

Education No Longer at Ease: The Necessity to Build a New Employable and Productive Society for Nigerian Youths through Quality Education

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Abstract

In Nigeria, education is in shambles; quality education is drifting away with the breeze of time; like wind and ashes that blow and leaving no alluring quality on employers of labour. Young people have become disconnected, disoriented and burdened by their never-ending predicaments in the labour market. While this is vexing and disappointing, this paper in succinct terms, appraised the necessity to build a new employable and productive society Nigerian youths through quality education. Among the findings, the paper revealed that improving the quality of education would bring about phenomenal changes in the employment rate of youths in Nigeria. Secondly, the paper also showed that building new employable and productive through quality education would reposition the development of science and technology to catch up other countries in job creation, especially the four Asian Tigers: Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The paper also unraveled that Nigeria's educational curricula is not only conservative, but that the managers of the educational sector are bereft of new programmes to initiate quality education for the well-being of youths. Sequel to this, the paper concluded that since education is the most significant means of change, overhauling the entire educational sector with new programmes, relevant and contemporary knowledge and skills to become employable and productive. Based on these findings, the paper recommended amongst others, that improving the quality of education would birth higher employment rate for youths and make them productive. Finally, improving the quality of education would usher in positive changes, particularly in the thoughts of those eager to change the poor narrative of educational sector in the country.

Keywords: *Youths; Quality Education; Asian Tigers; Functional; Productive; Nigerian society*

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a developing country; life in developing countries is difficult. Nigeria is 63 years old and will soon commence the journey to her 64th independence anniversary from Britain (1960), and possibly too, clock her 100th independence anniversary in 2060. While looking forward to the centenary celebration, the general mood in the country today is that of hopelessness and disillusionment because it has been 63 years of relatively little or no progress educationally. Rather than laying up celebration plans as it were the practices years back, Nigerians are at present lamenting the socio-economic upheavals foisted upon them by the removal of oil subsidy; the

greatest of the poor being adversely affected. Beside this uncharacteristic situation, Nigerians are also taking stock of the disaster in the educational sector, particularly the free fall in the quality of education attained by the present day graduates from the country's tertiary institutions.

Generally, education has been described as the process of imparting knowledge, skills, technology, cogent ideas learned, either officially or in a relaxed way to improve the basis for human capacity development, both physically and mentally to fit into the society (Lenshie, 2013). Expounding this assertion, the National Teachers Institute (2000) posited that education is a system motivating positive institutional changes and developments geared towards creating the required internal harmony, consistency and integration of people to achieve the common good for all in the society. Yesterday, the quality of education was remarkable and durable. From this angle, what passes for good quality education is simply one that provides all learners with capabilities needed to develop them into being economically productive, increasing their sustainable livelihoods, creating nonviolent and egalitarian societies in order to improve their well-being. Definitely, the learning outcomes required to attain these goals vary according to context, but at the end of the basic education cycle, learners must achieve literacy and numeracy, basic scientific knowledge and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease. Above all, there must be the capacity development to advance the quality of teachers and other education stakeholders throughout the process. Substantiating on what this description of quality education really entails, UNICEF (2000) provides a very wide-ranging definition of quality education as that which includes healthy learners who are well-nourished, are ready to participate and learn, whose learning is supported by their families and communities; healthy, safe, and supportive environments; content that includes the foregoing elements and peace; inclusive child-centered processes that are facilitated by competent self-driven teachers; and actual outcomes that encompass life-supportive knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education (equity) and positive participation in society.

While one appreciates the details involved in UNICEF's definition, good quality education is also an education system that emphasizes the importance of focusing on five important elements including: quality learners, quality learning environment, quality content, quality processes, and quality outcomes. It empowers students to think critically about their reality; by being creative and developing ownership of their learning experience, they learn through creativity and problem solving which helps them to develop critical consciousness about current realities they live in. In addition, it must be an all-inclusive term in which learners as well as environments for education are healthy, content is relevant, teaching is student-centered, and outcomes are all encompassing bringing about all that is good from the student's educational experience. It does not only an education that is well designed to provide the recipient with an all round development of skills and potential to achieve success in their future endeavors in a society, but also the type of educational output that meets the demands of the learners, teachers, parents, community, and the industrial sector for increase productivity.

In advancing reasons for the consistent good of quality education in developed countries like United States of America and Britain, and some Asian countries, such as China, India, Singapore and Malaysia, Lenshie (2013) highlighted the heavy investments with most sincere commitments to attain requisite goals of educational developments. Further, Lenshie argues that one fundamental drive for quality education attainment is the productive exchange relations in knowledge production, allocation and pledge of resources to achieving full intellectual employment and development. On the other hand, the case of the poor quality of the standard of education in Nigeria is hinged on poor budgetary allocations to the educational sector, including poor educational policy makers and managers for lack of effective policy making and management.

But with the rudderless direction of governance since the return of democracy, many sectors in the country's socio-economic and political activities collapsed. Nigeria's educational sector has gone through tumultuous times and appears to undermine the quality of good education envisaged from the country's tertiary institutions. Ironically, despite the deplorable activities of the political class, the number of tertiary institutions has continued to increase by the day, but without relevant and meaningful policies and programmes to create new skills, knowledge and technology to improve the quality of graduates being produced today. For example, it is said that in most tertiary institutions, antiquated techniques and technologies are still being employed in the teaching of engineering, technical and vocational courses. The question that begs for answer is: what then is the relevance of increasing the number of tertiary institutions without modern curriculum? Following this unanswered question, it has been argued by scholars over and over again that there is a complete mismatch between the knowledge and skills acquired by today's graduates from the country's tertiary institutions and those actually required by employers of labour. Substantiating, Chukwu, Nwagba, Obuzor, & Scent (2020) stated that the main key to swiftly adjust and increase productivity without stress ought to have been good quality of education, but the quality of education attained these days is far from being satisfactory. Thus, youths who graduated from these institutions have dislocated from employment opportunities because of the poor quality of education attained. Good quality education should have been a topmost priority of government; in fact, an invaluable asset in the attainment of meaningful employment and higher productivity. But that has not been the case as hundreds of thousands of Nigerians tenaciously hold that the country is a failed state, especially when the quality of education is taken into cognizance. According to this school of thought, nothing seems to be working positively to redefine and upgrade the quality of education in the country. Little wonder, a team of scholars asserted in 2020 that Nigeria would soon have a significant young population of highly skilled trained criminals if nothing was done to cancel out the mess in the educational sector (Bello, 2023). This statement aptly agreed with the immortal assertion of the statesman, C.S Lewis who stated that, *'education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make a man more clever devil.'*

Unmistakably, this unflattering judgment by this team of scholars came as a result of several cases of the poor quality of graduates and their outputs nowadays. Apart from this, it is even saddening to acknowledge that out of 20 million pupils who are in primary schools, only six million (30%) will get to secondary schools, and out of one million applicants for university education, only 150,000 (15%) will gain admission (Bello, 2023) into public universities. Already, it is obvious that underfunding, poor infrastructure and industrial strike actions are trademarks of public universities. Based on this, Bello averred that out of this number, about 100,000 will graduate, with less than 30,000 of them getting into regular employment. Certainly, those from rich homes! By implication, Bello meant that Nigerian society has increasingly been saturated with youths who have been made idle and unneeded, and are daily being exposed, according to Chukwu (2021), to learning the arts of violence, verbal intimidation, physical assault, blackmail, destruction of property and assassination. With this kind of mindset, the political class, the managers of today's government are ironically pleased! They are paradoxically satisfied because this significant young population of highly skilled trained criminals, who assists them to rig elections, kidnaps both political enemies and also innocent people for ransom and even terrorize the civil populace to remain in the good books of their paymasters - the government in power! With this frame of mind, is there any point urging young people to pursue quality education? In a conversation with a powerful political class, he retorted: If we as a government encourage good quality education, who will assist us manipulate election results as it happened recently? Do not forget, even some of the country's Professors who are the masterminds of the poor quality of education are on our payroll?

In today's Nigeria, poor quality of education has yielded expected fruits: political violence, verbal intimidation, assassinations, hate speech, fake news, physical assault, blackmail, and above all, corruption. This kind of politics that has corrupted the quality education has the flexibility to make quick money much more than engaging in any other discipline. Thus, the yearning for good quality education is almost being lost, not necessarily because the political class is averse to it, but because the quest for immediate gratification gotten from politics is killing the dreams and aspirations of millions of youths pursuing quality education. But this maneuver is purely deliberate. As it were, the participation of young people in the social, economic and political life of the country has been limited. Disturbingly enough, unemployment is itself a marginal status so long as employment is the norm in any society. With poor quality of education fast becoming a norm, young graduates have found themselves on the fringes of rejection because employers of labour deserve the best and nothing less, but the best!

From the foregoing, it can be observed that the educational sector is in a serious mess, and in the words of Plato, *the direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life*. Is there any future in the poor quality of education the country's young people have been manipulated to live with nowadays? In response, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor Wahab Egbewole warned against the notions of confusing teaching with learning as he argued that years of wrong indoctrination to believing that only schools can offer education are gone. Further,

Egbewole also rejected the notion that skills and knowledge acquisition are only reliable if it is formally acquired in a traditional school setting; he posited that a lot of incalculable damage had been done to attaining good education. In his thesis, a total overhaul of the educational sector is a necessity to arrest the worthlessness of certificates gained. Furthermore, he posited that a reinvention of Nigeria's educational curriculum is part of the solutions to rejuvenating quality standards in the nation's education system. While delivering the 7th convocation lecture of the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, FUYOYE Ekiti State titled: *Learning is Schooling Plus* (Leadership Newspaper, 10/2/2023). Professor Egbewole declared

.....that a good number of graduates are displaying certificates which they cannot defend, or match with the desired character and creativity; It is a fact that we have produced graduates who have not measured up to standard; we are also familiar with the stories of graduates who allegedly are unable to write ordinary application letters for unemployment. There are also instances where some are unable to identify the core issues in the courses they studied, talk less of explaining them.

Aside from this anomaly, Egbewole also maintained that there are also cases of graduates who are so educationally vapid, to the extent that they are adjudged not to be trainable, and therefore, not employable. According to him, the goal of education should be to generate compassionate and creative students who will contribute to the development and maintenance of a just society.

Also lamenting about the poor quality of education in the country, an enlightened and educated Muslim lady in a *Tik-Tok* video that has gone viral stated that there is this outrageous sense of self-entitlement children from rich homes now possess that has furthered crippled the quality of education. Going by their actions, these over-pampered children strongly believe that their parents/guardians' financial resources can afford them whatever educational certificates they require in life as well as buying them very lucrative jobs; it has become an obsession to the extent that their absolute belief in this philosophy has taken away the desire to study conscientiously. Unfortunately, parents and guardians who along have supported this philosophy do not even know how to put a halt to this deviant act; even if they do know, discarding this philosophy at this level, they reason, will push their children into depression, minor psychiatric disorders and low self-esteem. Without any iota of doubt, one could affirm that the maxim "money can buy anything" has become the motto of young people from rich homes!

Sadly, when these lucrative jobs are bought for them, their superiors bitterly complained that all what these youngsters do while in office is crossing their legs and punching their tablets and listening to music via ear-pot all day along. Ironically, they cannot be queried or sacked by their superiors because so much money was spent to procure these jobs from above! In buttressing her disappointment further, the Muslim lady upheld that nowadays students in the Junior Secondary Class Two, who are yet to complete their syllabus, write examinations meant for those in Class 3

and passed excellently and for this feat to be accomplished, some monetary transfers or buying some recharge cards are required for invigilators to look the other way; those in Senior Secondary Classes 1 and 2 who had repeatedly failed their terminal examinations, surprisingly sat and did extremely well in examinations meant for final students in Senior Secondary 3. Rather than question the magic behind the feats attained in their results even without the curriculum completed, parents ironically celebrated their wards proclaiming them the best even when it is crystal clear to everyone, particularly their poor classmates that the results were bought with money from miracle centers! If truth be told, miracle centers are examinations centers where answers to questions are prepared and sold to highest bidders! Consequent upon this mess, students below the ages of 14 and 15 are getting admitted into universities, particularly private universities where the vicious cycle of decay continues unabated. Since the academic rigors in the universities are so demanding, these underage kids from super rich hardly cope, indulging in illicit psychoactive substance become the easy way out. Regrettably, the indiscriminate proliferation and dependence on drugs and illicit substances among these super rich kids, particularly the rate of addiction is frightening and worrisome (Chukwu & Scent, 2023).

Closely disturbing is the continued springing up of private universities in every nook and cranny of the country, more like fuel stations, while public universities are being grounded, private universities are growing in heaps and bounds. No one is ever bothered about the quality of education therein. Of course, they are always accredited every four years to continue functioning as universities with track records! What track records? Are the track records observed in their products? The implication of this ticking time bomb is that these same children possessed with the sense of self-entitlements are going to man the country tomorrow as leaders! So, what does the country gets? Garbage in, garbage out! No one is asking questions because the very rich are neck deep in the rot. In some neighbouring countries, the story is even worse as Bachelor of Science/Arts degrees can be obtained within six months! It is not just a Nigerian problem, but the entire continent.,

Despite the blanket condemnation of private universities by the Tik-Tok video, it is fundamental to state that there are still some credible private universities in the country. Incidentally, Havilla University, Nde Ikom, Cross River State is very exceptional. Here is a university that is built and guided by a five-point agenda, namely, Knowledge creation, Student-centered, Community-participation, Balancing Stability and Change and above all, Global Relevance. Aside the usual attainment and excellent character formation, Havilla assists students to rediscover who they are, their capacity, the skills and the desire to continue learning and to serve others throughout their lives even under difficult and frustrating situations. The quest for new knowledge, and the incisive, unpretentious analysis and passionate commitment to changing every student's narrative is beyond belief.

In a swift reaction to the admittance of underage children into schools, the Federal Ministry of Education has banned children below the age of eleven from participating in the Nation Common Entrance Examination for admission into Federal Unity Secondary Schools, and made presentation of birth certificate as compulsory requirement for prospective applicants. While expressing displeasure with the number of underage children who sat for this year's examination, the Permanent Secretary advised parents/guardians not to rush their children through schools because education is not passing examination. It is teaching, learning and character formation. No value is attained by pushing your child too far. It is a wrong value. He concluded by holding that most of the time, if a child starts too early, he or she will have problems later in life. As a result of this unnecessary push, the country has continued to witness extraordinary and rapid abnormal behavioural changes among these super rich children who are known to drive their personal cars in campuses rather than focus on their studies.

However, while commending the young Muslim lady for speaking out through her Tik-Tok video, the question that still begs for an answer is, how did the political class arm-twist the Nigerian society to be trusted to manage the educational sector? No conscientious intellectual has ever been saddled with the management of the educational sector. As a result, the country's educational sector has become precarious and by extension, an educationist's nightmare (Chukwu, 2021). It has been poor curriculum development, recruitment of ill-equipped lecturers/teachers, government laid-back attitude towards research and development and above all, corruption and embezzlement of available funds (Chukwu, Nwagba, Obuzor, & Scent, 2020). Despite the abundant resources of the country, and the many promises, including the billions of naira budgeted yearly; the educational sector is still in the doldrums as industrial strike actions by teachers/lecturers over issues bothering on the non-provision of basic infrastructure and poor funding. Evidently, the provision of basic infrastructure, employment of qualified manpower and proper funding of the educational sector should not be issues government will wait to be reminded before the needful is done. But these have become recurrent issues plaguing the country's educational sector hence, the steady fall in quality.

Today, Nigeria faced numerous problems in implementing sustainable educational policies that would encourage economic and social development, especially with curriculum and pedagogical problems and economic and political problems intermixed. The difficulties that confronted successive governments to this time and age, however, have been attributed to politics. Despite this, most observers attribute the downward divergence of the country's education quality to a number of factors, including poor economic policies; the prevalence of corruption; poor infrastructure, frequent industrial strikes by teachers/lecturers; and the challenges posed by the environment. There was also insufficient liaison between educational policy makers and the planners of economic and social development. A onetime President of the World Bank, Barber Conable, observed that without education, development will not occur. Only an educated people can command the skills necessary for sustainable economic growth and for a better quality of life. Since success in education, in the position of Zuma (2011) will determine the scope and extent of the country's future growth and development, it is therefore worrisome that the right curriculum is yet to be developed for the country's educational sector. Going by this observation, Nigeria's

recovery and sustainable development obviously depends on many important factors, including the expansion - both quantitative and qualitative - of the country's stock of human capital through education.

Currently, the Nigerian university system is once more in the verge of a fresh crisis as University lecturers, under the aegis of their union, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and other critical stakeholders have disapproved the newly developed Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) by the National Universities Commission (NUC). According to Olanrewaju(2023), the National University Commission(NUC), the agency supervising university education in the country, had in 2022 developed CCMAS as a guide to replace the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) curriculum that had been in use in the universities since 2007, and which will be in use any time from now in the universities. But, ASUU and a segment of the university system are against the academic programme document. Explaining further, Olanrewaju stated that the NUC engaged a blend of academic experts, government as represented by NUC, as well as professional bodies and private sector, represented by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) to design and develop the CCMAS. The new curriculum expanded the former BMAS from 12 to 17 disciplines, which according to NUC, is to reposition the universities in line with the realities of the 21st Century, and also in line with national value and needs. But, ASUU and other stakeholders objection is based on the accusation that NUC designed and developed 70 per cent contents of CCMAS, and leaving only 30 per cent of the new curriculum which the Senates, the statutory organ of the university saddled with the responsibility for academic programme development. Irked by the development, ASUU have accused NUC of foisting the curriculum on the university system. However, while reacting, NUC's position was based on the law establishing the Commission, which in Section 10(1) of the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act, Cap E3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, empowered it to set the minimum standards for all universities and other degree awarding institutions in Nigeria, and conduct the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards. Despite NUC's position, ASUU and other stakeholders challenged the agency's role, insisting that the CCMAS is an imposition, as relevant organs of the university system were not carried along in the process. In view of this, ASUU has insisted that imposition of CCMAS on the institutions would not be allowed to stay, even as the union called for its urgent review, describing NUC's action as an aberration to the Nigerian University System. While this disagreement rages on, some academia said it showed much of incompetence, and very much amateurish because education, not university education alone, should reflect much of utility, practicality and pragmatism. In a related development, they further argued that knowledge in general is best when abstracted or extracted from the immediate environment. It is only then that a dialectical projection is made, which is simply the process of improvement, transformation and modernization. Other commentators contend that it is through this process that the self (individual, group or nation) reconciles self to self; such that at every stage of synthesis, opposites (thesis and antithesis) are harmonized. This, exactly, is the dialectical development of quantitative progress leading to qualitative progress. For the author, the essence of this study is beginning to yield result with the design and development of the new curriculum despite the brouhahas.

Despite all efforts made by concerted and serious minded Nigerians, the political class is yet to acknowledge the present day poor state of education and so, the ugly trend has continued unabated.

Most disconcerting is the fact the political class, the managers of the educational sector, is not oblivious that statistics to showcase the drift in the quality of education in the country can easily. Public opinion on the state of the country's education amid the incessant industrial actions by teachers/lecturers is mixed, ranging from the mild to the outright extreme or fanatical going by the poor quality of pupils/graduates produced yearly from the country's ill-equipped schools. There are those who call for improving the quality of education policies to suit contemporary times so that young people will be employable and productive as well as being proud of the country's educational sector. The author of this paper aligns to this school of thought. This is akin to a divorce from the old inappropriate education policies to make the country's education regain its lost glory. This assertion is in line with the position of Otara (2012) who averred that by improving the quality of education, Universities and Research Institutes in Africa would become more flexible by shedding off the excess baggage carried over from the colonial era and re-equip themselves with learner more efficient resources.

Based on the foregoing, this study set to appraise the need to build a new employable and productive Nigerian society for Nigerian youths through quality education because education is globally acknowledged as one of the linchpins that improves the lives of the population. Aside from this, it is understandable that divorce is predictable from the educational sector. Further, the divorce from poor quality of education will bring about the needed changes in education quality in Nigeria. Supporting this school of thought elsewhere, Ganjee (2014) avers that since education is one of the most important means to improve personal endowments, build capabilities, overcome constraints, the process can enlarge available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in the well-being of the society.

In this pursuit, the study explored among others, why education quality is not responding to the demands of the labour market. In addition, why there is limited access to Science and Technology in the country's educational development and above all, why government is unenthusiastic to fund education properly. From the discussions thereof, there is an urgent need to build a new employable and productive Nigerian society for Nigerian youths through quality education.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The functionalist theory

The proponents of the functionalist theory included Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, to mention, but a few. The main tenets of the functionalist theory have been found relevant to succinctly examine the necessity to build a new employable and productive society Nigerian youths through quality education.

The theory, simply called functionalism was chosen for this study because it is a broad theory that sets out to interpret society as a structure with interrelated parts. Functionalists liken the different parts of society to organs of the body such as heart, kidney, and liver that work harmoniously for the survival of the entire body system. Essentially, the basic assumption of the theory is that the society is like a living organism made up of component parts, which function harmoniously for the survival of the whole system. However, if any part fails to contribute positively to the overall good of the system, such non-functionality of the part negatively affects the consensus among the different parts of the entire system because the parts are interrelated. Extending the analysis further into the educational sector in Nigeria, it is obvious that there have been a serious disconnect among all the variables that would have ensured a good quality

education. Among the variables have been poor funding, incessant industrial strikes, poor infrastructural facilities, poor curriculum development, ill-equipped lecturers employed, government nonchalant attitude and corruption. As a result, education is currently in shambles as good quality education is gradually drifting away with the breeze of time; like wind and ashes being blown away without its exact destination being found. In like manner, employers of labour do not seem to appreciate any alluring quality in today's graduates from tertiary institutions. As a result, these young graduates have become disconnected, disoriented and burdened by their never-ending predicaments in the labour market.

Since functionalist theory emphasizes a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. Therefore, since good quality education entails an education that is well designed to provide the recipient with an all-round development of skills and potential to achieve success in their future endeavours in a society, all hands must be on deck to arrest the anomaly of poor quality in the educational sector so as to make the country's graduates employable and productive. This is because poor quality of education is dysfunctional and unattractive to the employers of labour.

3. Conceptual Issues

3.1 Government corruption in the educational sector

Despite the mess inflicted on the educational sector by corrupt politicians charged with the management of the sector, Nigeria's philosophy of education was primarily geared to effectively train individuals to become a resourceful and by extension, create equal opportunities for everyone at all the levels of education. This was to guarantee that the products of the sector are employable and productive, but at the moment, it is evident that the failure to understand the intimate and interdependent relationships that exist between planning and change has pushed these corrupt politicians in charge of education to make the desired goals of education difficult to attain. Sequel to this, the political class has blatantly rejected the philosophy of every child having the right to quality education. This is because government appointees interested in recouping their financial investment in the political party in power are usually those appointed to superintend the educational sector for ages now. Consequent upon this anomaly, acquiring education at all levels has fast become one of the thorniest issues in the country.

Here is a country where the political class is fanatical about feeding pupils in schools, but cannot provide basic infrastructure such as a roof over the heads of the same pupils being fed to protect them from the intense heat of the sun or, the harsh cold weather that usually accompanies the rainy season. One is tempted to applaud the ingenuity of the political class for the Greek gift (feeding school children), but when the intent of the hand bearing the Greek gift is critically assessed, the appreciation is automatically withdrawn. As the country continues to grope in the dark particularly in the educational sector in spite of the abundant wealth at the disposal of the political leaders, past and present, it is imperative to state that the paradoxical gesture in the feeding programme is because there is much to benefit monetarily from awarding contracts to food vendors to feed pupils who already fed from their homes rather than awarding contract to building classrooms for the same pupils. With this kind of inept leadership coordinated by the political class, no sane Nigerian is surprised about the decision to feed pupils who already fed from their homes. This is obviously a sad commentary on the country's political class that sits atop the educational sector.

Sadly, the food contracts are deliberately fraught with massive corruption geared towards producing emergency millionaires who will support the advancement of corruption in government. Otherwise what is the rationale behind an educational policy of the government that is primarily focused on spending billions of naira awarding contracts to political food vendors to feed pupils in primary schools? Clearly, the construction of basic infrastructure such as classroom blocks to house pupils from the harsh weather conditions would have been more appreciated than providing food for pupils who already fed from homes prior to coming to schools. Substantiating on this anomaly, Adesomojo, the correspondent of Premium Times (2021, May 7) reported that during the COVID-19 lockdown when schools were shut, the federal government said it spent 523.3 million naira on school feeding programme. While briefing the Presidential Taskforce, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs said 382,765 pupils, 124,589 households, and 2,859 schools in Ogun State, Lagos State and Abuja, the federal capital territory benefited from the school feeding programme during the COVID-19 lockdown between May 14 and July 6 2020 (Premium Times (2021, May 7). Since all schools were compulsorily shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, how were the pupils dragged back to schools to be fed given that COVID-19 disease was an infectious one? What happened to the social distancing measures which affected closure of educational institutions, and also served as one of the preventive mechanisms to reducing the spread of the disease infection? Reframing the question: Was the prepared food taken to the pupils in their different homes when they were under the COVID-19 lockdown? If yes, seriously, this is a huge risk taken! The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs certainly deserves an International Humanitarian Award for this extraordinary feat! The whole exercise had come and gone, but take it or leave it, the entire period of the school feeding programme will easily be remembered as the most unfortunate period of the country's education history under President Mohammad Buhari. It is a period, like the era of President Shehu Shagari (1979–1983) when “Ten percent” “Kick-backs”, Golden-handshakes, Brown envelopes and the like, were born into the Nigeria's political space. All these jargons are different forms of corrupt practices commonly associated with the political class in Nigeria and the appearance of these slangs in the present dispensation have kept quality education far from attainment.

Come to think of it, if the feeding programme was genuine as it appeared, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) would not have further broken the hearts of millions of Nigerians by revealing in her latest global data as reported by Alabi (2022) that Nigeria now has about 20 million out-of-school children. So, who and who did they feed during the COVID-19 lockdown? According to the statistics, Nigeria has one of the highest figures for out-of-school children globally despite the fact that education has the capacity to improve the lives of the very poor. Aside from Nigeria, India and Pakistan are other countries in the world with millions of out-of-school children. But Nigeria's situation is unacceptable because she is one of the most resource-endowed nations in the world.

Despite this, Nigeria has over the past years tried to improve the quality of her education, but her speed has been slower than the speed employed by the Asian Tigers, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan to attain their present enviable status in education. According to Chukwu (2021), the Asian Tigers did not cling to re-formulation of ancient and unsustainable educational policies and clothing them in new garments in their pursuit of development; rather they carefully resorted

more and more to improving their educational sector in line with international standards and funding them adequately to effect new change in the content of the products. This succinctly explains why the substance of their education rather than anything else is accorded a pride of place. Evidently, Nigeria can do better, but there is need to provide adequate infrastructure and funds in order to impart quality education into students for employers to seek and employ for increased productivity. The Asian Tigers' model was without too much pressure on schools to produce the needed manpower for development within a short space of time. This is not to suggest that quality young Nigerians cannot be trained within a short period of time to attain desired quality, but proper funding is usually the drive behind such feat which the Nigeria's political class is completely averse to it given the fact they are in love with Toronto certificates!

3.2 Nigeria's education and the affliction of *progeria* disease

Since the return of democracy (1999), Nigeria's education has passed through turbulent times, bastardized in most cases, and trying hard to survive the series of torture inflicted on it by the political class. In its attempt to survive, it has tried to transform, accommodate and absorb new teaching and technology and above all, shown remarkable improvement and durability, but this has been short-lived. In fact, since the return of democracy, Nigeria's educational sector has suffered terribly in the hands of government appointees, particularly those who claim to possess intimidating academic qualifications to transform the country's education to the next level in line with international standards, but when asked to present these claimed certificates for confirmation, affidavits are rather tendered with stories of having lost them in dubious circumstances. In other climes, technocrats with proven competence are appointed ministers to ensure good governance and development of humanity, but not party loyalists interested in plundering the country's common wealth in order to recoup their financial contributions to the party in government.

It will be untrue to hold that government is not oblivious of how her actions and inactions have collectively affected the lives of young people who are now out-of-school. For government, there is wisdom in poor educational quality as taking to crime, banditry, kidnappings and other unwholesome activities increases the percentage of security vote (funds budgeted to guarantee security of lives and property) which is never accounted for, whether used or not. Lamentable as it is, it is unequivocal that as long as this bunch of Nigerian politicians continue to hold sway, educational development at any level will continue to be a sham. The challenge, however, is: where does one begin to address the need to improve education from yesterday to today with the view to building a new functional and safer society? First of all, it is clear that the country's education lacks standard. Indeed, the crisis in the country's education is hinged on three words: Lack of standards. Lending credence to this submission, Prof. Tichapondwa Modesto (2016) agreed that standards were needed to improve educational policies in line with international standards. In Nigeria, hundreds of thousands, even millions of people are getting enrolled into schools for the first time, but too few are learning because educational policies are ancient and conservative.

The hopelessness of the present day attitude of government towards the need to improve the quality of education policies has been attributed to the affliction of the *progeria* disease. What is *progeria* disease and how has it affected the development of education in Nigeria? In an attempt to respond to this, the narrative of Alvin Toffler (1975) is of utmost important. According to Toffler, *progeria* is the name of the disease that afflicted an eleven-year-old Canadian, Ricky Gallant until he died.

He died of old age, but at eleven years! What will immediately strike an individual is how an eleven-year-old could die of old age! In the narration, Ricky Gallant was only eleven years old chronologically, but he suffered from an odd disease called *progeria* – advanced ageing – and he exhibited many of the characteristics of a ninety-year-old person. The visible symptoms of *progeria* are *senility, hardened arteries, baldness, slack and wrinkled skin*. In effect, Ricky was an old man when he died; he died as a result of a long time biological change being packed into his eleven short years.

In Nigeria today, tenth, fifteenth and eighteenth obsolete educational curricula are still struggling to find relevance in this 21st century. Since independence, education has been afflicted with *progeria*. While this is heart-breaking, it is clear that the symptoms of *progeria* which have afflicted education in Nigeria include poor-funding, incessant academic strikes in the country's schools at all levels, recruitment of unqualified personnel, politicization of educational policies, corruption and embezzlement of available funds, et cetera. What a country! With this, the question that readily comes to mind is: how much longer will Nigeria, a unique country endowed with abundant human and natural resources wait for the total collapse of her educational sector before making efforts to improve it in line with international standards? Obviously, *progeria* is a rare disease, yet metaphorically, in the high technological societies, Nigeria's education suffers from *progeria* in the face of inevitable change.

As a symptom of progeria, the incessant industrial strikes have continued to affect education negatively in Nigeria. Children of the political class are sent abroad to improve themselves with tax payers' money, while children of the commoners languish in poorly equipped public schools. According to data from the Institute of International Education, the economic impact of spending children of the political class abroad and those of their collaborators in business to the United States alone, reached \$514 million in the 2018/2019 academic year. This statistics exceeded the economic impact of students from countries including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in the same period. Based on this vexing statistics, it is now evident why the quality of education has been bastardized; in this destruction, the political class has cleverly resorted to sending their children abroad to study. Four years after this exposure, the current statistical figures are not only frightening, but disappointing as the Academic Staffs Union of Universities (ASUU) continues to cry out. At this juncture, it is easier to reconcile why the Academic Staffs Union of Universities (ASUU) have gone on strikes 17 times in the last 23 years of democracy!

ASUU STRIKE CHART FROM 1999—2022

TABLE 1: PDP 1999 — 2007

1	1999	5months
2	2000	3months
3	2002	2weeks
4	2003	6months
5	2005	2weeks
6	2006	3days
7	2007	3months
8	2008	1 week

9	2009	4 months
10	2010	5months
11	2011	59 days
12	2013- 2015	5months
	Total	34 months, 9 days =2 years, 10 months, 9 days

Source: Field work, 2022

TABLE 2: APC —2015 -- 2023

13	2017	1 month
14	2018	3 months
15	2020	9 months
16	2021	11 months
17	2022	8 months and 9 days
	Total	31 months and 9 days

Source: Field work, 2022

Total number of strikes (Table 1 + Table 2 (PDP+APC)=64 months plus;15 Semesters, approximately 7 years lost since inception of democracy

The contempt of the political class towards improving education has clearly shown how they have under-developed the educational sector through the ill treatment meted out to several unions, and committees set up to intervene in all disputes between federal government and teachers/lecturers. For example, the slighting suffered by the Briggs committee, the Committee of Vice Chancellors (CVC) and Pro-chancellors are cases in point. Ironically, the political class has indeed kept educational development in a comatose state for years without any guilt. For example, as earlier observed, the Academic Staff of Union Universities and other tertiary institution staffers have gone on industrial strikes at different times, even including those from primary and secondary schools without any genuine response from government.

More than ever, Nigeria needs to incorporate STANDARDS into her educational policies to improve the quality of pupils, students and graduates from schools, especially universities where potential employers of labour are having a hard time being convinced that the country's graduates have the capacity to deliver when hired. Regrettably, employers nowadays demand for graduates with first class honours degrees, or those with even third class degrees from foreign universities. Thus, incorporating standards into the country's education will amount to ensuring the following(a) Curricula that is compliant with modern times(b)Quality of qualifications (c)Employable graduates (d)Unlimited access to academic collaborations & meaningful research capacity, and(e) Adequate funding for education development.

Going by the UNESCO prescription of 26 percent of national budgets, what really goes to education at the federal level in the country is always less than 10 percent (Ekpu, 2020). This low budget, according to Ekpu, has contributed to the poor state of education in the country at all levels as the quality of education continues to nosedive, and the future of the country is getting bleaker than ever. In this vexing situation, politician are increasingly sending their children abroad to attain quality education, while doing nothing to improve the standards of education in line with international standards. In Nigeria, education is underfunded. Concurring to this statement, Otara (2012) presented the scenario differently by observing that education in Africa has been afflicted with archaic techniques and technologies in its engineering, technical and vocational schools. Substantiating his position, Otara (2012) averred that there is a complete mismatch between the knowledge and skills acquired by

graduates from schools in Africa and those actually required by industry or for self employment. In his analysis, he further held that the result was a growing number of unemployable youth and job losses by technical artisans and slower economic growth because qualified and the skilled employees they needed could not be trained due to poor funding.

3.3 Incorporating effective STEEM into Nigeria's education

There is an absolute need to incorporate STEEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine) into Nigeria's education to suit contemporary times. With its absence, there is hardly any new breakthrough commensurate with contemporary educational advancement of today in the country. Indisputably, with the incorporation of STEEM, education and development is inseparable. Corroborating this assertion, Fidel Castro, an erstwhile leader of Cuba argued that there was no distinction between education and revolution (Cuban Ministry of Education, 1961). Reading through Castro's thoughts, one could deductively admit that if education suggested schooling to excel, it then implied that the improvement attained from education was revolution, and revolution itself meant change. From this, development implies change. It also implies continuous process of positive change in the quality of life of an individual or a society, reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality. It is within this explanation that Rhoads (2013) declares that education exists to train individuals for competency in a field of work. In doing so, it also exists to produce knowledgeable, informed, caring and responsible citizens. By educating its citizens, Rhoads avers that a country can greatly improve its overall well being because education equips and enlightens people towards a brighter future. In this manner, one can uphold that the importance of education in the development of the society is measured by the caliber of individuals that it produces.

As earlier observed, the figures of out-of-school children had oscillated between 10.5 million and around 15 million for more than a decade, but today with inept leadership and corruption ravaging every facet of the Nigerian society, education quality, has not only been priced out of the reach for the poor, but ceased to be a priority of government. Due to this, these out-of-school pupils have turned to kidnapers, arsonists, political thugs, drug addicts, gangsters, cultists, armed robbers and many more are still being trained for tomorrow. These revelations seemed to affirm what the team of scholars once observed that Nigeria would soon have a significant young population of highly skilled trained criminals if nothing was done to cancel out the mess in the educational sector. How can this army of young employed Nigerians become productive with the poor quality of education they have been imbued with? The significant population of highly skilled trained criminals' prophecy that has been rearing its ugly heads in the educational sector must be aborted with non rhetorical resolve now or never (Bello, 2023). Going by the huge number of out-of-school children, is there any assurance that government will initiate programmes to improve the quality of education to enable youths to be employable and productive?

Perhaps, it is necessary to recall that over 30 years ago under the leadership of President Deng, China was confronted with an army of frustrated unemployed youths. Deng, after a thorough analysis of global trends particularly in tradable skills decided to focus on University education with emphasis on science and Information technology (IT). Today, China produces over 50% motorcycles and over 30% of personal computers globally. The country churns out 350,000 engineering and computer specialists annually, registering three times more patent applications than the US; just recently another batch of Chinese astronauts returned to earth from the moon.

Similarly, the slide in quality of education in Nigeria has cleverly been rejected in Singapore given the fact she was at par with Nigeria in the sixties, with each having a \$300 per capital income. But the Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong declared, ‘there will be no barrier to knowledge, information and lifelong learning. Universities in Singapore maintained open access, but rigorous academic standard, Polytechnics imparted professional expertise through a practice based curriculum, and the institutes of technical education equipped students with hands-on technical skills and critical thinking habits. The Singaporean government also invested in upgrading the skills of the workforce, kept older workers current and employable. On an intelligent Island, every pair of hands had to be a pair of thinking hands. None was allowed to become hewers of wood or drawers of waters. Today, Singapore is one of the Asian Tigers!

In another case in point, Nigeria was far better than Costa Rica in the 60s when her youths were productively at optimum, but today the country has successfully transited from a banana republic to a regional IT power hub just over a period of ten consistent years of planning and execution. In 1998, Arias, a Nobel Laureate and then President of Costa Rica declared that his government installed computers in elementary schools. The programme has since then reached over 1.5 million students, more than half of those who live in underprivileged areas. Exactly ten years after the first computer was installed, and in support of President Arias’s determination to change the narrative in Costa Rica, Intel, opened a \$500 million micro chip plant in San Jose. Among the attraction Intel cited was the availability of an educated workforce. Today, Costa Rica’s 12% GDP comes from software sales and is the third most competitive outsourcing destination in the world after China and India vying for a piece of the global IT outsourcing market worth more than \$50 billion.

Despite these giant strides by China, Singapore, Costa Rica and others, Nigeria appears to be drifting back into the dark periods of colonialism when education meant little or nothing, other than producing clerical workers without any technological support, but a cursory analysis of the Nigeria’s situation calls for sober reflection. Nigeria’s educational policy planning and development is over centralized and the protagonists of this school argue that it makes sense; it helps to develop a uniformed education policy and also provides a functional educational system that equips learners with requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable them relate and adapt successfully to the rapid changes in the society. But on the other side, however, it is observed that many of those responsible for the country’s educational policy development have been arm-chair educationalists whose ideas are no more relevant in this 21st century. Little wonder, the country’s educational policies are formulated in their air-conditioned offices rather than going to the field to update their knowledge. Besides, the failure to incorporate STEEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine) to suit contemporary times has been their greatest disservice to the Nigerian society. With the non-inclusion of Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine, no new breakthroughs commensurate with contemporary educational advancement have been recorded. In his discourse, Otara (2012) states that without a strong science and technology base no country can develop in this modern era. In other words, African countries, like Nigeria, are really handicapped in science and technology. The country’s education is very far behind the rest of the world in the advances made even by some developing countries in STEEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine). So, all efforts should be directed in ensuring that the country catches up faster in STEEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine). For Sawyerr (2012), new techniques and products will emerge in the information sciences, communications, biotechnology, space science and aeronautics, medicine and many other areas. Substantiating, Otara avers that appropriate skill is essential for innovation and development of education in this 21st century. Having said, this capability calls for a fundamental transformation of the mindset to accommodate STEEM by

education planners in Nigeria. Supporting this declaration, Otara (2012) further argues that the 21st century education is focused on innovation and for the authors of this work; STEEM is the basis of the expected innovation. This often starts with what the technology world calls ‘mashups’ – the joining of ideas that do not seem related but, when brought together, break new ground (Otara, 2012). This way of improving the country’s education falls under what Dorothy Leonard-Barton (1995) described as “creative abrasion” to enable people with radically different ideas to bridge points of view and innovate – a needed 21st century skill that points to changes in the how and not just the what of teaching and learning, but collaborating to solve the big obstacles government lackadaisical attitude to improving education has negatively caused, particularly in the Nigerian society.

3.4 The pervasiveness of Toronto (fake) certificates

With the return to democracy in 1999, a young Nigerian of the North Central Geopolitical Zone lied under oath that his stunning academic qualifications were obtained from Toronto University, Canada, but on thorough investigation, the certificates were found to be counterfeit. Subsequently, he was found guilty and disgraced out of the speakership position he occupied in the House of Representatives! Despite this, lessons have not been learnt. Thus, in acknowledging the undying love for Toronto certificates by the political class, Nigerians were denied the opportunity to interrogate the qualifications and competencies of those who paraded themselves as electable in the just concluded general elections. Aside from two presidential candidates, others stayed away! With the country’s huge human and natural resources, had these deliberate absentee candidates presented themselves alongside with their academic credentials as expected, a halt to the bastardization and deplorable conditions of the educational sector would have given everyone the feeling to celebrate the rebirth of the educational sector. Unfortunately, during series of interactions with some of the politicians with the view to understanding their position on changing the narrative surrounding the poor quality of education, they were clueless as to how to reconstruct the country’s educational policies to suit contemporary times. Though, these revelations were not surprising because of the discrepancies in most of the intimidating academic qualifications they possess; the qualifications were more like those presented by the erstwhile disgraced speaker of the House of Representatives (Toronto certificates) beautiful to behold! In spite of all criticisms and condemnation of Toronto certificates (fake certificates), they still are commonly held and paraded by the political class without guilt and shame. Hence the result has been the crafting of half-baked educational policies to further stagnate and destroy the country’s educational sector, particularly public schools/universities.

In their assessment of the colossal damage to the educational sector, Chukwu, et al, (2020) affirmed that the poor quality of education and passion for bogus certificates has really gained pre-eminence because the educational sector has thrown the country’s core value system to the wind. Accepting the foregoing as correct, it is apparent that the pervasiveness of Toronto certificates by those in government, particularly actors who manage the educational sector has for decades pushed them to contemptuously regard education as if it meant nothing. While governments have failed to acknowledge the alarming and worrisome state of the country’s educational sector, there have been incessant policies somersault. For example, there was the 6-5-4 educational policy; the 6-3-3-4 policy, and now, the 9-3-4 educational policy, but how long will this policy last before its cancellation remains unknown! The incessant changes of set of courses/subjects almost every year to archaic and unsustainable ones have been appalling. Admit it or not, the benefits of poor quality education and fake certificates apart from being immediate to the beneficiaries and easily accepted by their cohort of corrupt minds usually spread beyond the seekers parochial perspectives. As a result, Nigeria has failed to make significant progress in formulating global educational policies since independence due to poor

leadership. Poor leadership has been a major hindrance to the realization of the country's potentials in the educational sector. Thus, the inability to improve education in Nigeria through adequate funding and other logistics has increased the level of illiteracy and made daily living a more difficult struggle. People have not only become helpless, but do not have the wherewithal to significantly improve the quality of education and the life they live (Chukwu, 2021).

The acquisition of school certificates and higher degrees is not necessarily associated with an improved ability to undertake productive work. If it were not so, most graduates and school leavers would not have been involved in most of the terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency, armed robbery, yahoo-plus ravaging the entire landscape of Nigeria. Therefore as the country's educational policies gallop into the abyss, there has been the persistent multiplication of insurgents, bandits, kidnappers, armed robbers, Unknown gunmen and a whole lot of miscreants threatening the social security in the country.

3.5. The essence of teachers in the improvement of education for tomorrow's needs

In as much as there is an urgent need to improve the quality of education in the country, the quality of the teachers/lecturers is as important as providing adequate funds for the educational sector. The most important element in any educational programme is the teacher. Substantiating, the National Council for Teachers Education, NCTE (1998) stated that teachers are principally accountable for the improvement of quality of education at any stage in the country. It was in line with this that the NPE 2004 emphasized on teachers' education as the foundation for quality education at all level of learning. Evidently, teachers are very significant to achieving quality education at all levels. In view of this, it is incontestable that the necessity to build a new employable and productive society for Nigerian youths through quality education is dependent on having the right teachers' education. Going by this, it is clear that teachers are made and not born as wrongly upheld in some quarters. No individual was born with the necessary skills; everyone was trained to possess pedagogical skills to transfer knowledge to the learner. Since the quality of pupils, students and graduates are a direct reflection of the quality of teachers, the affiliation of the National Teachers' Institute to a University is a good development, but the instructors must be thoroughly supervised in the training and retraining of teachers to impart current knowledge cannot be over emphasized.

Apart from the foregoing, teachers without the requisite facilities/infrastructure for academic research and development will not improve the low quality of education. Hiring poorly equipped personnel, limited access to academic collaborations, illegal fees and the embezzlement of available funds have among others been identified as the basis for the poor quality of education. The absence of these have clearly manifested in the poor quality of school leavers /graduates across the country. Unfortunately, government does not believe that quality education is a powerful change agent needed to produce individuals of appropriate quality, skills, and attitudes. Notwithstanding, it is an undeniable fact that Academic research is the cornerstone of meaningful education in our universities. What could really be the reason the poor state of education at all levels in a country, a country so richly endowed in both natural and human resources? First, the budget for the educational sector is abysmally low. It is less than 10% instead of the required 26% as prescribed by UNESCO. The consequences of poor funding has manifested in the following:(a)Poor quality of personnel (b)Limited access to academic collaborations(c)Limited resources to power research and development (d)Unemployable graduates (e)Curricula that is non-compliant(f)Politics and militarization of institutions of education, and(e)Embezzlement of funding meant for education, to name but a few.

In the "Special Report on Education," the World Bank clearly delineates the significance of education. First, education is a basic human need because people need education to acquire a broad base of

knowledge, attitude, values and skills on which they can build a better life. Thus, education enhances people's ability to learn, adapt to social and cultural activities. Thus, the impact of education on the lives in Nigeria reveal that it has positive effects socially, culturally, politically and economically, as the single most determining factor improving the lives of people since it is generally agreed that life is about change through learning and opportunities for the learner, the opportunities people are exposed to determine the kind of change they will experience. In all this, there can be little doubt that education is the key to the development of a people's ability to manage and induce change whilst facing the challenges of making choices and of increasing the range of choices will facilitate the emergence of a functional and safer Nigerian society that will throw up the right kind of leaders. Agreeing with this, the thought of one of the first leaders in post-colonial Africa is important. President Nyerere (1967), in one of his seminal papers on "Education for self-reliance" remarked:

. . . . We have not until now questioned the basic system of education which we took over at the time of independence. We have never done that because we have never thought about education except in terms of obtaining teachers, engineers, administrators, etc. Individually and collectively we have in practice thought of education as training for the skills required earning high salaries in the modern sector of our economy. It is now time that we looked again at the justification for a poor society like ours spending almost 20 per cent of its Government revenues on providing education for its children and young people, and begin to consider what that education should be doing. . . The educational systems in different kinds of societies in the world have been, and are, very different in organization and in content. They are different because the societies providing the education are different, and because education, whether it be formal or informal, has a purpose. That purpose is to transmit from one generation to the next, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development (Nyerere, 1967:3).

4. Conclusion

Education is the most significant means of change in the world. It is a thorough process that involves the improvement of the entire society. Besides, it is through education that the human resource capacity of a country like Nigeria can be transformed to create a new employable and productive society. This change being canvassed here is one that inculcates achievement motivation. In their submission, Abu & Ogehenekohwo (2010) argue that the effectiveness of a country's educational system is often times an indicator of the strength and vitality of the country. Further they contended that empowering the next generation with knowledge and skills to create a life of success and independence is best achieved through a strong system of education within the society. There is no doubt that educational policies change in different countries develops over time to meet desired goals. Thus, through improving the quality of education, more idealistic goals will be pursued to pave way for graduating employable youths who will increase productivity to the employers' delight.

5. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion thereof, the following are the recommendations put forward to pave way to create a new employable and productive society through quality education.

1. Government should take practical and urgent steps to address the poor state of education in the country. Otherwise, Nigeria risks of being left further behind by the rest of the world. In a nutshell, collaboration with industries despite the negative state of education in the country should be encouraged to grow and more importantly private industry should be more vocal on issues of education and employment.
2. In the bid to rescue the country's educational sector, teachers/lecturers must be at the pivot, if the country hopes to reach that point of unspoiled paradise. It is not just enough offering scholarships to pupils/students, equipping libraries and developing the reading culture amongst the younger generation. The success of this depends the training and retraining teachers receive. In essence, teachers' sagging spirit must be lifted, and improved upon so that the long suffering, long-neglected and long despised toilers in the country's educational vineyard to meet international standards.
3. Since government should redouble her efforts to improve the country's education, especially by incorporating STEEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine) into the educational policy. So, all efforts should be directed to ensuring that the country catches up faster in STEEM so that it will be comprehensive, total, holistic and futuristic.
4. Government should convoke a colloquium on education that will give the country a realistic idea of how low the educational standard has dipped. Through this, the country can realistically be in a position to formulate policies to save the country's education from the jaws of decay. In addition, the government should redesign the educational curricula with great commitment and will.
5. All efforts should be directed to ensure Nigerian education policy is overhauled completely through proper legislation and its effective implementation. Legislations should be made taking into account the regional diversities of each state. The masses should be made aware of the new developments. Further, government should continue to provide enabling environment to ensure macro-economic stability to encourage increased investment in the educational advancement by both individuals and private sectors.
6. Regular closure of tertiary institutions due to strikes, cult activities, and a host of other factors should be addressed by the relevant authorities. Government should expand institutional capacity by strengthening the infrastructure of educational institutions to produce quality manpower. Above all, teachers /lecturers salaries and improved working condition in educational institutions should be accorded high priority by the government as this will not only ginger them into going extra mile, but putting their very best.

Conflict of interest

The Author does not have any conflict of interest as far this study is concerned.

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