Improving Quality Educational Administration and Management for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Focusing on how to improve the quality of educational administration and management for sustainable national development in Nigeria, the study implicated the fact that once quality education is assured, the outcome of it is development. Discussion in the paper pointed out the fact that school administrators and managers have a lot to do for schools to achieve their goal of ensuring quality education. It is however noted in tertiary institutions that despite accreditation instituted they are found wanting in the area of ensuring improved quality education and hence stunted development observed over the years. Corruption and examination malpractice are identified to be rubbishing every efforts made towards attainment of improved quality education that could guarantee sustained national development in Nigeria. It was recommended that accreditation exercise in tertiary institutions be strengthened and as well extended to primary and secondary schools to help in instilling consciousness on the managers and other stake holders. That school managers or administrators should be monitored to ensure that they faithfully carry out their statutory duties and that concerted efforts should be made by school proprietors, managers, teachers, parents and the society to curb corruption and examination malpractice in schools.

Key Words: *Quality Education, Sustainable Development, Educational Administration, Educational Management, Educational Managers*

Introduction

Nobody is tired of listening to the same song being sang all the time in Nigeria because it is the only available music. More than 60% of conference themes in Nigeria for about a decade now have centred on the issue of 'quality education' and 'sustainable national development'. Since we have not attained the kind of quality education that we desired and believe could bring about national development that could be sustained, the theme for this conference is very much in order. This time around we have decided to focus our attention on *improving quality education for sustainable development in Nigeria*. This again has the understanding that before now the quality of education that the country could offer cannot bring about sustainable development. *Sustainability* therefore has become a key word in this paper. Nigeria has taken a number of giant

steps and made some rapid progress before now and of which everybody including non-Nigerians know that such development is hanging on pseudo legs and so could never be sustained. For instance, in the 70s and 80s Nigeria had depended heavily on expert rates for virtually everything including teachers in secondary and tertiary institutions which certainly could be not sustained either due to finance or political reason. The windfall from sudden rise in oil prize due to war and or problems in certain parts of the globe that is enjoyed sometimes is something we cannot imagine it being sustained. And now, we cannot boast of a sustained weather for the farmers that produce the food that we eat because of ozone layer depletion that is affecting almost everything across the globe including the weather (though some may argue that weather is controlled by nature). One can only sustain what is available. Therefore one can only talk of sustaining quality education in Nigeria if it exists. The question therefore is, do we have quality education in Nigeria? I guess the organisers of this conference know that the answer to

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The question is not affirmative and thus the inclusion of a qualifying adjective - *improving*. We are therefore faced with the issue *of improving the quality of educational administration and management and* then *sustain it*. It is agreed in this paper that we have double job to do - improving and sustaining.

The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools is highly desired in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. The following according to Adegbesan (2010) are the major needs of quality assurance in our education system in Nigeria:

(i) to serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education,

(ii) to ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels,

(iii) to assist in monitoring and supervision of education,

(iv) to determine the quality of the teacher input,

(v) to determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education, and

(vi) to determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control

(vii) it would ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized.

Development in all sectors of Nigerian economy is agreed in this paper to be tied to development in education. The implication is that no matter how the nation seems to be advancing in commerce, science and technology, information and communication technology and so on, if education is out of it, it could mean that the success or development is temporary, depending on borrowed skills, etc which definitely will not last. At the moment the poverty index of the nation, the nature and output of school leavers, facilities available in schools at all levels, etc are all indicating that unless corrective measures are taken now, what the future holds as far as education and subsequently development for Nigeria could be catastrophic. The paper therefore is a wakeup call to address the issue of improving quality of education in Nigeria and how it could certainly bring about sustained national development in all ramifications.

Quality Assurance and Educational Administration and Management Development in Nigeria

It is put on note that the concern for quality has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education in Nigeria. Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) see quality as the total of the features of a process, product or service on its performance, in 'customers' or clients' perception of that performance. It is not just a feature of a finished product or services but involves a focus on internal processes and outputs and includes the reduction of wasted and the improvement or productivity. Taking a cue from the above definition, Fadokun (2005) characterized quality by three interrelated and interdependent strands; (i) Efficiency in the meeting of its goals, (ii) Relevance to human and environmental conditions and needs, (iii) Something more" that is the exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and encouragement of creativity.

Further, with regards to education, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) views quality from different perspectives. The first is from the internal criteria of the system such as profile expiration and the external criteria which are the fitness and relevance of such education to its environment. Arikewuyo (2004) judged quality in education by both its ability to enable the students perform well in standard examinations and relevance to the needs of the students, community, and the society as a whole. He finally concluded that quality serves as determination of gradations based on standard of excellence beneath which a mark of inferiority is imposed or adduced and above which grades of superiority are defined. However, quality assurance is related to quality control, but its functions in a rather proactive manner in the sense that quality control serves as series of operational techniques and activities used to ensure that requirements are met. While, quality assurance goes beyond that and this is because it extends the focus from outcomes or outputs to the process which produces them. Similarly, Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) argue that, quality assurance is related to accountability both of which are concerned with maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational systems and services in relation to their contexts, of their missions and their stated objectives. In his own definitions, Ehindero (2004) says quality assurance focused on the:

(i)   Learners entry behaviours, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning,

(ii)   The teacher entry qualification, values, pedagogic stalls, professional preparedness, subject background, philosophical orientation, etc,

(iii)   The teaching / learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment,

(iv)   The outcomes, which are defined for different levels in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes including appropriate and relevant instruments to assess these objectives.

In attempting to bring all definitions together, Fadokun (2005) seems to sum the definition of quality assurance in education as a programmed, an institution or a whole education system. By implication, quality assurance is all these attitudes, objectives, actions and procedures that through their existence and use, and together with quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each programme. According to Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2004), National Educational Quality Assurance Policy in Nigeria is concerned with 8 components of quality standards itemized as:

1.   learner achievement and standards;

2.   learners' welfare and participation;
3.   care guidance and support;
4.   leadership and management;
5.   school community relationship;
6.   learning environment;
7.   teaching and learning;
8.   curriculum and other activities

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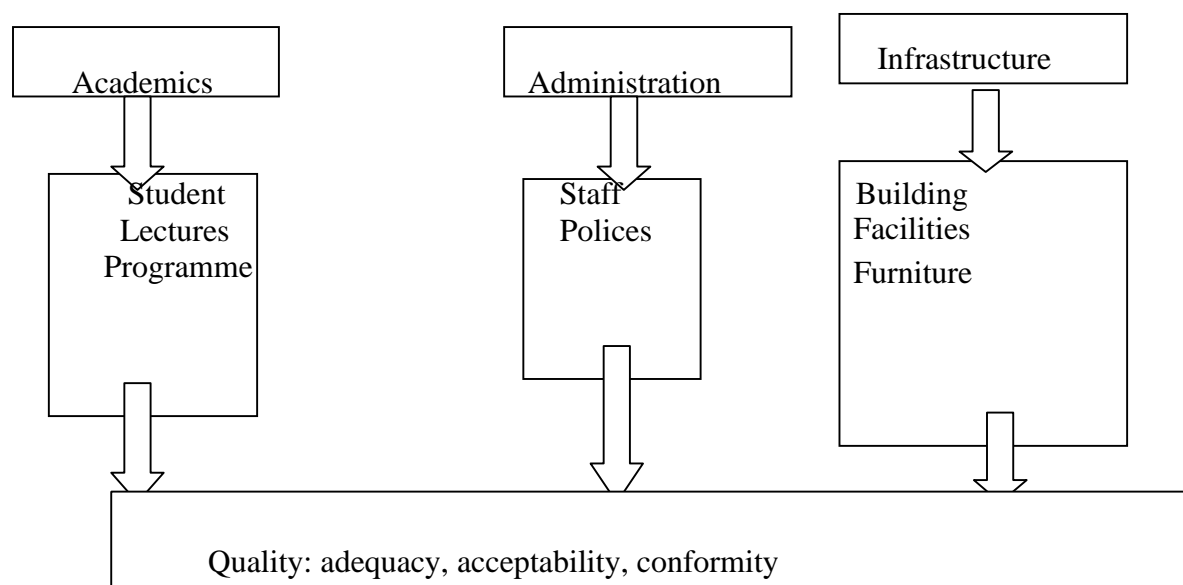
Quality here can be globally seen as the worth, goodness, acceptability, strength, taste, durability, etc of something. All these quality constructs have diverse meanings that call for an in-depth understanding of quality assurance. According to Okebukola as cited in Bandele (2011), quality assurance is an umbrella concept designed to improve the quality of infant, process and output of the education system. It is a label for the process of ensuring for purpose. Quality assurance is amplified here to include academic, administration and infrastructural quality assurance. Detailed schematic representation of the segments sectors of institutions college quality is presented in Figure 1.

Figure1: Relationship among dimensions of quality assurance (Source: Bandele, 2011)

A major problem in Nigeria is the proliferation of substandard goods and services due to corruption. It is a common thing to pay for services that are never enjoyed because there is no quality assurance measure put in place (Kolawole, 2011). Most buildings under construction have collapsed while consumers have paid for sub-standard goods such as drugs, electrical appliances, cables, drinks and services. The implication of some of these things is that the health of the people is compromised, huge sum of money is lost annually and the country is portrayed in negative light in the eyes of our neighbours who use the country as a dumping ground (Kolawole, 2011).

It is still fresh in people's memory that in 1996 the NNPC imported adulterated fuel into the country. The battle that the NADFAC has waged against the importers of low quality drugs has gone a long way to clean up the pharmaceutical companies and improve the quality of health delivery in the country. These are indications of what can happen when quality assurance agents are not allowed to work efficiently. According to Kolawole (2011) the inevitability of quality assurance mechanism in development has been highlighted by scholars in the field of development and they have thus indicated that quality assurance is the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a service, facility or project with a view to maximising the probability that minimum standards or quality are being attained by the production process (Almeida, Alvaro & Meria, 2007). According to them, quality assurance helps to ensure that mistakes are eliminated while the product or service is made suitable for the intended purpose. The realisation that quality assurance drives improvement and establishes a standard of behaviour led to the suggestion of four critical elements that must be emphasised in underlying the importance of quality assurance in development. The elements according to Kolawole (2011) are:

(i) control of job management, adequate processes, performance and integrity criteria
and identification of records;

ii) Competence in the area of knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications; iii) personnel integrity, confidence, organisational culture, motivation, team-spirit, and quality relationships;

iv) Adequate infrastructure to promote functionality (Almeida, Alvaro & Meria
(2007).

Gboyega (2003) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. Naomi (1995) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life (Naomi, 1995). Chrisman as cited in Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) views development as a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the wellbeing of people are generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life including education.

The high level of development that is needed to drive Nigeria as a country in the 21st Century cuts across various fields of endeavour. The level of development that we desire in the country can be attained when adequate security has been put in place and quality assurance is ensured (Bandele, 2011). This is because these twin ideas, security and quality assurance are a 'sin quo non' to promoting development in the country. While it is being argued that Nigeria can develop to the fullest if it makes efforts to promote the security well-being of its people and makes laws that will guarantee quality assurance in whatsoever that is done, the corollary is true and it is that there can be no development where there is no security and quality assurance mechanism.

Educational Administrators and Managers as Quality Assurance Agents in Nigeria's Education System

According to Adegbesan (2010), the roles of educational managers range from administrative to professional. That professional staff in the education industry should be concerned about how they manage the educational resources allocated to them for use as well as the control of their schools and students. The teacher's managerial functions by the same token should go beyond those of the beginning classroom teacher. The author further added that the teacher should be responsible not only to himself and his pupils but also to other staff members and their pupils. Not only that, he is faced with the responsibility of determining the priorities of management and the management style to be used for achieving qualitative educational results.

Arikewuyo (2004) had listed the tasks which must be done by education managers in order to have a qualitative education. These include:

1. Measurement and standardization of academic attainments.
2. Evaluation of quality of work during supervision,
3. Use of competent teachers and administrative /supervisory personnel.
4. Dissemination of information to teachers and students,
5. Use of educational technologies with a view to increasing the efficiency of teaching,

6. New research and development to invigorate all educational activities.
7. Guidance and counselling.
8. Placing students in suitable employment.
9. Efficient management of all education.

However, educational managers are classified by their functions, that is, by the role they play in their position as managers. To fulfil the purpose of quality assurance in Nigerian education system, there is need to identify educational management as a body of systemized knowledge, based on general principles which are certifiable in terms of school of practice. Ogunsaju (2006) argues that, a school manager may manage with good or bad judgment, with great or little experience, with exemplary or undesirable character traits. Educational managers ought to function for quality assurance in our education systems and therefore their practices may be similar in all kinds of schools. These practices are:

1. Planning: This is an essential aspect of good management. It requires the ability of the manager to look ahead and be able to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system.

2. Organizing: This is the ability of the managers to create structural work. That is, he should focus attention on the structure and process of allocating tasks to achieve common objectives.

3. Staffing: This is another essential role of educational managers. It requires his ability to search for the right people and to place them on the right job both in quality and quantity which would reflect their experience and capability for the school objectives to be achieved.

4. Motivating: This is the energizing force behind all other activities of educational managers. Managers should know how to keep good morals of their workers in order to obtain maximum

efficiency and effectiveness from them. This includes constant payment of salaries and other emoluments needed for their welfare.

5.   Evaluating: This is the ability of managers to assess and know the outcome of the school aims and objectives. He ensures that set down goals and objectives are achieved through quality control system which includes:

(a) An effective quality school system,

(b) Periodic audit of the operation of the system,

(c) Periodic review of the school system to ensure it meets changing requirements (Ogunsaju, 2006).

Ogunsaju (2006) however, concluded that, for a school manager to perform his roles effectively in assuring quality in the school, he should be able to play these parts: be a listener, an encourager, a dissuader, a reporter, a watcher, a judge, a critic, a decision taker and on occasion a model. The question therefore is, how can quality education be attained despite all these especially at the tertiary institutions?
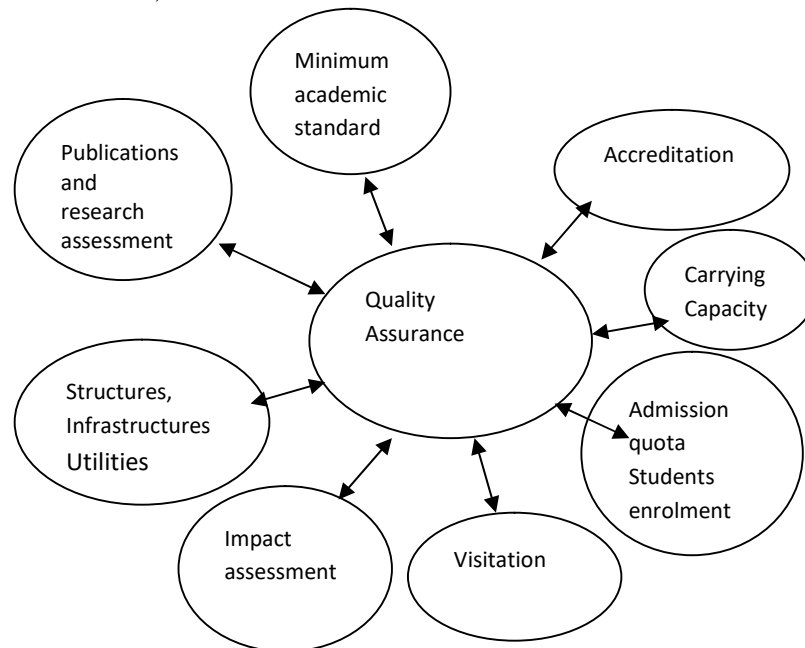
Factors of Quality Assurance towards Sustainable Development in Nigeria

It is glaring that the philosophical objectives of quality assurance are the decision of educational programme to train individuals to achieve competence in a given area of industrial production function. The focus of which, is to prevent problems, strengthen organizational systems and continually improving performance (Oyebade, Oladipo & Adetoro, n.d). Thus, quality assurance is the ability of educational institutions to meet the need of the use of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products. With this, the quality of an academic programme becomes a universal concern. This is because the product of one tertiary institution becomes another employee in another tertiary institution   or   other culture's industrial   setting. Consequently, quality assurance has become an internationalized concept. The NUC reported the first attempt at universalization of quality assurance in higher education across the globe in 2004. The study ranked the universities in terms of their productive functions, and the relative efforts on their product. No African universities were ranked, including Nigeria. Since this development, the NUC has heightened its efforts in standardizing the quality of university education in Nigeria. To establish and maintain high quality standards, the universities and the NUC have a shared responsibility in addressing the following key areas, according to Adedipe (2007).

1. Minimum academic standard.

2. Accreditation

3. Carrying capacity and admission quota

4. Visitation

5. Impact assessment

6. Research and development

7. Publications and research assessment

8. Structures, infrastructures and utilities

These conditions apply to colleges of education and polytechnics.

1.   Minimum academic standards form the baseline for entrenching quality tertiary education, since it prescribes a profile of curriculum, human resources, structures, infrastructures, equipment and associated facilities required for establishing, governing and managing the institution.

2.   Accreditation is the process by which programmes are evaluated against set minimum academic standard and institutions comprehensive academic research and development activities are evaluated against prescribed criteria (including self-visioned and self-produced strategic plan(refer to Figure 2 for details).

Figure 2: Factors of Quality assurance towards sustainable development in Nigeria adapted from Adedipe (2007)

3.   Carrying capacity of an institution is the maximum number of students that the institution can sustain for qualitative education based on available human and material resources.

4.   Visitation to institutions is a statutory requirement that empowers the proprietor to ascertain the well-being of the institution.

5.   Impact assessment is a specialized form of evaluation aimed at finding out if the core expectations of the establishment of a particular institution are being met.

6.   Research is the driving force for human development as globally determined; such research should be evidenced by publications.

7.   Structures, infrastructures and utilities are essential driving force for qualitative productivity in any organization, particularly in the university system.

However, Baldwin as cited by Oyebande, Oladipo and Adetoro (n.d) in his own view, highlighted the following as quality assurance checklist:

• Institution /faculty mission and objectives

• Teaching programmes

• Students selection

• Course structure and documentation

• Teaching arrangement

• Postgraduate supervision where applicable

• Students

• Support

• Assessment / evaluation

• Grievance procedures

• Monitoring of outcomes

• Research and development

• Community service

• Staffing issues

• Infrastructure / resources

• Governance

Makoju, Nwangwu, Abolade and Newton (2004) observed that the Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) concept/practice is considered as one of the cornerstones of quality assurance and one way of improving the quality of education. Quality assurance in this context refers to the monitoring and evaluation of performance of the various levels of the education system in achieving the specific goals at each level and overall objectives of the system.

Quality and Development
At school level, corruption and examination malpractice is an event on a continuum. At one end is corruption very prominent while the other end is examination malpractice whereas in the middle is a blend of both. According to Ayobami (2011) corruption is a social problem that has interested many scholars. Ruzindana as cited in Ayobami (2011) asserts that corruption in Africa is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact. He also identified the types of corruption in Africa as bribery, private gain, and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners (called ghost workers). The dishonest and illegal behaviour exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption. According to the ICPC Act (section 2), corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise). Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within contemporary societies (Ayobami, 2011). It usually involves more than one party. It takes a form of an organized crime. At times, an organization can be established on corruption to beget corruption. Gbenga as cited in Ayobami (2011) asserts that corruption is contagious. According to the perception index of Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 144th out of the 146th countries, beating Bangladesh and Haiti to last position. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences. It is now dawning on the Nigerian public

that the so-called private enterprise and legislators are free from scrutiny, and governors claim to be immune. Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, and misuse of public offices, positions, and privileges, embezzlement of public funds, public books, publications, documents, valuable security, and accounts. Corruption can be systematic in nature and affect the whole life of an organization or society like school.

Within the educational sector in Nigeria, especially from secondary to university levels, corruption is very pervasive, and most of which is not in the public eye. Corruption in education according to Ayobami (2011) includes: Parents are known to have used unorthodox means to influence their children's or wards' admission to federal government secondary schools, commonly referred to as unity schools. A high JAMB score is critical for admission into the university in Nigeria, and this has led to cheating by some students and parents. There are expensive coaching centres that charge exorbitant fees to guarantee a minimum score of 300 in the JAMB score, which is been orchestrated by coaching centres through aiding and abetting cheating in the JAMB examination with the connivance of JAMB officials. At a lower level students or pupils even follow their teacher to do farm work so as to guarantee a good grade in his/her examination.

Within the university system, some students resort to "sorting" (finding ways of purchasing of high and unmerited mark from a lecturer in order to enhance the grade in their final examination). Such students will then say they have gone into the university and having what they have not worked for. Lecturers and students print fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees, and some unsuspecting students are usually discovered by the audit department.

In Nigeria, the last two decades have witnessed an alarming rate of increase in incidents of examination misconduct. Evidences abound of increasing involvement in examination malpractice by students, teachers and parents (Vanguard, 2005; Weekend Pointer, 2005; Daily Independent, 2004). The incidence of examination malpractice has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system that there is no one form of sharp practice or the other. The incidences of examination malpractice are common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating (Ayobami, 2011). Although efforts seem to be yielding some results, yet incidences of examination malpractice still feature prominently in the school system. In 2006, the Federal Ministry of Education blacklisted and derecognized 324 secondary schools across the nation as centres for conducting public examinations from 2007 to 2010.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the discussion made so far, to ensure an improved quality education, quality assurance measures have to be put in place. This will involve school administrators and managers with a lot of implications for all levels of educational institutions in Nigeria with particular emphasis on tertiary level. It is also the conviction of the paper that development is simply a product of quality education system. However, there is doubt as to whether the problem of Nigeria is really quality education and development rather than corruption and examination malpractice. The paper concludes that discussion of quality and development without putting in perspective what corruption and examination malpractice could do may result in efforts in futility.

As a way forward a suggestion is made to the effect that issue of accreditations in tertiary institutions should be strengthened. This is because a lot is seen each time being put in place practically as the people come around on inspection. Notwithstanding a monitoring group should

ensure that window dressing is uncovered and punished while it is suggested that at the same time that accreditation be introduced as quality assurance strategy at the primary and secondary school levels.

The school administrators and managers are seen to be custodians of policy, implementation and monitoring; their failure to do or not to do what is expected of them could make or mar schools. They should be monitored to ensure that they faithfully carry out their statutory duties.

Though appears unrelated, it was made clear that corruption and examination malpractice are silent killers of quality and development. That concerted efforts should be made by school proprietors, managers, teachers, parents and the society to curb corruption and exam malpractice in schools.

Other recommendations include:

(i)   Education curriculum and standards of education in Nigeria should be reviewed to reflect the needs and aspiration of the society.

(ii)   There is need to harmonize the internal and external criteria of quality assurance raising standard of excellence of the education systems.

(iii)   There is need to improve or employ modern teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. (iv) A more developed and reformed curriculum content is highly desirable. There is also the need for curriculum evaluation to allow innovations and new techniques/ methods to be incorporated.

(v) Effective supervisory system should be injected into the system.

(vi)   Full professionalization of teaching in the country to set a standard under which a qualified and well trained teacher must operate is highly imperative.

(vii)   Government should endeavour to properly fund education institutions in the country to meet the expectations of the society.

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