

The Blame Game in The Fallen Standard of Education in Essien Udim, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the responsibilities of stakeholders in education in Nigeria. Critically, it analyzes how they contribute to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. The study employs the philosophical research method of criticism, speculation, analysis as well as a descriptive research design. It used a population a randomly selected 21 parents, 21 Government officials, 21 heads of institutions, 21 teachers, and 21 students, making a total number of 104 Nigerians. Data collected were analyzed using means, standard deviation statistics to answer for the research questions. The results showed that each stakeholder has contributed in their respective proportion to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. The study recommended among other that if all hands are on desk, the resultant effect will be significant academic excellence in Essien Udim, Nigeria.

Key words: *Blame game, Fallen standard of Education –Nigeria, Educational institution failure, Parents' failure, Teachers' failure, Students' failure*

Introduction

Education has remained a major key to all round development and progress of any individual and the society at large. It provide the right enabling environment and condition for building sustainable leadership. Education is the right weapon to attack ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. It must develop a total person who should grow to appreciate and ultimately influence the environment for good. Thus, it is only a society with high standard of education that can record meaningful growth, progress and development.

This paper, therefore set to discuss the blame game played by various stakeholder in the fallen standard of education in Essien Udim, Nigeria. It exposes the failure of parent, government, teacher, educationists, institutions, and student themselves. If we actually want to improve our standard of education, each and every one must carry out his respective tasks.

THE DEFINITION OF STANDARD OF EDUCATION

Standard of education is a multi- dimensional concept. Generally, it entails the best of practices, status, products and contribution of education to the general development of the society.

OVERALL STRUCTURE OF NIGERIA EDUCATION

Nigeria education system comprises of three different sectors namely, Basic education (Nin years), Post- Basic / Senior Secondary education (three years), tertiary education. (Four to six years depending on the program of study). According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on education (2013) basic education cover nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of Junior Secondary education. Post – basic education include three years of Senior Secondary education. At the tertiary level, the system consist of a university sector and a non – university sector. The latter is composed of Polytechnics, monotchnics and college of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offer opportunities for undergraduate, graduates, vocational and technical education.

METHODOLOGY

This research is philosophical as well as survey research with a descriptive research design. It used a population of a randomly selected 21 parents, 21 Government officials, 21 heads of institutions, 21 teachers and 21 students, making a total number of 104 Nigerians. The instrument used for the collection was structured modified Hikert type questionnaire titled Blame Game in the Fallen Standard of Education in Nigeria (BGFSEN). The reliability co-efficient (r) of 0.73 was obtained using Gronbach alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation statistics to answer for the research questions.

Mean and standard deviation on the blame in the fallen standard of education in Essien Udim, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD
1	Parents' failures Accepted	3.14	1.2
2	Governments' failures Accepted	3.65	1.8
3	Education institutions' failures	3.42	1.7 Accepted
4	Teachers' failures Accepted	3.23	1.5
5	Students' failures Accepted	3.21	1.4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results in the table above, shows that, all the items scored above 2.50. This implies that Parents' failures, Governments' failures, Education institutions' failures, Teachers' failures and Students' failures contribute in their respective proportions to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. This result is in line with the findings of Ojelabi (2009) who investigated on teachers training to improve the standard of education. Asaya (2011) also examined that it is therefore important that teachers be encouraged to join academic or professional associations, which will promote their academic and administrative growth. Agi and Adiele (2009) indentified indiscipline management strategies as part of the institutions' failure. Beside this, institutions should ensure that orientation of students on admission is promptly done, positions of responsibilities should also be assigned to students. Noted also Akpan (2018) opined in line with the findings that over the years, educational plans have been faced with various challenges which negate education development in Nigeria. The challenge of actualizing the Nigerian Lofty

plans modeled after the American system is therefore hampered by low budgetary allocations by the Nigerian Government. (Wali, 2007).

Writing about politicization of education Nigeria, Idiong (2022) remarked that educators need the support of the ruling power, the public and other governmental in order to carry out their functions. Moreover, that the standard of education has fallen partly due to primordial considerations of ethnicity, religion and god-fatherism. Idiong (2022) noted also that the educational positions of authority are motivated by primordial factors. The recruitment criteria for teaching staff are watered down in order to accommodate these primordial interests.

PARENTS' FAILURES

Education starts from the family level. Children's proper up-bringing in all ramifications are the first and primary responsibilities of their parent at home. However, most parents shift these responsibilities and blame governments, school's authorities, teachers, etc. Actually they have played a vital part in contributing to the fallen standard of education of their children. So many parents lack family planning. They have so many children without any social plan for them. More often, their children are left to auto socialization and thereby lacking proper foundation. It is the responsibilities of parents as first teachers to ensure that their children attend to their studies rather than staying glued before the screen of television, phones, computer, etc. Parents should assist their children and wards not to cut corners in gaining any academic qualifications especially the O'level Certificate. It is saddening that some parents albeit instead of discovering the ugly practices such as payment for malpractices in the so called special center, in pursuit of excellence in O'level examinations. All these contribute to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria.

GOVERNMENTS' FAILURES

Quality control of education in Nigeria, equal right and opportunity to education has been played down by government policies. The universal declaration of human rights released by the United Nations (UN) in 1948 state that everyone has the right to education. Education should be free, at least elementary education should be compulsory.

Moreover, the "No child left behind Act" released by U.S.A in 2002 promoted the equality of educational opportunity and led the concept to the peak. The above, notwithstanding, there are still many barriers of equality of educational opportunity. Barriers are the extent to which people have obstacles that keep away from unhindered opportunities to access equal education opportunity.

One of them is individual difference among the learners. The education system does not take into consideration the ability and aptitude of the individual pupils enrolled into our educational institution. Abolishing fees, providing common curricula, equipping school with adequate

instructional material are not enough criteria for meeting educational needed of every learner in a given society. It is unfair to provide the same dose of education to difference learners with difference aptitude and interests. It is absurd subjecting the same curriculum to the mentally retarded, the normal child and the gifted one.

Assessing the selection method, once notice in Nigeria schools, that the common examinations or selection such as JAMB, encourages inequality instead of quality. This is so because those who are unable to pass these comprehensive examination are deprived of their right free to attend educational institutions of their choice. Regrettably, children of the rich who have been specially prepared by attending high fee paying schools pass examinations easily. More so, the application of Quota System Admission involves the principles of discrimination against prospective university candidates simply because they happened to be a citizen of certain state of the federation. No matter the argument in favour of the Quota System, there is a great emphasis attached to one's place of birth. This in a way destabilized the system instead of promoting unity in Nigeria.

Another barrier to equality of education opportunity is the high cost of education materials. In spite of the free and compulsory education policy in some state, some additional charges for uniforms, textbooks and fare to school still create financial barriers for many parents. Due to this, may cannot afford to go to schools. The devastating effects of armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies also obstruct equality of educational opportunity in Nigeria. In certain part of Nigeria, thousands of people are forced out of school. Such serious conflict affects the state of the nation. The current Boko Haram insurgency, herdmen, bandits etc. has disrupted school activities especial in the Northern part of the country. Classrooms, teacher and pupils are often the prime targets. The consequence of this is fear on the part of children to attend classes, fear among parents to send their wards to school and fear among teachers to teach in school. In additions, armed conflict in Nigeria divert public funds from education into military spending.

Another issued that lead to fallen standard of education is the low funding of education. The government has budgeted lower percentage of fund for education instead of the internationally recognized 26 percent which was suggested by UNESCO. For instance, premium Time newspaper reported that in the 2017 budget proposal presented by the president Muhammad Buhari, N448.0 Billion allocated to education. This represents about 6 percent of N7.30 trillion budgetary allocations to the recommendation by UNESCO. This lower budgetary allocation is tantamount by funding of education in Nigeria and this leaves school laboratories unequipped, infrastructure undeveloped, staff poorly remunerated, students welfare disregarded and tuition fees exorbitant, etc. There is a lots of negative impact arising from this poor funding. The incessant disruption of the academic calendar, with strike actions from conflicts between the staff in education sector and the government bothering on this poor remuneration. The current strike case is academic staffs in Akwa Ibom State University.

Another issue is that of the politicization of education in Nigeria. The political system in Nigeria has influenced educational system. The success or failure of any educational system depends on the political system of the area concerned. Education cannot be separated from politics because it is an aspect of political needs of the society. For this reason, the federal government is involved in education at all levels be it primary, secondary and university levels. Adesina (1978) stated that there is no problem marrying politics with education. He further assessed that in analyzing politics, the national aim of making education available to every child, the idea of using education to wine out hunger, illiteracy, ignorance and diseases are on the whole less educational than political. Education in Nigeria has been a necessary function of politics. Almond and Coleman (1960) posited that all political systems tend to perpetuate their culture, ideas and structure. This could be achieved through education.

However, the system has failed to produce good leadership and fellowship in the society. This is because people recruited to pilot the affairs of the sector are selected based on primordial considerations of ethnicity, religion and god-fatherism. The propelling factors for the manifestation of these identified Nigeria education sector could be clannish or sectarian conception of social life which most people associate it to political elitism and manipulation of the mass mind. Staffing and the admission processes of students is also influenced by this politicization factor. The position of Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Rectors, Principals and other heads of schools are kept for the indigenes people of the institutions host communities. If the positions are occupied by “Non indigenes”, the process of institutional governance and administration becomes frustrated. In some cases, the recruitment Criteria are watered down in order to accommodate these primordial interests. Such system is not healthy for the development of education because it excludes those who merited the positions. Due to politicization of education, many scholars have relocated to their “indigenous homelands” or areas considered to be relatively peaceful. This has led to the cross fertilization of scholarship in Nigeria University impossible due to unfriendly nature of the Nigerian societies to foreign scholars. The derogatory space for this development is ever expanding. Abiola University by the Federal Government of Nigeria led to violent demonstration among student in Lagos, majority of them were Yoruba.

Tracing the problem, it will be revealing that it was associated with the memories of the June 12, 1993 Babagida’s annulled elections.

Cumulatively, so many Nigerian who lack good job are poor and have no political connections.

EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS’ FAILURES

The facilities of our education institutions for teaching and learning is another reason for fallen standard of education in Nigeria. Schools in Nigeria are permeated with corruption and ineptitude Admission into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria today are hardly by merits.

It often goes to the highly connected of the highest bidder. Many teachers engaged by the educational institutions are not qualified and one wonders how they can possibly give what they don't have. The resultant effect of such anomaly is the fallen in our standard.

TEACHERS' FAILURES

Teachers play vital roles in teaching – learning activities. A situation whereby our teachers are unqualified, corrupt and unproductive, then the fallen of our standard is at increase. This breed of teachers in question do not go to class, and when they do, they use the lesson period to tell jokes and stories. They seek qualifications of various levels in exchange with marks. They don't read research or undergo routine training or retraining in teaching skills. These failures of teachers reflect significantly in the equality of graduates they produced.

STUDENTS' FAILURES

The students are also culpable in the fallen standard of education. Most students don't read, study or go to classes. They engaged themselves on frivolities such as surfing social activities like clubbing and wedding. When they cannot make it in their examinations, such students go to any length to induce their teachers in one way or the other for good grades. Such ugly trend result in a situation where the face values of their certificates don't reflect the content of their brains.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, the awareness of the fallen standard of education in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. However, blaming others and shifting our respective responsibilities would not save the situation. Obviously, these are responsibilities of everyone of us, be it parents, teachers, governments, educationalists and even students themselves. Thus, all hands must be on desk to ensure that standard of education in Nigeria is raised to an admirable state.

POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should give proper attention to education sector by proper funding, good policy formulation and implementation.
2. Parents should take their responsibilities serious by monitoring their children and wards as well as providing for them.
3. Teachers as the major stakeholders in educational sector should work consciously in teaching their students effectively.

4. Students themselves should study hard and assiduously towards their expected success and self development.

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APPENDIX I QUESTIONNAIRE
BLAME GAME IN THE FALLEN STANDARD OF EDUCATION IN
NIGERIA QUESTIONNAIRE (BGFSENQ)

INSTRUCTION: Please kindly indicate to what extend you agree with the following statements by ticking (v) from the highest to the lowest.

SA - Strong Agree

A - Agree

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
	Section A: Parents' Failures				
1.	Parents are less interested in their children education.				
2.	Parents do not pay their children fees on time.				
3.	Parents do not check if their children have done their home works.				
4.	Parents can go to any length to assist their children pass their examinations.				
5.	Parents do not always meet up with their children school needs.				
	Section B: Government Failures				
1.	There is poor funding for education in Nigeria				

2.	Government has not invested enough in teacher's training and development.				
3.	Government has not prioritized education in its budget.				
4.	Government has not done enough to access quality education for all.				
5.	I think curriculum used in Nigerian schools is out dated and does not meet the needs of the students.				
Section C: Educational institutions' failures					
1.	Schools are not providing a high-quality education				
2.	Schools are not adequately preparing students for life after graduation.				
3.	There is no save and secured environment for learning and Teaching processes				
4.	Adequate support for students with special needs are not provided in the school..				
5.	There are inadequate facilities and resource to enhance learning.				
Section D: Teachers' Failure					
1.	There is poor and inadequate training of teachers				
2.	Teachers are not motivated to perform their duties effectively.				
3.	Teacher are not held accountable for their performance				

4.	There is inadequate resource for teacher to perform their works.				
Section E: Student's Failure					
1.	Students lack the necessary study skill to pass their examinations.				
2.	Students lack the necessary support system, both at home and at school.				
3.	Students are not adequately guided to develop their God given talents and skills.				
4.	Students are not encouraged to take ownership of their own learning.				
5.	Students are not motivated to perform well academically.				