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REVIVING EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Education has been identified as a critical agent in the development of a modern society because it plays a pivotal role in training and building human capacity for the nation. It is argued “as information grows exponentially, and its incorporation in the production process becomes increasing complex, the ability to absorb, and adapt new knowledge is determined by the nature, quality and quantity of the education system”. Nigerian government played the ‘Ostrich’ while its educational system headed for a total collapse. This paper in a quest to examining the issues pertaining to the decay, finds poor funding, limited access to good education, obsolete curricula, brain drain, corruption, incessant University strikes, examination malpractice, inept leadership, and poor budgetary allocation to education as part of the problem. Our simple regression findings show a positive relationship between

education, health and economic growth. Therefore, except the system is revived and revamped, it will be a mirage for the country to catch up with the global competitiveness. As a way forward, Government must increase funding, tackle corruption and improve infrastructure. Excellence must be rewarded and indigenous R&D improved. They must stem the tide of brain drain by creating environment for good education.

Keywords

Education, Reviving, Economic Growth, Problem, and Prospects

1. Introduction

Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, she has made frantic efforts to develop and sustain the type of education bequeathed to her by the British colonial authority. The first National Development planning, 1962-1968, incorporated educational development as essential in changing the economy for better. Though the educational system Nigeria inherited was highly skewed (bias towards over reliance on programmes that are academic oriented (rather than vocational, technical oriented curricula), yet government invested massively to improve it (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012). No wonder foreign nationals were attracted to Nigerian universities both students and expatriate teachers in the early days. Thus, the products of Nigerian institutions then were highly rated globally, especially among the commonwealth nations in the 1960s (Jones-Esan, 2009).

Education is said to be positively related to economic growth as the findings of (Olulu et al 2014; Afolabi and Loto, 2012) show in the case of Nigeria. Quality manpower therefore, is derived from standard education and it is the key for economic growth. Eboh and Uma 2009, Uma and Eboh, 2013 pointed out that the quality of manpower is a sine qua non for good governance. As information grows exponentially, and as its incorporation in the production process becomes increasingly complex, the ability to assimilate, acquire, adopt and adapt new knowledge becomes an important determinant of growth (Isola, 2002). Regrettably, the good thing (in terms of education) Nigerian inherited from the West has been allowed to decay because of many years of neglect.

Consequently, with time Nigeria's educational system began to suffer from policy inconsistencies and neglect that tends to rubbish the lofty ideals of the fore fathers, to the extent that it will really take some time to correct. Notwithstanding, the problem of education are redeemable problems, in other words, they are creations of the polity. For example, it is in

a bid to satisfy ethnic divide and religious sentiments that the principles of state of origin, quota, and catchment were entrenched as a model to admit students into tertiary institutions. All these breed compromise standard that produces mediocre students.

2. Problem Statement

Okigbo (1992), put a time scale on the problem of education with the political crises of 1964-1966 as origin. The civil war that followed in 1967, the oil boom, the explosion of numbers in student population and limited number of institutions, the military incursion, the low cost recovery ratio for higher education, the total secularization of education at the primary and secondary school levels all served to undermine standards as they “recalibrated” our scale of values. Other factors according to (Adelowokan, 2012; Falola, 2004; Aluede, *et al.*, 2012; Edukugho, 2011) include, lack of objectivity and fairness, academic offences exemplified by “plagiarism, sexual harassment of female students, upgrading or lowering of grades, fraud, sorting, un-conducive learning environment, congested class rooms, over-crowded laboratories (where they exist), ill-motivated lecturers, and incessant strikes.

Most of what we have listed above may be symptoms, and expressions of a fundamental problem. Our position in this paper is that the underlying problem was the undue influence given to ethnic and religious divide on one hand, and the over dependence on oil money. As oil money (petrodollar) began to flow into Nigeria, little attention was given to education. School and schooling was no longer attractive as money was in ‘abundance’ everywhere. Nigeria entered into what economists refer to as “Dutch Disease”. And the outcome was near total collapse of the system, and massive failures in virtually all forms of examinations. To rekindle hope in the industry therefore, demands reviving and revamping it.

The main focus of this paper therefore is to examine and discuss the teething problems associated with educational development in Nigeria and forward possible ideas to solving them or making them better. As a way of approach, we shall look at the stylized facts about education in Nigeria (that is a descriptive survey) and a literature review and a statistical inference to enable us establish the importance of expenditure on education and economic growth; and finally advancing educational prospects and conclusion.

3. Stylized Facts of Education in Nigeria

The Ashby commission of 1959 conducted investigation into Nigeria's need in the field of education especially at the primary and post primary levels. It discovered a lot of imbalances and lapses in policies, curricula, facilities and the imbalance between levels of the different regions (because the North was far behind the south) in terms of quality of institutions and their products (Agi and Adiele, 2009). Despite the recommendations of the commission, at independence in 1960, Nigeria's education systems was still characterized with lack of uniformity in curriculum, both in content and policy, regional imbalances in access and attainment, inadequate high level manpower, school curriculum lacking in science and technology, inadequate provision of tertiary level, shortage of qualified teachers, and lack of truly national education policy etc.

It's also worthy of note that they were other commissions and policy thrust after Ashby for, example: The universal free primary education-1976, National policy on education – 1977, The adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system – 1988, The 9-3-4 system, Universal basic education scheme-1999, The national policy on education – 2004 (that emphasizes continuous assessment at all levels), and The national universities commission (NUC) was established in 1962 after the Ashby commission Report of 1959. We must admit that in the last three years there has been little improvement in the stride to enhance education.

Despite all these commissions and policy thrust, the educational system is still saddled with steady deterioration that we want to mention but a few bellow:

- (a) **Poor funding.** Nigeria has maintained low budgetary allocation to the education sector. There is no way the sector can improve beyond the allocation because the neglect runs through the very fabric of its existence.
- (b) **Paper qualification.** Over emphasizes on paper qualification has reinforced and heightened the level of mediocrity of Nigerians graduates. For over four decades, the Nigerian educational system has witnessed some bias. Towards over reliance on educational programme that places little emphasis on technical skill. An ill-trained, unskilled, unhealthy labour force, cannot contribute to or benefit from the modern world, such scholarship have lost intellectual appeal in the modern world.
- (c) **Lack of motivation.** Teacher/lecturer problem starred, impoverished, and ill-motivated teacher/ lecturer would certainly not give his/her best to the system. This deepens the quality of school form-outs, and gives room for other vices that both the teachers and students indulge in examination malpractices, sorting; extortion of money from students etc.

- (d) **Fading reading habit.** It is possible today to find an economics graduate in Nigeria who has not read principles of economics by Paul Samuelson, or Mankiw, even Jhingan. The basic interest of most students now is to have the paper (certificate) without reading rather they can spend long hours browsing and charting in the internet and spend few minutes to read for the academic works.
- (e) **Cult and cultism in most universities:** The activities of cult groups have brought school calendar to a health. The cult boys decide when the exam would be set and would determine the score that should be given to them. Any position of the school contrary will lead to violent disruption of the academic system.
- (f) **Policy inconsistencies.** The copy and paste policy has not helped the system. Policy makers are quick to copy a programme run in another country without fully understanding how that system operates. And no sooner that policy is introduced, it will crash. The quota system as practiced in Nigeria is absurd. There is no standard in Nigeria's unity school. If you are the best from your state and you only scored 1% in the exam you will be admitted even where some people that score 80% from another state could not, because they have filled their quota. Brilliant children are therefore sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity.
- (g) **Religion.** Nigeria is highly divided on religious line such that some policies must first be subjected to faith of the leader at a time before it is accepted no matter how important such policy may be. In the same manner good policies are reversed as government or rather religious interest's changes.
- (h) **Dutch Disease.** The prominence and dependence on oil revenue and the wasteful spending that follows it distorts the school system.
- (i) **Infrastructural decay.** To say the least many institutions are operating in schools with little or no facilities for sound academic learning.
- (j) **Corruption:** corruption breeds in every facet of the education chain- from policies to personnel, purchases.

4. Budget allocation to Education a Comparison

The essence of this tables and graphs is to bring out in pictorial form the nature and sources of the decay in education in Nigeria as illustrated above and its outcome.

Table 1: School Enrollment and Public Expenditure on Education (% & GDP)

| Country | % of Secondary School Enroll Population | Pupils per secondary school ratio | Tertiary enroll rate % of age group | Public expenditure on education % of GDP |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Nigeria | 44 | 33 | 6 | 0.6 |
| Ghana | 59 | 18 | 12 | 1.6 |
| Cameroon | 51 | 24 | 12 | 1.4 |
| Cote d'voire | 14 | 29 | 8 | 1.4 |
| Senegal | 42 | 27 | 8 | 1.4 |

Source: Education for all global monitoring report (2013) (National Bureau of statistics revised economic outlook 2012-2015)

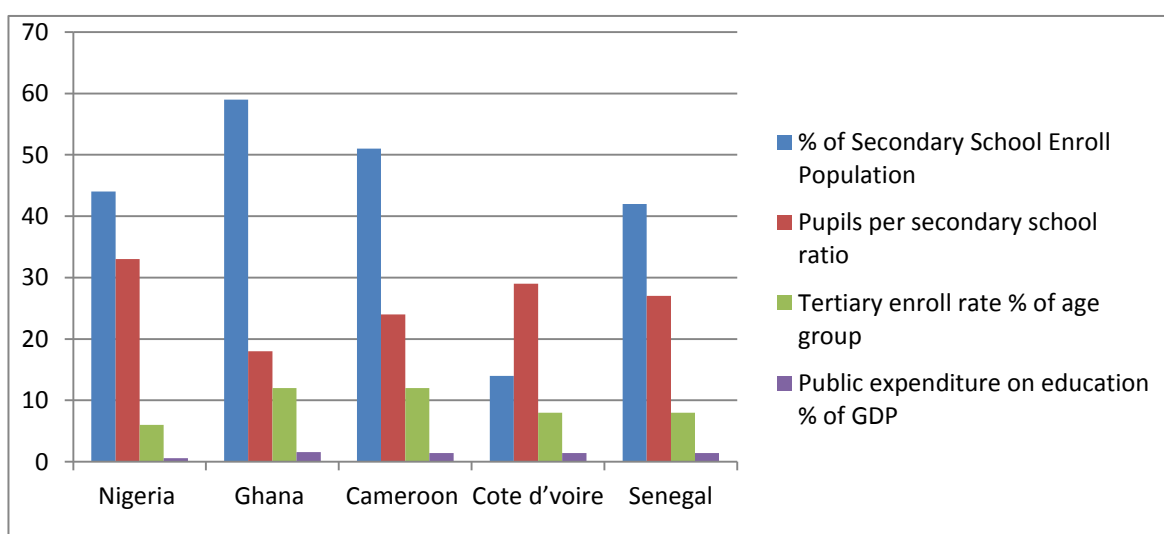


Figure 1: School Enrollment and Public Expenditure on Education (% & GDP)

Source: Education for all global monitoring report (2013) (National Bureau of statistics revised economic outlook 2012-2015)

Table 1 and Figure 1, is specifically chosen to rank Nigeria's expenditure on education in comparison with smaller West African countries. Nigeria has the resources, the manpower and the exposure to make reasonable budgetary allocation to education. The report show that in terms of secondary school enrolment for population Nigeria is 44, lower than Ghana and Cameroon; tertiary enrollment ratio Nigeria is 6, lower again than the rest of the West African countries. In particular, we see the public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, Nigeria is dismally poor at 0.6%, far less than the rest of the countries. This is disturbing and no doubt will affect the standard of education in the country.

Table 2: West African Examination Result (2010-2015) (5 Credits in English and Mathematics)

| Year | % students who score credits in 5 subjects including English/Maths |
|------|--|
| 2010 | 23.36% |
| 2011 | 30.9% |
| 2012 | 38.81% |
| 2013 | 36.57% |
| 2014 | 31.28% |
| 2015 | 38.68% |

Source: Online report of WAEC Result (2016)

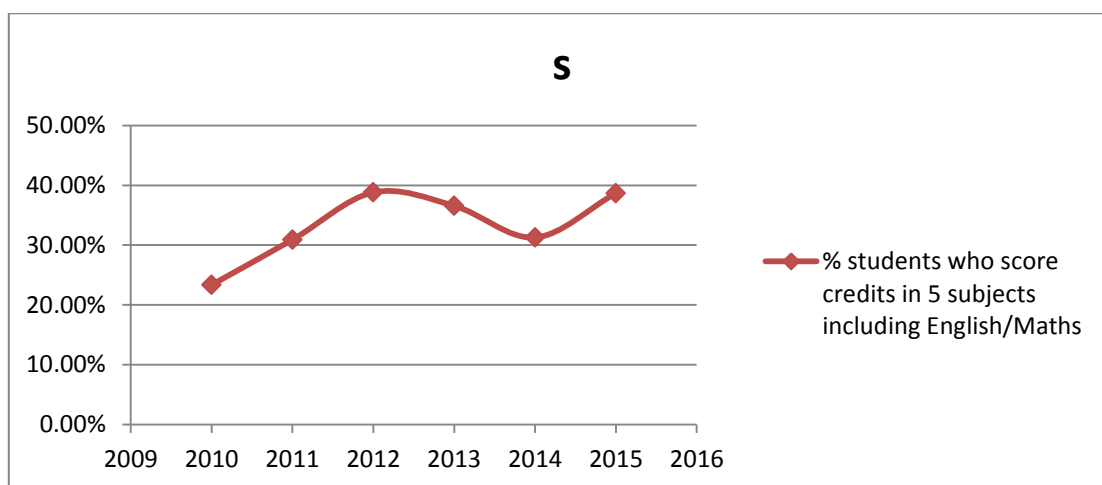


Figure 2: West African Examination Result (2010-2015) (5 Credits in English and Mathematics)

Source: Online report of WAEC Result (2016)

In Table 2 and Figure 2, we have another interesting challenge. To be admitted into any Nigerian University you must credit five subjects including English and Mathematics in the West African Examination council (WAEC) or National Examination Council (NECO). In the table above we see that in 2010, only 23.36% of the students obtained the preliminary qualification to enter into Nigerian university, in 2011, 30.9%, in 2012-38.81%, and in 2015 only 38.9%. This percentage of candidates that passed WAEC will obviously be less than the percentage that should have passed the joint admission matriculation board exam (JAMB). The implication is that for a long period of time in Nigeria, only an insignificant number of students are admitted into Nigerian universities and the rest become nuisance to the society and themselves. It is this company of drop-outs that reinforce the pressure on the system to bastardize it. Having seen the descriptive statistics, we shall turn to our methodology for a statistical inference on budget allocation to education in Nigeria.

5. A Brief Literature Review

In this literature review we are limiting ourselves to the relationships between educational funding, human capital and economic growth. Beginning with a cross-country study of per capita GDP growth during two periods (from 1965 to 1975 with 97 countries) Barro and Sala-I Martin, (1995), obtained the following findings: that educational attainment measured by average years of schooling is significantly correlated with subsequent growth although if the aggregate measure of educational attainment is decomposed by level of education, the impact of primary education remains largely insignificant. Again, public spending on education also has a significant positive effect on growth; a 1.5% increase of the ratio of public education spending to GDP during the period 1965-1975 would have raised the average growth rate during the same period by 3% per year.

In the study to examine the relationship between, human capital and economic growth (Anochiwa and Maduka 2014), using error correction model it was found that human capital is positively related to economic growth. The coefficient of human capital was positive and a one percent increase in human capital development will result to about 9% increase in growth of GDP. Okebukola (2008) in the assessment of high education participation rate (HEPR) of selected 15 countries, found that while some advanced countries such as USA, Spain and Haly operate at 64%, Japan stood at 50% while the lowest HEPR countries such as china and India were 10% but Nigeria was even below, operating at HEPR of 8.1%. It is believed that when adequate opportunity is made available to the people desirous of tertiary education, it is a way to discover latent potentialities and expansion of the economy.

In their study on OECD, Mankiw *et al* (1992) find that if human capital investment (as a share of GDP) is increased by a tenth, output per worker will rise by 6 percent; if investment in human capital is doubled, output per worker will eventually rise about 50 percent. Soho, Pravakar (2011) on India, using error-correction modeling, establishes a unidirectional causality form economic growth to education. Aghion et al., (2009), provide evidence to support the causal impact of education an economic growth in the United States. Barro (1991), find similar evidence in their studies on Nigeria. Their different result shows positive effect of education on economic growth. Conversely, Bils and Khenow (2000) find little evidence that initial schooling affects economic growth sufficiently and some studies even find negative coefficient on the level of human capital.

What is clear from both the theoretical and empirical literature is that good education and good health leads to good human capital growth, and human capital development is an essential ingredient to economic growth and development. Nigeria must close the gaps in its educational system to move forward.

6. Methodology

Secondary data (1970 – 2014) were also used in this research and these data were gotten from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin of December, 2014 and Nigeria Bureau of Statistic (NBS). In an attempt to establish empirical evidence on the impact of Federal Total Capital Expenditure on economic growth, and specifically on Education; Grossman-Helpman (1991) endogenous model and Darma (2014) were used to examine the relationship between education and economic growth. In our model real gross domestic product is a proxy for economic growth while expenditure on education is a proxy for human capital. The Grossman-Helpman model is depicted as $Y = K\alpha H^B (AL)^{1-\alpha-B}$. It suggests that a general empirical model of government capital expenditure in education on Nigeria's growth could be stated as:

$$RGDP = f (TOCE, EDU, HEALTH, EXR, UNEMP, PRINV, OPEN). \dots\dots\dots Eq 6.1$$

Equation 6.1 reads, the Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) is a function of Total Capital Expenditure (TOCE), Total Capital expenditure on education (EDU), (HEALTH) capital expenditure on health and other control variables -Exchange rate, private investment, trade openness and unemployment.

Model: The linearised version of equation (6.1) in natural log form is given as
 $\ln RGDP = \alpha + \beta_1 \ln Toce + \beta_2 \ln Edu + \beta_3 \ln Exr + \beta_4 \ln Unemp + \beta_5 \ln Open + \beta_6 \ln Prinv + \mu$.Eq

Table 3: Unit Root Test (Ordinary)

| Variables | ADF statistics | 1% Critical value | 5% Critical value | 10% Critical value | Prob | 1 st Diff |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Rgdp | -4.288515 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.0020 | 1 |
| Toce | -0.395581 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.8983 | 1 |
| Edu | -0.538039 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.8706 | 1 |
| Exr | -1.701608 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.4209 | 1 |
| Unemp | -0.876692 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.7826 | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|---|
| Open | -1.416881 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.5617 | 1 |
| Prinv | -2.338737 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.1667 | 1 |

Table 4: Unit Root Test (Levels)

| Variables | ADF statistics | 1% Critical value | 5% Critical value | 10% Critical value | Prob | 2 nd Diff |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Rgdp | -4.288515 | -3.653730 | -2.957110 | -2.617434 | 0.0020 | 1 st |
| Toce | -5.861615 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0000 | 2 |
| Edu | -5.888413 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0000 | 2 |
| Exr | -5.225937 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0002 | 2 |
| Unemp | -5.582743 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0001 | 2 |
| Open | -5.388602 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0001 | 2 |
| Prinv | -6.807640 | -3.661661 | -2.960411 | -2.619160 | 0.0000 | 2 |

Empirical Analysis: In order to test for the stationarity of the variables, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) tests was used to investigate if the variables had a unit root or not.

Unit Root Test: The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test for unit roots was conducted for all the time series employed for the study. The ADF results in Table 5.1 show that all the variables are non-stationary in their levels except rgdp. However, with their first differences, all other variable become stationary, that is, they are I(1) since the ADF value of each of these variables are greater than the 5% critical value in table 5.2. we can also see their probability value is highly significant. With these results, all variables are regressed at their stationary level.

**Table 5: Data Estimation Result Prais-WinstenAR (1) regression -- iterated estimates
Linear regression reg lrgdp ltoce ledu lexr lunemp lopen lprinv**

| Rgdp | Coef | Std. Err | T | p> t | +(95% conf | Interval |
|---------------|-----------|----------|-------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Ltoce | .1724314 | .0486907 | 3.54 | 0.002 | .072151 | .2727117 |
| Ledu | .0733994 | .0283902 | 2.59 | 0.016 | .0149286 | .1318702 |
| Lexr | -.0179681 | .061035 | -0.29 | 0.771 | -.1436739 | .1077378 |
| Unemp | -.1198577 | .1008759 | -1.19 | 0.246 | -.7716195 | -6409.888 |
| Lprinv | .0852211 | .0157215 | 5.42 | 0.000 | .0528421 | .1176002 |
| Lopen | -.4116306 | .174791 | -2.35 | 0.027 | -.7716195 | .1176002 |
| Cons | 9.816988 | .474789 | 20.68 | 0.000 | 8.839142 | 10.79483 |
| No of Obs | 32 | | | | | |
| F(6, 25) | 68.12 | | | | | |
| Prob>F | 0.00000 | | | | | |
| R-squared | 0.9424 | | | | | |
| Adj R-squared | .9285 | | | | | |
| Root MSE | .13308 | | | | | |
| DW original | 2.128321 | | | | | |
| DW Transformd | 2.023218 | | | | | |

7. Interpretation and Discussion of Results

The growth and federal capital expenditure equation given the R-square of 0.9285 suggests that Total Capital Expenditure (TOCE) and Expenditure on Education (EDU) has a

strong and positive relationship on Real Gross Domestic Product(proxy for economic growth) and the Adjusted R-square of 93 percent shows that the model in use is capable of determining the total variation in dependent variable. The function shows that 93 percent variation of the dependent variable can be accountable by the change in the independent variables. The other indicators, Durbin Watson test, Prob>F are in the acceptable region.

The results indicate that Total Capital Expenditure (TOCE), Expenditure on Education (EDU), and Private Investment (PRINV) was statistically significant, while we may not labour on the control variables that are statistically insignificant in explaining the variation in Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria. From the result the apriori expectation of TOCE and EDU were proved to be true being positively signed. The point we want to establish in the finding is that there exists a positive relationship between education funding and economic growth. In other words poor funding of the educational sector is a direct attack on the sustainability of the system. In view of the above analysis, it's obvious that we have prospects of revamping educational system in Nigeria.

8. Prospects of Revamping the System

At every stage in the development of a country, there are always challenges which, in a way help to bring new strategies for desired transformation. Nigeria as a developing country has such challenges that if properly tackled, will gradually reposition the educational standard in the polity. The following measures are worth considering in improving the standard.

- (i) Expansion of existing institutions of learning by providing relevant quality facilities that will improve the absorption of more students. Government must co-opt individual, philanthropist, industrialist, and private sectors to assist in funding and research as done in other countries. The rate of expansion in enrolment should match the rate of provision of facilities and human resources.
- (ii) Ethnicity, culture, and Religion must not be allowed to dictate the pace of education in Nigeria
- (iii) Collaborative learning should be explored and encouraged. A situation where some schools could establish an understanding with foreign institutions to exchange ideas.
- (iv) The academia should lead the campaign for improved funding of the institutions through improved cost recovery and making the case for appropriate school fees. These are all within the purview of the academia and should constitute his role in reviving academic standards in our institutions of higher learning.

- (v) A Bridge from school to work: schools should have affiliated industries either privately or publicly owned so as to support practical training. This will go a long way to minimize 'paper certificate', and theoretical graduates who might not have seen any physical gadgets needed for processing raw materials or doing any work in their fields of training. It will enhance the bridge from school to work and reduce youth unemployment.
- (vi) Focus on moving education towards equipping students with skills that will lead to their path of employment.
- (vii) Manpower needs of the education system in Nigeria should be addressed. The methodology for handling children, teenagers and adults are not the same. This calls for training and retraining of teachers in educational institutions.
- (viii) Visual aid teaching has almost gone in all facets of learning in Nigeria. It must be re-introduced from the pre-nursery to the tertiary institutions.
- (ix) Reward system is discouraging. The teachers in schools are the least paid in the country. A local government councilor in Nigeria earns higher than a senior lecturer in the University. The annual income of a professor in Nigeria is less than the monthly income of a senator.
- (x) Patronizer's of foreign education should pay tax on education. Whereas we do not advocate for the closing of window for educational tourism, yet the highly placed Nigerians, who prefer to send their children to advanced countries should be made to pay a form of high import of service duty.
- (xi) Education environment, research grants security of life and property and other welfare packages need be addressed to minimize brain drain. A situation where a lecturer in the University takes home ₦68 (ie \$0.34) as monthly hazard allowance is laughable.
- (xii) Government must trim the bogus and jumbo pay of the politicians to be able to finance the education sector.
- (xiii) Corruption must be tackled with every measure of sincerity or else nothing meaningful would be achieved.

9. Conclusion

The paper has tried to show the problems, issues and prospects of education in Nigeria over the years. The study is not exhaustive but has exposed some of the key issues facing the education sector. The economic, social and environmental factors that have led to

poor standards of education in Nigeria have been discussed. The roles of the government in these were examined in relation to poor funding and neglect of infrastructure and the need to address them. The influence of parents/ society itself through an irrational scale of values was noted as it has made pupils lose hope in learning. Through empirical findings we also established that there is a positive relationship between education funding and economic growth. Observing that the Teachers/Lecturers has a duty of positively affecting society, by their comportment and service delivery, this paper criticized the roles and suggested ways of making amends. A fairly detailed list of measures has been proposed as prospects for to revive and revamp declining standards of education.

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