for the MDGs, 2015 is reached and the evidence on ground reflects only a marginal, if any, picture of advancement in the envisioned MDG sectors, fears and pessimism about the Vision 20:2020 have become more realistic than hope. With less than half a decade to the "magical" year 2020, the call for Nigeria's enlistment into the league of the world's twenty most developed economies resonates more sharply in academic discourses as another potential scheme of national failure. This study therefore becomes timely in providing additional platform for analysis for which analysts and policymakers may further dilate. The study is approached from the perspective of development planning with educational planning as its immediate focus.

Planning is a primeval aspect of human development as preparing for the future has always been part of man; either as an individual, a group, a corporate entity or a nation. This preparation for the future often appears in the form of a mental imagination of what is expected in the future. Becky (2007) ascribes this to a vision - which is a picture of the future that defines what we want to become and as a substance or basis for decision making. Vision statements would appear very crucial, not only for individuals and corporate entities, but also for countries as motivation towards greater work efforts. It is an essential step in building a political consensus on a broad national development strategy, which encompasses the roles and responsibilities of the different agents in the society.

Every vision provides a compelling and persuasive logic of where an institution or country is heading and everyone whether individual or institution is expected to know the direction and the reason for doing so. In effect, the vision of a nation must be a shared vision, in which every member understands his contributory role in its achievement. It also implies that the vision must be the desire of all not just that of an individual, but one that is developed from the common will, beliefs and values that are shared by all. In this way, everyone endeavours to

align his policies and goals to the achievement of the common vision. Vision statements can be seen as prelude to development planning, because while vision represents a picture of the future and basis for decision making, economic or development planning involves decision making, a deliberate and conscious attempt by governments and corporate bodies to formulate, coordinate and control economic decisions towards achieving a predetermined set of development goals.

The development planning begins with a vision statement and then a scientific identification of the set goals and this is followed with an analysis of the means of achieving the goals. Specifically, economic planning becomes the process of identifying the economic development challenges and designing the strategies and policies needed to mobilise available resources to resolve them in order to move the economy towards the desired path of economic growth and development. The planning process involves the government choosing socio-economic goals, setting targets and organising frameworks for implementing, coordinating, and monitoring the development plan in which the broad goals and specific targets are pursued through the formulation of policies, articulation of appropriate projects and programmes and the mobilisation of available resources for their effective realisation (Dike, 2002; Obadan, 2004). In effect, development planning is a deliberate and conscious process of creating a blueprint and action agenda for translating the people's shared vision into a reality. It is the transformation of thoughts and desires into possibilities through the identification and analysis of how they can be realized, taking into cognizance, the social dynamics and prevailing resources at hand.

Study background: Nigeria's previous visions and development plans

Naturally, future projections require some insight into the past, an understanding of the main trends that have dictated the experienced changes of the past and present, and with a deep reflection on the direction of such changes fairly reliable forecast can then be made. Admittedly, there is a great extent to which long term developments depend on short term decisions and which ultimately provide guidelines for the day-to-day actions and decisions. Consequently, our degree of perception and projection into the future and the clarity of our vision is largely a function of how well we are able to study and understand the past and present. Rhetorically we may ask: 'how has it been with past visions and plans in Nigeria?'

The history of development planning in Nigeria dates back to the 1946 - 1956 "ten year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria" which was created during the

closing years of colonial rule. This plan was revised to a five-year plan in 1951 and aborted in 1954 as a result of the introduction of a federal system of government in that year, which resulted in the autonomous regional governments and the federal government launching a separate five-year development plan, 1955-1960. This economic planning experience, although rudimentary and unstructured, resulted in an impressive average growth rate of 4% per annum in real terms between 1950 and 1960 and a GDP annual growth rate of 28% in agricultural sector (Ayo, 1988).

The first development plan after independence in 1960 (1962-1968) although was interrupted by the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967, still resulted in an impressive average growth rate of 5 % per annum. The impressive performance of the economy arising from the early experiences in development planning encouraged its adoption as a national culture, which led to the launching of the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974); the third (1975-1980); and the fourth (1981-1985). However, by the end of the fourth national development plan in December, 1985, different economic emergency programmes emerged. There was for example the 1986 two-year Structural Adjustment Programme and the three- year rolling plan of 1990, 1991 and 1992.

Of a particular interest here is the Second National Development Plan (1970-1975) which was launched immediately after the civil war and hence, culminated in the development of the five broad national philosophy or objectives namely: a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; and, a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Unfortunately, these articulated objectives notwithstanding, the second development plan could not sustain the average growth rate recorded in the previous plans, as it marked the beginning of the nation's total reliance on crude oil and drastic deviation from agricultural production which recorded a negative growth rate of about 0.06 %. Rather than being self-reliant, the nation became more dependent on other nations for food and other social goods needed for survival.

The Third National Development Plan, according to Ayo (1988) marked a turning point in the history of development planning in Nigeria, firstly, because it involved extensive consultations with the private sector and secondly, because it identified more specific and measurable macroeconomic objectives namely: increase in per capita income; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of high level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development; and indigenization of economic activities.

This Third development plan evolved at the peak of the

sharp increases in both the price of crude oil (from \$3.56 in 1973 to \$ 14.69 per barrel in March, 1975) as well as the level of its production, which rose to 2.3 million barrels per day. Unfortunately, barely few months after the launching of the plan, there was a world economic recession, which resulted in the decline in price and production of crude oil. Of course, this economic recession, coupled with the change of government in July, 1975 led to the inability to attain the target growth rate of 9.5 % per annum. Nevertheless an average growth rate of 6.5% per annum was realized, and agriculture still recorded a negative growth rate of 0.1%.

In furtherance of the process of laying a solid base for the long term economic development of the country, the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985) was launched with emphasis still on agriculture, manufacturing, education and manpower development, infrastructural development and social services. Also, the objectives of the plan were expanded, based on the broad goals outlined in the Third Plan namely: increase in the real income of the average citizen; more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups; reduction in the level of unemployment and under-employment; increase in the supply of skilled manpower and the reduction in the dependence of the economy on a narrow range of activities. Other objectives include the achievement of a balanced development- that is, between the different sectors of the economy and the various geographical areas of the country; increased participation by citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises; greater self-reliance, on local resources and implied greater efforts to achieve optimum utilization of Nigeria's human and material resources; the development of local technology; increased productivity; and the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment.

This lofty plan prepared in a period of strong and favourable economic conditions was once again launched at the time of serious economic crisis and slump in oil markets, culminating in general poor performance of the plan. The expected 7.2 % growth rate per annum declined to about 4.2 %; while agriculture, for the first time since 1970 recorded 1.1% average annual growth rate.

Since the end of the fourth national development plan and the unsuccessful launching of the 1986 economic emergency programme, the fifth development plan, the three year rolling plan, which was to be operated along with a 15-20 year perspective plan (1990-2009); no meaningful visionary statement or development plan had emerged again neither can one say that the national philosophies and objectives outlined in the past plan documents were achieved. If anything, the history of development planning in Nigeria reveals that there have

been more failures than successes. In particular, the failures are attributable to poor implementation, neglect of the agricultural sector, which is the base of the Nigerian economy and the over-reliance on the crude oil resources. Other factors include failing or unstable economic and political systems dominated by the military juntas, lack of transparency and accountability by public officers, poor corporate governance and policy formulation mechanism including poor manpower planning and development policies.

The absence of a clear policy framework in this period resulted in either the closure of many manufacturing companies or drastic reduction in their production capacities. The impact of this clearly manifested in form of mass retrenchment and layoffs creating unemployment (including disguised unemployment and underemployment). Other results include material and intellectual poverty; infrastructural decay, dwindling power supply, very low per capita income, high rate of inflation and corruption and the devaluation of the country's currency (the Naira). Mounting foreign debt and debt servicing costs emanating from a near total reliance on importation of food, raw materials and other social goods including used clothing, cars (popularly known in Nigeria as "tokunbo" cars) all contributed to drastically reduce the growth rate of national product averaging 1.6 percent per annum during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Nigeria launched a Vision 2010 development blueprint during the Sanni Abacha military regime on Tuesday November 18, 1997 which attempted to make Nigeria a developed nation by 2010 when she celebrates her 50th independence anniversary. It was expectedly a blueprint which should provide government with a focus on how to create enabling environments that will stimulate private sector savings and investment; provide conducive infrastructure, build human capital (education, health care and technological know-how); inspire good governance anchored on the public interest, and orient the economy towards diversified, export-oriented development based on national competitive advantage. It provided that the private sector is to support government in truly progressive partnership, acting as the engine of growth of the economy.

The vision 2010 targeted that Nigeria's GDP growth rate would average 10% per annum and that the private sector would become a lot more active, within a market-oriented, highly competitive, and broad-based, private-sector driven development process. That privatization, liberalization, and rapid technological advancement should be among the critical elements of Nigeria's economic development strategy during the vision 2010 period. Unlike previous development plans and visionary statements, the vision 2010 gave serious consideration to education as a focal point to attract at least 26% of government budget. It declared that science, engineering

and technology are crucial for any agricultural, industrial or technology takeoff in the modern era and that a sound basic education in the sciences and technology is a prerequisite. However, this visionary statement, the first ever to recognize that science and technology education is progressively and essentially the bedrock for any development planning was aborted even before it was launched. Critics had rationalized the Vision 2010 as a subterfuge to elongate the tenure of the military head of state General Sanni Abacha and transit him into a civilian president (Aluko, 2006).

As a result of the inconsistencies, poor implementation and failures of the development plans to achieve their broad policy objectives of poverty alleviation, economic stability, employment generation, diversification of the economy, infrastructural and economic development, the vision of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was initiated, based on the previous initiatives of vision 2010 (National Planning Commission: 2005). The NEEDS vision, which culminated or transformed into the vision 2020 also emphasized the age-long objectives of the previous plans, but with focus on the private sector partnership with government. From all indications the attempts at development planning and vision statements in Nigeria, including the MDGs have been largely unsuccessful, and the vision 2020 is feared to suffer same except urgent actions are taken by policymakers. This forms the premise upon which this paper discusses the role of education in the actualization of the Vision 20:2020.

Theoretical framework: The Education/Development Connexion

Education is a bridge to the future, an agent for human capital formation, a manpower industry that produces the knowledge and skills necessary for development. It has become a known creed that a nation's ability to develop the skills, knowledge abilities and competencies of its members is crucial and fundamentally linked to the education system – a social service with positive externalities that foster economic, social, political and technological changes. This is confirmed by Harbison (1973); Johnston and Parker (1987); Awaritefe, (1988); Becker (1995); Ogbodo and Nwaoku (2007) who in separate forums, opine that the primary determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeeds in developing and utilizing the skills, knowledge, health, and habits of its population and that human capital development can be neglected only at a country's peril. Education formal, informal or non-formal remains the bedrock of growth and development of any nation, that which liberates man and his society from ignorance and superstition, and act as the key to unlock the development of individuals and national potentials for enhanced

social, political and economic progress (Seegolam, 1993; Fadipe, 2000; Aghenta, 2001).

Development on the other hand is a total and comprehensive transformation through quantitative and qualitative improvements in the various parameters of life. Aspects of national development include: increased per capita income and a more equitable distribution of it, sustainable supply of food with improved nutritional standard, shelter and reliable health service. Development also involves expanded employment opportunities, better education and improved knowledge built on a sustained rise in functional literacy level; and improved access to education. Other aspects of development include a rise in productivity, high rate of structural transformation of the economy and high rate of technological advancement, low mortality rate, improved humanistic and positive values and attitudes that give concern to the effective and efficient utilization of accumulated resources geared toward reducing poverty and servitude (Fadipe, 2000; Aghenta, 2001; Todaro and Smith, 2003; Reed and Wolniak, 2005).

Investment theorists believe that development begins with the training of men, the human resource that will act as a catalyst in the improvement and overall development of nations. In this sense, development begins with education, the main agent of human capital formation, a facilitator in skill acquisition and technical change. This confirms the assertion of IIEP/UNESCO (2002, 2007) that education is at the heart of development, the most potent means of self and social transformation, the crucial factor that links all the items on the development agenda: reducing poverty, promoting health, sharing technology, protecting the environment and improving governance. This in indeed, suggests a symbiotic relationship between education and development; the knowledge of which has informed the increasing world recognition of the importance of the need for training, particularly in science and technology education for all aspects of development.

The education that brings development

Empirical evidence indicates that human capital and well-functioning economic institutions are the two major variables that bring about desired development (Becker, 1995; Theodore, 1996). Also, Ayodele et al. (2013) argue that a fundamental concern for the realization of the vision 2020 is the empowerment of the people through good education which the authors believe is a bedrock of any development. This presupposes that it is not all education that brings development which explains why after more than a century of formal education Nigeria still wallows in abject poverty and disease in the midst of her abundant human and material resources. It also shows that not all investments in education yield desired results,

or turn out to be good education.

To Blaug (1980) quality labour accounted for as much as 23% of the annual growth rate of the American economy between 1930 and 1960; and that by 1850 when Britain had passed through the Industrial Revolution and had become “the workshop of the world” 65-75% of her working class had achieved rudimentary and functional literacy. In fact, evidence from the major developed countries - Britain, the United States, France, Russia and Japan - shows that at least 50% functional literacy rate is required, though not a sufficient condition for rapid economic advancement. Also, Blaug (1980) quoting the works of Bennett (1967) argues that economic variables were generally more highly correlated with vocational and specific skills acquisition learning than with academic schooling.

In line with Coombs (1985); Ogbodo and Nwaoku (2007); Akubuilu and Ozochi (2007) the quality of science and technology education is very crucial to national development and that technology education even at the basic education level is a veritable way to developing a stock of skilled manpower which a nation needs for development. The implication therefore, is that a nation will either accelerate her human capital formation in science and technology or remain economically, socially and politically underdeveloped, yet falling prey to perpetual subservience and control of the developed nations. Indeed, good quality science and technology education remains the ultimate means for exploiting the vast natural resource endowments of a nation. It enables man to invent machines and tools for improved agricultural production, better transportation, communication, housing, health care and enhanced social, economic and political wellbeing of man.

Good education is also defined by the quality of its inputs, a strong financial and infrastructural provision and a relevant curriculum that meets the ever changing needs of the learners and society. One important aspect of quality is the relevance of the subjects taught and the objectives of education. Good quality education is an education that provides students with the tools to deal with and find solutions to the challenges confronting mankind. In a changing world this means that what was considered good quality education yesterday might not meet the standard of what may be understood as good quality today or tomorrow. This is particularly true at present if we take into consideration the rapid changes created by new technologies. The attainment of basic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, are regarded as essential parts of a qualitative education. Also, the provision of adequate and modern infrastructural facilities that promote good quality impartation of science, technology and even general liberal education is crucial. Good quality manpower that is well motivated and retained to implement the desired curriculum is also very

critical to the attainment of good education for economic development.

Also, to be effective and be of good quality, education must interact with other sectors of the economy in the promotion of inter-sectorial linkages. It involves developing a strong, functional and reliable education-private sector collaborative partnership. Through this, the needs of the education subsector and those of the organized private sector are harmonized, coordinated and mutually re-enforced. For example, curriculum, manpower, facilities are exchanged as research collaboration activities flourished with the aim of solving specific problems of corporate organizations and the society. In fact, the education that brings development is that which is well funded, provided with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, with well motivated and dedicated manpower to impart the science, vocational and technology-compliant curriculum, relevant to societal and entrepreneurial needs of individuals.

METHODOLOGY

Official documents including publications of the Federal Ministry of Education, National Universities Commission and other government policy papers are systematically analysed against authors' practical experiences of the realistic on-the-spot situations. As a theoretical paper, authors have only utilized numerical data as a basis of discussion against prevailing literature and experiences and not as scientific hypothesis testing. The discussion is purely historical.

THE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS: THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION AND THE REALIZATION OF VISION 20:2020

The developed countries of the world, Britain, the United States of America, Canada, Germany, Japan and the “Asian Tigers” have been transformed as world economic and industrial giants through the recognition, training and nurturing of their greatest assets - the human mind - and for being able to effectively utilize them. The Nigerian case is however different as she has, over the years neglected the call to equip her manpower force with the requisite knowledge and skills to perform in this age that is knowledge and technology-driven. It is expedient at this point therefore, to identify the challenges facing the Nigerian educational system, which most policymakers must rudely and decisively address if the ideals of Vision 20:2020 are to be realized.

Some of the several challenges of the Nigerian educational system to which the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) has attested and acknowledged are analysed presently:

Problem of access

Access to education has been a perennial problem

Table 1. State of inputs in Nigerian educational institutions (Pre-basic, basic and post basic).

Type/Level of Educ.	Expected enrolment	Actual enrolment	Out of Sch. population	Available No. of classrooms	Additional classrooms Required	No. of teachers available	Additional No. of teachers required
CRÈCHE	22,000,000	2,020,000	19,980,000	NA	4,000	NA	969,078
NOMADIC	3,050,000	450,000	NA	10,469	1,764	NA	12,329
PRIMARY	34,920,000	24,420,000	10,500,000	NA	22,000	NA	338,147
JUNIOR SECONDARY	9,270,000	3,270,000	6,000,000	NA	10,160	NA	581
SENIOR SECONDARY	9,983,796	2,773,418	7,210,378	497,871	32,677	180,540	NA
TECHNICAL COLLEGES	NA	92,216	NA	NA	NA	2,730	NA
COLLEGES. OF EDUCATION	NA	354,387	NA	NA	NA	11,256	14,858
POLYTECHNICS	NA	360,535	NA	NA	NA	12,938	17,078
UNIVERSITIES	NA	1,131,312	NA	NA	NA	27,394	19,548

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2009) Roadmap for the Nigerian education sector. Note: i) NA= Not available as the time of data collection, ii) All figures are rendered in units.

affecting all levels of the educational system. For example, despite the purported emphasis (in terms of funding, staffing and teacher training) on primary education, through such international and national programmes as the Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) 38 million children were never enrolled in school in Sub-Saharan Africa as of 2004 (UNESCO, 2006). For example, in Table 1, it can be seen that 10.5 million Nigerian children who (as of 2009) were of primary school age were out of school; 6 million were out-of-school at the junior-secondary school level and 7,210,378 at the senior-secondary level. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the secondary school level was merely 31.4 percent in 2005 and the transition rate from junior to senior secondary school stood at 16 percent UNESCO (2006). The World Bank (2009) and Okogu (2009) have in separate works confirmed that the access problem in Africa is acute at all levels of education and is reflected in the low gross enrolment ratios at secondary and tertiary levels, which are 30 and 5 percent respectively as of the 2009 levels; the lowest level compared to any other region in the world, implying that there is still a long way to go before achieving Universal Primary Education and the MDGs in Africa. The Data on Table 1 also show that the girls' enrolment ratio is much lower than that of boys at all levels of education and the problem of access to technical education is even worst as only 2.8% (that is, 92,216 of 3.2 million) of products of junior-secondary schools transit to technical colleges, which are also very few (Federal Ministry of Education, 2009). The problem of access to education has grave consequences for the achievement of the vision 2020. In fact, UNESCO (2006) has predicted that in the achievement of the MDGs

relating to education and literacy, Sub-Saharan Africa lags far behind other regions, with an estimation that 28 of the countries are seriously off-track and are unlikely to reach the MDGs before 2040. Nigeria is one of these twenty-eight.

Challenges of school infrastructure

The lack of essential infrastructure and the very poor state of the physical facilities at the basic and post basic education levels pose a serious threat to the actualization of vision 2020. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2010) the physical state of classrooms is very poor, with floors full of holes, roofs and ceilings broken, the fabric in a state of disrepair; most schools are without perimeter fences subjecting the school premises to intrusion, vandalism while in other circumstances, the premises are being messed up having been used as toilets. More than 55% of classrooms fall into this poor state category. At the tertiary level, infrastructure, equipment, laboratory and library facilities are also grossly inadequate, obsolete, dilapidated, and non-functional (Schleicher et al., 1995). An earlier NUC survey report in 2011 indicates that only about 30% of the students in universities could have access to classrooms, lecture theatre, laboratories and other physical facilities. As shown in Table 1: a total of 70,601 additional classrooms are needed at the public basic and post basic public levels alone as of 2009, besides furnishing, laboratory equipment and libraries, a clear indication of the poor state of education in Nigeria. Correcting these deficiencies and providing the basic and essential infrastructural needs of the education sector are fundamentally

Table 2. Staff strength in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Institutions	Academic Staff Strength	Non-Academic Staff Strength	Total Staff Strength	Student Enrolment	Academic Staff Required	Academic Staff Shortfall	Academic Staff as % of Total Staff
Coll. Of Education.	11,256	24,621	35,877	354,387 (1:32)	26,114	14,858	31.4%
Polytechnics	12,938	24,892	37,830	360,535 (1:28)	22,702	17,078	34.2%
Universities.	27,394	72,070	99,464	1,131,312 (1: 42)	46,942	19,548	27.5%
TOTAL	51,588	121,583	173,171	1,846,234	98,816	51,484	29.8%

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2009). Report of the Vision 2020 National Technical working Group on Education sector.P.61.

crucial, without which, the actualization of the Vision 20:2020 will be a mirage.

Challenges of teacher adequacy

Although the National Policy on Education (2011) re-echoes the obvious fact that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers, the quality and quantity of teachers at all levels of the Nigerian school system remains a toothy challenge. Based on the data on table one, the total number of additional teachers required for the entire educational system stood at 1,371,619, as at 2009. But available records released by the National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) indicate that Nigeria needs 1,320,135 teachers to meet the demands of Basic Education by 2015. In spite of this gross inadequacy, a large number of the teaching force at the basic and post basic levels have qualifications below the National Certificate in Education (NCE) minimum teaching qualification (Ojo, 2007). For example, in the North-East and North-West, about 70% of the teaching force at present has less than the NCE. Notwithstanding, the serving teachers are poorly trained, remunerated and motivated. They have engaged in endless industrial actions to be paid their rightful entitlements, culminating in poor performance and declining quality education.

At the tertiary level, the situation is not different. Table 2 presents some clear description of the present disposition.

As shown in Table 2, there is acute shortage of academic staff in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The figures in parenthesis, which represent teacher-student ratio, indicate a one-teacher-to-forty-two-students ratio in Nigerian universities. This is against the expected one-teacher-to-twenty-five-students ratio recommended by the National Universities Commission. The situation where a lecturer has to contend with as many as 42 students and more than 70% of staff is non-academic is most unproductive and retrogressive for the actualization of the ideals of tertiary education in the 21st century. Yet this statistic represents the average. The high correlation between infrastructural development and academic performance expressed by Abubakar (2009) cannot be

ignored in the nation's quest to realize its developmental vision.

Funding challenges

Poor funding remains a major challenge that has continued to blight the development of education in Nigeria (Utulu, 2001; Ayeni, 2007). Total expenditures on education have lagged behind other regions since 1990s. Per pupil and per student expenditures that were relatively higher in the 1970s as a legacy of early efforts to emulate the European education systems gradually began to fall and since the 1990s fallen below the regional average.

Table 3 shows the inter-sectoral budgetary allocations for the seventeen year period, 1990 – 2006. As can be seen, the Federal Government budgetary allocation to education since 1990 has been far lower than the 26% recommended by the World Bank. Even the peak years of 1999 and 2000 when the sectoral allocation rose to between 10 and 12 percent, these are still a far cry from international standards. When compared to allocations to general administration, defence and internal security, even since the launching of the UBE in 1999, the disposition clearly shows governments' continued showed lip service to the funding of education in Nigeria. The World Bank data contained in Table 4 adds further strength to the issue of poor funding for schools in Nigeria. The education required for the attainment of vision 20:2020 must be that where schools are equipped with functional physical or e-libraries facilities, laboratories, classrooms well furnished with modern instructional technology gadgets, projectors, audio-visual and video conference equipment.

Funding challenges of the universities have particularly remained critical during the past ten year period. The Federal Government report on the educational sector lamented: "For example, in 2004, only 255 of the universities' funding requests were met by the Federal Government. To make matters worse, there is an existing policy which prohibits federal universities from charging tuition fees" (FGN, 2009:61)

In addition, the crucial challenges posed by mismanagement, misappropriation and wastage of the

Table 3. Federal Government budgetary allocation 1990- 2006 (as a percentage of total allocation).

Year	Agriculture	Education	Defence	Internal security	General administration	Defence & internal security
1990	0.8	7.2	5.2	4.2	10.5	9.4
1991	0.5	4.9	7.2	5.9	15.9	13.1
1992	0.4	4.6	5.6	4.8	14.1	10.4
1993	1.1	6.9	3.3	3	13.7	6.3
1994	1.2	9.9	5.3	6	15.1	11.3
1995	2.1	8.6	4.9	1.9	23.4	6.8
1996	1.2	8.6	8.1	8.4	18.4	16.5
1997	1.0	7.6	7.2	5.6	15.7	12.8
1998	1.6	7.6	8.3	6.7	13.4	15
1999	14.2	10.4	12.7	9.2	20.5	21.9
2000	1.4	12.5	9.4	5.4	14.6	14.8
2001	1.2	6.9	8.1	6.7	13	14.8
2002	1.4	11.6	9.9	9.1	16.9	19
2003	0.8	6.6	5.2	6.9	16.9	12.1
2004	1.3	7.9	7.2	8.9	10.6	16.1
2005	1.0	8.5	8.3	8.4	13.5	16.6
2006	1.4	9.6	6.2	7.4	11	13.6
MEAN	1.9	8.2	7.2	6.4	15.1	13.6

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (2006). *Statistical Bulletin* Vol.17, Dec. STABULL_2006.Abuja

Table 4. Annual budgetary allocation to education by 20 selected countries.

S/NO	Country	Budgetary allocation to education	Position
1.	Ghana	31.0	1 st
2.	Cote d' Ivoire	30.0	2 nd
3.	Uganda	27.0	3 rd
4.	Morocco	26.4	4 th
5.	South Africa	25.8	5 th
6.	Swaziland	24.6	6 th
7.	Mexico	24.3	7 th
8.	Kenya	23.0	8 th
9.	United Arab Emirates	22.5	9 th
10.	Botswana	19.0	10 th
11.	Iran	17.7	11 th
12.	USA	17.4	12 th
13.	Tunisia	17.0	13 th
14.	Lesotho	17.0	14 th
15.	Burkina Faso	16.8	15 th
16.	Norway	16.2	16 th
17.	Columbia	15.6	17 th
18.	Nicaragua	15.0	18 th
19.	India	12.7	19 th
20.	Nigeria	8.4	20 th

Source: World Bank (2002) Financing education for all by 2015: Simulation for 33 African countries.

scarce available resources and the general lack of accountability, probity and transparency further deflate the mean resources allocated to the education sector - a

factor which has dissuaded foreign donors to the Nigerian education sector. All these combine to explain in part the decay in education in the country.

The issue of relevance

The quest for relevance for the Nigerian educational system, which necessitated the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and culminated in the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1977, has remained a mere dream. The challenge of implementing the 6-3-3-4 and the 9-year basic education curricula, particularly in relation to science, vocational and technology education required to meet changing societal needs has been a difficult one. The result is the extremely low enrolment in technical colleges, science and technology-based courses due in part to low societal regard. The continuing preference by students, parents and policymakers for general education (bequeathed by the colonial masters to the local people) which lacks the basic entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and for confronting the challenges of underdevelopment, renders the attainment of the vision 20:2020 a mirage. Indeed, the lack of relevance and current focus of some programmes with highly “academic” contents in Nigerian educational institutions have placed tolls on the dropout rates and graduate employment in the country as these programmes hardly make the outputs self-reliant after school.

Issue of development-focused research collaboration

Among other things, there are problems of lack of (or limited) relevant research and poor funding of research activities directed at solving national problems. The level of collaboration between universities and research institutes, between university-based/research-institute-based researchers and between indigenous researchers and inventors is at present not adequate and encouraging. Also, the lack of emphasis on endogenous research and development that is based on local initiatives, local knowledge and institutions and resources has been preventing the attainment of development in Nigerian (Aletor, 2009).

Issue of consistency and sustainability in educational policies

Just as there has been very unstable political system in Nigeria, so has it been with educational policies and programmes. The different governments since 1960 have had different educational policies. None could be seen to have demonstrated a strong political will targeted at empowering the people through education and even in monitoring for the effective and efficient realization of policies and programmes. The sustainability question is very crucial in Nigeria as different political regimes seem to introduce something peculiar to their regime without

desiring to build on existing policies even if they were good ones. Hence every government can establish a university while any existing one is crying out loud for funding and maintenance of infrastructure.

The overall result of the foregoing is that there is poor quality of outputs from the nation’s educational institutions comprising among others (tertiary, secondary and primary) forty federal-owned, thirty-nine state-owned and fifty-nine private universities (NUC,2013,) as at the time of this study. The “political” (rather than functional) growth of national universities (as depicted by the Goodluck Jonathan administration’s establishment of nine new federal universities to ensure that each state in the federation has at least one federal university) has further accentuated the funding challenges in these institutions with every new federal university aspiring to develop new infrastructure and recruit scarce qualified staff to run their academic programmes. Even though this expansion in the number of tertiary institutions may be argued as partly solving the problem of access earlier identified, there are strong indications that effective education as Blaug (1980), Fadipe, (2000) and Reed and Wolniak, (2005) may have expected in these institutions are tainted by the dearth of proper funding and other resources.

RECOMMENDED EDUCATIONAL PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE VISION 20:2020

The foregoing discussion leads to the following prescriptions for actualizing the 20;2020 vision.

Firstly, it must be expressed without contention that every meaningful and sustainable development agenda must begin with the cultivation of the active agents of development, the human resources, who must accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, and build social, economic and political organizations for national development. For the next ten years there should be emphasis on increased access and development of science, vocational and technology education.

Secondly, the Millennium Development Goal 8, Target 16, stipulates that governments “develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youths in developing countries” (United Nations, 2000:31). To achieve this goal, entrepreneurship education is paramount to act as a useful way to promote self-employment among the youths. The entrepreneurial education must be focused on technical and vocational education and the acquisition of employable skills that begin early from basic education to equip the youths as they transit into the working age.

Thirdly, there is urgent need to create a synergy between the formal and non-formal education sub-systems; so that the educational system can gradually

move away from the current school-based learning for easy production of the need-specific skills which the formal system cannot offer. In addition, the various communities that are well known to specialize in different skills and endogenous research and technology activities should be well encouraged and funded to form Research and Development (R&D) centres at the local and national levels. These centres can also collaborate with universities and research institutes in creating sustainable social, environmental and economic impact nationwide. This, in effect, implies giving recognition to both academic intelligence and traditional technological potentialities of the people.

Furthermore, through endogenous research and development emphasized by Aletor (2009), small and medium scale enterprises can successfully emerge with innovations to harness local resources and add value to the desired economic growth and development. As envisaged in the vision 2010, there is need to develop simple and basic technologies for small and medium scale agricultural and industrial processes, capable of enhancing capacity utilization. As the country currently encourages the development of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), the success of this scheme does not lie only in the provision of loan facilities to these entrepreneurs but also in their ability to connect to local research initiatives to support their growth and development. This has been the case in South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Besides, the desire of the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) to create centres of excellence by establishing intra and inter-institutions centralized laboratories, studios and workshops, and overhaul existing laboratories, studios and workshops in one university, polytechnic and college of education in each geo-political zone yearly should be implemented immediately without fail; and encourage science and technology-based education as a matter of national preference. In addition, annual budgetary allocation to education should be increased beyond its present level reaching up to the specified 25% by the United Nations to provide adequately for infrastructure for science and technology; research and development and for the rehabilitation of laboratories and workshops in universities and polytechnics. Increased education budgets certainly provide high-yielding investment in economic development (Coombs, 1985). Industries and the organized private sector should also be encouraged to invest much in research and development of product and process technologies and in the improvement of skills of their workforce.

Again, while improving the funding for education, adequate financial and technical support for agriculture, health and infrastructure are also necessary to strengthen capacity for production and trade and to sustain high growth rates and create employment. A

funding formula for agriculture, education and the other social services is required, rather than continue in the current practice where funding is allocated on the basis of convenience. There is the need for fund that is allocated for the educational sector to be efficiently accounted for; and stringent and tough regulation of the financial system is required to ensure fiscal responsibility, accountability, due process and enforcement of stiff penalties against any breaches of best practices (Aletor, 2009).

Finally, all educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of education and actualize the vision 20:2020 must begin with a deliberate effort at improving the status, motivation and the overall conditions of service of teachers. As the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) rightly remarks, Nigeria's ability to realize its vision of becoming one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 is largely dependent on its capacity to transform its population into highly skilled and competent citizens capable of competing globally. The teachers to effect the transformation must be well trained, attracted, equipped, motivated and retained.

Conclusion

It has become obvious that development does not just happen. It is often carefully and consciously planned and implemented through a deliberate will of the people and government. Current president Goodluck Jonathan, then as vice president, presided over the final meeting of the Vision 20:2020 Committee at the State House on August 3, 2009. As president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is expected that meaningful efforts should at this time have been put in place. Rather, the cacophony of political communications now centre on talks about transformational agenda, transformational leadership, -mere conjectures that do not have the intellectual inputs that resulted in Vision 20:2020. Comments from Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman, Minister of National Planning Commission, at the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) meeting showed the Vision 20:2020 is a document that has faded with the demise of Yar'Adua. Nigeria according to him: "was the 37th economy in the world in 1999, but is now 31st, an improvement that is based on the concerted efforts by the Federal Government to provide good governance, improve infrastructure and human capital development" (Vanguard, Editorial 2012:18).

The implication of such comments is that the Vision 20:2020 has already been implemented. Some analysts believe that Nigeria may not get near the position of being the 20th largest economy by the target date of 2020. For instance, Nweke (2012) as cited in Vanguard News (2012) believes that Saudi Arabia, not Nigeria, would be the world 20th largest economy, "Based on

projections, using the IMF World Economic Outlook database, our findings are that: Saudi Arabia will be the 20th largest economy in the world by 2020, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$1.2 trillion in purchasing Power Parity (PPP)" (Vanguard News 2012: 1).

From this projection also, it is believed that Nigeria would be the 27th largest economy in the world by 2020, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US \$864 billion in PPP which will be US\$316 short from the Saudi GDP and may only be the 20th largest economy by 2035.

Even as impressive as it sounds, it requires decisive attempts by policymakers in Nigeria to swing into concrete actions. All concerned should shun corruption and the wasteful use of the scarce resources and adhere to a prudent and efficient allocation and management of the resources. For the vision 20:2020 to be a reality, much effort must be put to make the educational system more functional and relevant than ever before, to the vocational, technological and entrepreneurial needs of the society, such that the beneficiaries can be more flexible and quickly adaptable to solving the problems of society. An all-inclusive, integrated and participatory strategic planning and implementation model that is targeted at the teachers and the poor is worthwhile. Also, the vocational, science and technology education should start at an early stage of the education to inculcate in the Nigerian youths such values as honesty, integrity, dignity of labour, positive work ethics; opportunities for personal development, confidence to adapt to new situations and change, national consciousness and developing a strong revulsion for materialism and corruption.

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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