

## ***Readiness Challenge: Functional Education Lacuna in Nigeria and the Fallacy of Hopelessness***

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### **Abstract**

*From a selfie of Nigerian educational system, it is a source of concern that the problem of non-functionality of education in Nigeria could not in all respect be associated with COVID-19 pandemic. Even if it is, there are already proactive measures to stem the spread through strict observance of its protocols, and development of vaccines for inoculation, which Nigeria had already taken delivery of some doses. Effective virtual learning, which is today an encouraged mode of pedagogy, is also not a strange concept in Nigeria, as it is the fundamental philosophy guiding the operations of National Open University in Nigeria. It is believed that there is no fault associated with the problem of non-functionality of Nigerian educational system due to COVID-19 pandemic, rather there is fault with the readiness of the educational system on its deliverables, vis-à-vis the promotion of healthy lifestyles, means of livelihood, and being useful in the world of work. It is therefore on this note that this article on “readiness challenge: functional education lacuna in Nigeria and fallacy of hopelessness” becomes apt and for which the paper explored and charted new directions.*

**Keywords:** readiness, functional, education, lacuna, fallacy, hopelessness

### **Clarification of concepts**

#### **Functional education**

Functional education refers to educational expectations or training that have positive and relevant impact on the trainee and by extension the community. In other words, an educational system is said to be functional where it is practically providing support to enable the learner be useful to himself in terms of livelihood and the society he belongs. It is a type of education that is devoid of alienation and possibly frustration after schooling. Orugbani (1994) opined that Herbert Macaulay studied surveying overseas but on arrival in Nigeria, he became alienated and was appointed a Secretary to the Oba of Benin.

Therefore, functional education is that which is unconnected with wastages in terms of manpower utilization. The functionality of non-formal education explains the point. Apprenticeship education clearly demonstrates that the apprentice can handle all the operations in the trade. This is functional education in action. Also, a farmer with an adult male child may wish to settle him and he teaches him how to make mounds and obviously the male child shows capacity in acquisition of this skill of making such mounds; it follows that he can now fend for himself if given seedlings to cultivate.

### **Historical antecedent**

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic, was the Nigerian educational system functional? If yes, to what extent? It is a fact that Nigerian educational system was already suffering infractions which manifested in providing education for her citizenry whose training relevance was in the past. This scenario clearly became reflective in job search after schooling; white collar jobs became inadequate, and less number of the educated prefers blue collar jobs either because of the associated social stigma, or lack of or poor pecuniary value attached as compensation. Well, Adam Smith, in Agabi (2003), a classical economist once maintained that a man should live by his wages and whatever a man earns should be sufficient to sustain him.

### **Entrepreneurial mindset**

Disturbed by unemployment crises, the governments of nations have introduced entrepreneurial education as a panacea; but has it solved the problem? Further questions may also beg for answers. The philosophy of entrepreneurial education is to make the learners create jobs rather than seeking for them. To achieve these, the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education needed to be modified but the questions are (a) Are the instructors of entrepreneurship education entrepreneurs in themselves? (b) Is the teaching of entrepreneurship not for certification? (c) Are those who teach entrepreneurship different from those who participate in other forms of pedagogy? (d) How then will the educational system attain its functionality? (e) Is it by magic? (f) Are entrepreneurship centres not converted to institutional show rooms rather than laboratories for practicals?

### **Pedagogical readiness: Institutional related readiness**

- a. Institutions of learning should adopt virtual modes of instructions
- b. Schools should have unlimited access to internet to support virtual modes of learning
- c. Available internet should have sufficient bandwidth so as to reduce fluctuations and disruptions
- d. Credit hours system be allowed for learners to take more of entrepreneurial training
- e. Regulatory bodies of institutions of higher learning should not constitute a cog in the wheel of this progress
- f. The university senate still do not have the final say on programme approval in Nigeria

### **Students related readiness**

Students to have shown lack of readiness as reflected in these questions:

- a. Are students themselves ready to acquire functional education?
- b. Do they not aid and abet criminality in the search for certification?
- c. Do students willingly return to school after resumption?
- d. Do students not spend upward of one month after resumption at home?
- e. Are students' hostels and staff offices connected to the internet?
- f. What is the level of observance of non-pharmaceutical protocols in schools?

(Akuizilo, 2002)

Nigeria has taken delivery of the first batch of Corvex (COVID-19 vaccine) but the doses may be insufficient for all Nigerians; this implies that some citizens should die. The timetable for the inoculation suggested the framework of front line health workers, government bureaucrats and the aged as priority. It is not known when the vaccines shall get to the various states and other categories of the Nigerian population yet to be captured by NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) timetable. From the foregoing, is the Nigerian educational system ready for functional education?

### **Further historical proof**

The centrifugal forces of history, introduced in Nigeria a system of education that can best be described as an investment in frustration, which necessitated the desire for entrepreneurial mindset whose pedagogical approach leaves much to be desired. This mode of teaching is didactic and inadequate to equip the learners to be able to think creatively and managerially (Babalola, 2007).

### **Rhetorical questions**

Some critical questions begging for awareness are:

- a. To what extent are our educational institutions meeting societal expectations in terms of desired value orientation?
- b. Are the curricula of the Nigerian educational institutions being implemented in ways that will facilitate the attainment of the broad national values and specific targets of the nation's aspirations?
- c. Can the curricula of the schools be said to be functional in terms of meeting the needs and values of the nation socially, economically and technologically?
- d. Is the country producing through the schools' curricula, the quality of Nigerians that will promote the nation's developmental efforts? (Nwadiani, 1992)

Education is intended to inculcate the desirable values and attitudes in the citizens but these could be thwarted in the absence of functional education without acceptable values. The bottom line of educational system is value. The Nigerian educational system appears sick with exception of some aspects of law, medicine and engineering. To prove this assertion, let us go through some observations/remarks made about the Nigerian educational system in terms of its functionality and values derived.

- a. The country can boast of numerous Professors of engineering in Nigerian universities, persons who graduated with first class honours or second-class honours, upper division, but why does the country continue to find it difficult, indeed impossible to effect mere routine maintenance of her petroleum refineries.
- b. Why does the country continue to import the expertise, or in the alternative import the refined petroleum products from other countries?
- c. Why is it that the contracts for the most sophisticated roads and bridge constructions are awarded to Julius Berger or other foreign firms when optimum efficiency is expected to be displayed?
- d. Why can Nigerian education not produce a prototype bicycle, a motor cycle engine not to talk of a car engine more than half a century after independence? What is the value of Nigerian engineering curriculum?
- e. The Colleges of Medicine in Nigerian universities produced doctors in various fields, but why do Nigerian leaders continue to fly to the first world countries for medical check-up when they need the best of such services?
- f. Why is it not heard of medical feats and breakthroughs from Nigerian medical institutions?
- g. Why is it that Universities Teaching Hospitals in Nigeria could not even initiate the coronavirus vaccine? (Undie, 2020).

Today, the world is integrating in a global system and this is made easy with the use of the computer. Nigeria therefore exists in the computer and electronic age, but the following posers are baffling:

- a. Why in spite of the existence of computer science in Nigerian universities, there is not yet a fully Nigerian made computer, radio, television, calculator, refrigerator, deep freezer, electric fan, air conditioner, wrist watch or clock etc (Mkpa, 2006).
- b. It is argued that Nigeria must not necessarily be proficient in all areas of development, but that the country is interested in the agricultural sector, the question arises as to how well the country has fared in that field. It is worth mentioning that the level of technology in Nigeria's agricultural sector is largely knife/matchet technology same as was employed a little after the iron age. The faculties of Agriculture are expected to produce food, raise revenue, pay itself and donate to the College/Universities despite the absence of the relevant technology to boost their activities (Undie, 2018).
- c. It is sad to be reminded that Malaysia that took away from Nigeria some oil palm seedlings several years ago, has today become the world's greatest producer of palm produce whereas Nigeria trails behind. The Asian Tigers that were colonized by the same colonial powers that lorded it over Nigeria about the same time, have employed the dynamics of functional educational system with appropriate values to break loose the shackles of backwardness and have today shot into the lead of socio-economic development.
- d. Singapore, like Nigeria, became independent in 1960; today her per-capita income is higher than Nigeria. Taiwan, Korea, Japan, among others, belong to this group that Nigeria shared common features with, but today they have all without one exception overtaken her in the race for economic development.

e. In 1990, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai and Abu Dhabi were desert but today they have become the centre of world tourism.

f. Mauritius survives from the blue and ocean economy. It seems Nigeria is a country of contrast for when the world is going right Nigeria will go left.

g. Bangladesh economy survives on borrowing. Bangladesh which was seen as terribly under developed has picked up. These monies borrowed are channelled into productive sectors that transform the economy. In Nigeria borrowed monies are shared among the states with no savings. In political dispensation in Nigeria between 2003 and 2011, only two governors out of 36 supported the idea of savings (Governor Peter Obi of Anambra and Governor Lyiel Imoke of Cross River).

h. As at Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021 Coronavirus vaccines (Covax) was estimated to cost over 400 billion naira whereas the entire budget from the Federal Ministry of Health ranges a little above 500 billion naira. This implies that only the vaccines have taken over 75% of the sectoral budget for health. The question is, what if there is another natural disaster? This will further imply macro-economic adjustment where education sector becomes even further a victim (Undie, 2020).

### **Safety of students in schools**

This discourse is on the outcome of learning experience being useful to the learner and to the community after schooling. How can this discussion make meaning in the midst of the recent phenomenon of abduction of school children? If this banditry is not addressed, some parents may be forced to consider the option of withdrawing their wards from schooling in Nigeria. This portends danger and the Nigerian government must act now. When this happens, the discourse will not be on functional education any longer, but on how to make the children and schools safe for learning. Abduction incidence from Kagara in Niger State, Jangere in Katsina, Chibok in Borno, Dapchi in Yobe and Ikorodu in Lagos are still fresh in the memory of Nigerians. Along that same trajectory, there is growing concern of kidnapping and taking hostage of academics whose duty, it is to re-engineer, restructure and shape functional education ultimately. Nobody is excited about some academics in University Port Harcourt, University of Calabar, among others being taken into captivity. Some have died in captivity and no remains are found and some pay ransom to effect release. It is even worse off during elections, as government is alleged to bribe militants to allow them to conduct peaceful elections. What should one expect from the common man with no capacity? The point is, the environment of learning must be conducive and safe for learning before the country can move ahead (Undie, 2020; Aghenta, 2001).

### **Challenge of cultism**

Tertiary institutions are expected to impact positively on overall well-being of their immediate communities as their corporate social responsibilities to them. If these institutions are to deliver their mandates without disruptions, it is therefore imperative that their host communities have to be: (i) stable (ii) peaceful and (iii) progressive. What is the story today?

The most serious threat is the menace of secret cults. There is a public alarm as regards secret cult because of the associated dangers. Before now, an injury to one student was usually seen as injury to all undergraduates. For example, the killing of Adepoju in 1971 at University of Ibadan had its memorial celebrated for many years. Today, students openly kill one another with joy and impunity. Nowadays, the country's educational sector is riddled with cultism, rape, arson, maiming and wanton destruction of lives and property. Parents, unfortunately, take side with their children and wards. Cultism has spilled over to secondary and even primary schools. Members of these secret cults were alleged to be children of rich and well placed parents because of the financial implications. Today, it is even the very poor that are members. The feeling in the air is that secret cult membership is becoming a hidden criterion for appointment into some key positions or protection thereafter (Nwadiani, 2015).

It is the ripple effects of do or die politics and winner takes all syndrome that has penetrated into the school system. Banditry and insurgency have a history traceable to politics; it is unfortunate that the target misses the point and the country is reaping and paying the price of excessive ambitions of politicians (Nwadiani, 1993).

#### **Delay in the release of students' academic results cum transcripts**

This situation has given students and lecturers opportunities to commit social vices such as examination misconduct, and sexual harassment. In some institutions, discipline has broken down not only among students but also among their teachers. Many professors can no longer inspire either their junior colleagues or their students. They rather see them as threats.

#### **Appointment of academic staff**

Institutions appoint their staff. Universities and Colleges, like other higher education institutions, advertise and appoint their staff based on government policy in terms of structure and spatial spread to reflect federal or state character. Most institutions tend to promote ethnicity and mediocrity in this regard with people from institution's very immediate catchment area at an undue advantage. Foreign staff are no longer employed in universities and institutions of learning in Nigeria. What is obtainable now are anointed locals and products of academic inbreeding. The chief executive position and principal officers have become highly political. It is the preserve of the owners to appoint through their respective governing councils. Tertiary institutions are becoming growing centres of partisan politics and with dependent loyalties. Thus the independence of minds of scholars in the universities, polytechnics and colleges are fast disappearing in the area of appointment of staff. This is why the best are no longer "lucky" to be hired (Nwadiani, 2015).

#### **Absence of knowledge based strategy**

What usually distinguishes universities from other higher education institutions is the Excellence of knowledge as ivory towers in terms of quality and volume. The quality of

knowledge is sustained by engaging, motivating and retaining of robust scholastic minds whose attractions are beyond meal on the table and other mundane desires.

### **Paucity of educational resources**

All tertiary education resources, except perhaps students in some regions, are in short supply. Lecture halls, classrooms, offices and students' accommodation are grossly inadequate. First timers and non-final year students are usually faced with acute accommodation problems. While some squat with friends, making the rooms overcrowded and unhealthy; others rent private, off-campus residential places which are expensive and exploitative. The phenomenon of students squatting is turning the campuses into poultry-like houses. Ojukwu once described accommodation provided in Nigerian universities as a harem for students adding that the students are in constant running battle with snakes and other reptiles (Nwadiani, 2015). Aghenta (2001) asserted that learning cannot be in the right quality when the inputs are not in the right order.

### **Lack of books and other literatures**

The weakest link in the academic production function is the increasing shortage of books and journals either in the institutions' libraries or bookstores. Where they are available, only the children of the rich and top officers, politicians and contractors can afford them. What is in vogue and fast becoming a culture is the use and sale of handouts by lecturers to students at ridiculous prices. It has become a profit-making venture for 'merchant' lecturers. It is reassuring that the senate of some universities have banned the sale of handouts which have not been very effective. Self-made and 'garri books' are proliferated (Nwadiani, 2015). Students who fail to purchase these handouts stand the high risk of failing examinations.

Laboratory facilities are no longer enough in Nigerian Colleges and Universities. Where the facilities and equipment are available they are obsolete, over-utilized and sometimes vandalized. Many students of science and technology graduate with little or no exposure to experiments and practical aspects of their courses. What they are studying are more of traditional science (Nwadiani, 1992).

### **Absence of innovative research impact**

Massive researches are being conducted in Nigerian universities with Nigeria ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> after South Africa in the publication of over 4,000 research outcomes. Unfortunately these researches are purely personal publications aimed at individual's career progression in form of promotion. This is because of the slogan "publish or perish". They are not cutting-edge researches. Therefore they are not able to promote sustainable national development with very few patents emanating from Nigerian universities (Katampe, 2021).

### **The world ranking of universities**

In terms of quality, excellence in teaching, research, innovations and other indices, Nigerian Universities do not fare well at all. Apart from the University of Cape Town that ranked 273, University of Ibadan the best in Nigeria ranked 1,335th position followed by

Obafemi Awolowo University (1,986th position). This is not surprising because of poor government commitment towards university education, Educators and Researchers. Federal Government of Nigeria, in 2017, budgeted only 50 billion naira for capital expenditure in education. To say that this is grossly inadequate will be an understatement.

**Table 1:** Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of the top richest economy in the world

S/No	County	GDP Gross Domestic Product
1	USA	\$ 21.43 trillion
2	China	\$ 14. 34 trillion
3	Japan	\$ 5.08 trillion
4	Germany	\$ 3.86 trillion
5	India	\$ 2.87 trillion
6	UK	\$ 2.83 trillion
7	France	\$ 2.73 trillion
8	Italy	\$ 2.00 trillion
9	Bragil	\$ 1.84 trillion
10	Canada	\$1.74 trillion
11	Russia	\$ 1.70 trillion
12	South Kurea	\$ 1.65 trillion
13	Australia	\$ 1.40 trillion
14	Spain	\$1.39 trillion
15	Mexico	\$ 1.27 trillion
16	Indonesia	\$ 1.12 trillion
17	Nellerland	\$ 907.05 billion
18	Dautidrabic	\$ 792.97 billion
19	Turkey	\$ 761.43 billion
20	Switzerland	\$ 703.08 billion
21	Poland	\$ 595.86 billion
22	Thailand	\$ 543.53 billion
23	Belgium	\$ 533.10 billion
24	Swaden	\$ 530.88 billion
25	Nigeria	\$448.12 billion

Source: Celeb Silver Dec. 2020

Nigeria ranks as 25th top richest economy in the world, but none of her universities ranks among the first one hundred in the World. Yale University, the 2nd richest educational institutions in the world currently has an endowment that exceeds \$25 billion and its library holdings are more than 15 million volumes, the third largest in the world. For example the Nigerian Universities research percentage share from the statutory allocation is less than 05%. This is very insignificant in the course of sustainable national development (Katampe, 2021)

### **Unpatriotic, visionless and corruptive leadership**

The most graphic threat to tertiary education and the inability to stimulate any sustainable national development is unpatriotic, visionless and corruptive leadership. Nigeria has very few leaders who are passionate towards the corporate good of the people and are able, with integrity, to provide the inventive platform for sustainable national development (Nwadiani, 2015).

### **Politics**

The force that will kill or save the university, polytechnic and college of education systems in Nigeria is politics. Government controls and has undue interference in the management of tertiary education, allocation of funds/grants, values and consequently the erosion of autonomy and academic freedom are detrimental and inhibitive to their overall development. This is why universities and other tertiary institutions of learning have become theatres of labour union crises. The Government of Cross River State has industrialization as her policy thrust. Very recently, in the course of commissioning the Welding and Fabrication Academy in Calabar, the Governor gave a charge that the academy should fabricate flyover along MCC road in Calabar within one year. This is a school without a Rector, no curriculum, and its focus is yet to be determined. This has planning implications (Allen & Jin, 2004).

a. **General attitude to education:** Some rhetorical questions are posed here:

1. How many people in Nigeria believe that education is capable of creating the wealth of nations and a viable option for development?
2. In how many communities in Nigeria do citizens not drop out of school after the first years of primary education?
3. How many people really consider this as backwardness and how many communities are bothered to reverse that trend?
4. How many communities accord place of honour to their educated sons and daughters, their lecturers, principals, their head teachers?
5. How many communities accord recognition to their sons and daughters who attain professorship?
6. How many communities remember the educated when chieftaincy titles are being conferred?
7. How many communities have their retired professors, permanent secretaries or principals installed as traditional rulers?
8. How many communities have libraries, organize quiz competitions as they organize dancing competitions and political rallies?
9. How many have scholarship programmes for their sons and daughters?
10. In how many communities is the teacher or the educated man still a role model?
11. How many young people today want to be teachers or tutors or even lecturers and not a politician?
12. How many of the wealthy have endowed chairs or prizes in the universities?
13. How many are interested to invest in the infrastructural development of the institutions?

b. **Physical infrastructures for education:** Further rhetorical questions explain the point.

1. The quality of public infrastructure of a people somehow approximates the values of the people.
2. In how many communities are the primary and secondary school buildings well maintained?
3. How many schools still have the beautiful grounds, the ornamental hedges, the flowers and the trees of the pre-war years?
4. In how many communities in Nigeria are the public schools not the ugly looking public buildings, like shrines?
5. How many schools today, primary and secondary, have teachers' residential quarters?
6. How many primary schools still have football fields? Have some of these not been converted to shops for trading?
7. How many of them have enough desks and teaching aids for pupils?
8. Are the schools including the universities, properly equipped?
9. Are some of our universities really looking like universities, or are they still glorified secondary schools several years after they were established?
10. How many have enough classrooms for their students?
11. How many have enough seats?
12. In how many do some students not stand taking lectures?
13. How many of our libraries now have virtual library facilities?
14. Are there universities where some Departments do not have Computers?
15. Are the libraries properly equipped with up-to-date books, do they have enough seats?

c. **Residential facilities:** Some further rhetorical questions are asked here to give direction to this subheading.

1. How many tertiary institutions now have enough hostels and bed spaces for their students?
2. How many institutions have adequate catering facilities for their students, facilities where students take reasonably balanced diet three times a day?
3. How many students do not take their food unhygienically prepared and served under unhygienic conditions?
4. In how many universities do students not squat, at times four to five in a room meant for two?
5. In how many universities do students not read at night in rotation because they share beds and do not have enough reading facilities? (Enaouho & Ejerekayo, 1989).

d. **Admission System:** This issue is also presented with some rhetorical questions.

1. Are some people not gaining admission into universities with bribes?

2. Are forged certificates not being used by many to gain admission into institutions - forged GCE's, forged SSCE's, forged JAMB, forged transcripts of Universities, Polytechnics and College of Education?
3. Do some parents/guardians not sponsor those forgeries?
4. Have one or two principals not owned up issuing false statements of results to their students.
5. Do some lecturers not help to cover up the forgeries?
6. How many universities, polytechnics and colleges of education painstakingly verify the certificates of their new students or even their staff?
7. Do some lecturers not teach too many courses just for financial gain?
8. Do some not cover up non teaching by awarding everybody the best grades?

**e. Quality of teaching:** Quality of teaching is also presented with the following rhetorical questions.

1. How many tertiary institutions now run regular academic programmes? How many have not experienced one type of strike or the other?
2. How many students in tertiary institutions are now reasonably sure of the time they would be graduating?
3. When last did Nigerian universities have a stable academic calendar?
4. Do Nigerian universities still have the long vacation?
5. How many students return exactly on the official reopening day? How many do not give themselves one or two weeks of holidays after the official resumption date?
6. Are many classes not missed by students or lecturers as a matter of routine in the school system? Do some not teach only three or four times in a semester while collecting their salaries regularly?
7. Do some lecturers not teach too many courses just for financial gain?
8. Do some not cover up non teaching by awarding everybody the best grades?

**f. Sanctity of examinations**

1. Which examination today does not leak? Is it the Common Entrance, the Senior School Certificate, the General Certificate of Education, the JMB/UTME etc?
2. How many parents do not now fund some of the leakages and even hire mercenaries for their children?
3. How many young people do not now serve as mercenaries in writing examinations?
4. Do examinations not also leak in universities? Are some lecturers not aiding and abetting these leakages?
5. How many universities have evidence for examination malpractices let alone to punish their offenders?
6. Is invigilating an examination in some of our schools now not a high risk or money making venture depending on whether the invigilator is honest or corrupt?
7. Do some students not contribute money openly to bribe the invigilators?
8. Are some invigilators who refuse to be bribed not being physically attacked by the students?

9. Are life bullets not at times fired in examination halls to facilitate some examination malpractices?
10. Are some bodies not using the police/state security service to oversee examinations, and has this improved the situation?
11. Are some examinations not cancelled and shifted by some lecturers without authorization?
12. In how many institutions do students really sit spaced-out properly during examinations?
13. Do some teachers not exchange grades for money and other kinds, including some sexual harassment?
14. Are all the answer scripts thoroughly read before the grades are awarded?
15. How many people will faint if they hear that a student got an “A” without taking an examination, including someone even impersonating?
16. In how many tertiary institutions is the publishing of semester results not delayed?
17. How many undergraduates still receive statements of results immediately after every semester examination?
18. How many graduates receive their certificates three to six months after graduating?
19. How many still do not receive theirs even several years after graduating?

**g. Quality of research**

1. How many academic researches are going on in our universities?
2. How many academic researches are patentable?
3. How many researches taking place in our universities are funded by Government or industry?
4. How many of the findings of these researches are used by Government and the organized private sector to solve problems that puzzle mankind?
5. Are the researches not stored up in the library accumulating dust?
6. Of what use are these researches when the findings are not tested or implemented?
7. These are some of the development challenges in Education for the twenty-first century.

**Major characteristics of a world class institution of learning**

- a. Has an international reputation for research.
- b. Has an international reputation for its teaching.
- c. Has a number of research stars and world leaders in their fields.
- d. Is recognized not only by other world-class universities but also outside the world of higher education.
- e. Has a number of world-class departments (that is, not necessarily all)
- f. Identifies and builds on its research strengths and has a distinctive reputation and focus (that is, its “lead” subjects).
- g. Generates innovative ideas and produces basic and applied research in abundance.
- h. Produces groundbreaking research outputs recognized by peers and won prizes (for example, Nobel prize).

- i. Attracts the most able students and produces the best graduates.
- j. Runs an efficient government and management system.
- k. Can attract and retain the best staff.
- l. Attracts a high proportion of students from overseas.
- m. Operates within a global market and is international in many activities (for example, research links, students and staff exchanges, and crowd of visitors of international standing)
- n. Has a very sound financial base
- o. Receives large endowment capital and income
- p. Has diversified sources of income (for example, government, private companies sector, research income, and overseas students' fees)
- q. Provides a high-quality and supportive research and educational environment for both its staff and its students (for example, high quality buildings and facilities/high quality campus).
- r. Has a first-class management team with strategic vision and implementation plans.
- s. Produces graduate who end up in position of influence and/or power (that is, movers and shakers of the society such as prime ministers and presidents) etc.
- t. Often has a long history of superior achievement.
- u. Makes a big contribution to society and the era.
- v. Continually benchmarks with top universities and departments world-wide; and
- w. Has the confidence to set its own agenda.

### **Fallacy of hopelessness**

From this presentation so far, lamentations have been adequately advanced with substantial justification. This has shown that Nigerian educational system is not yet there in terms of its functional dream endeavours but does it imply that it will forever remain stereotype? Although, Nigeria may not have made sophisticated outcomes from her educational enterprise as evident in the preceding discussion but there are proofs that the products of the Nigerian educational system have attempted to self-sustain itself to an acceptable degree of recognition. It will not be completely correct to argue that Nigerian education system has achieved nothing or less and has not impacted very positively on her clientele; there lies the fallacy of hopelessness. Therefore given the level of educational attainment in Nigeria with additional improvements in the industry, the hope to meet and surpass her counterpart nations and fit into global competitiveness is in sight. When this happens Nigerian educational system shall arise again.

### **Conclusion**

The secret of functional education is obvious through adoption of practicable approaches, especially ensuring that societal values are prioritized, consciously determining skills and value deficiencies needed for qualitative change within the growth parameters of national economy. The quality of educational system is an obvious determinant of the quality of national development; Education-economic nexus captures this symbiotic relationship. In Nigeria, education is both a public and an investment good on one hand, and on the other hand a catalyst for stimulating and sustaining overall national development. Education

therefore has an intimate relationship with the economy; its advancement is a further indicator of national or economic development. It is hoped that the thoughts expressed in this article will stimulate further intellectual romanticism in this regard.

This paper advocates for the repositioning of the tertiary education system to stimulate sustainable development and functional education in Nigeria; such repositioning will lead to production of well trained and skillful workforce, knowledgeable and selfless men and women of goodwill who will engender national cohesion and development. The repositioning can be achieved through well planned tertiary education that is knowledge driven, and one where there is partnership with the institutions, industry, Government and the society.

### **Recommendations**

1. Realistic planning, to balance the demand, supply and expansion of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education proportionately, to set up the demand for, value and image of non-university institutions.
2. Improving and restructuring the curricula to meet the demands of functional educational development.
3. Diversification of sustainable funding sources, including the encouragement of private participation in a context of strong political will, particularly by governments (state and federal). Examples are Triple helix and quadruple helix as viable options.
4. Proper utilization of tertiary educational resources, applying the best practices in this era of COVID-19 epidemic. All sources of waste must be blocked therefrom.
5. A shift towards a problem-based model of knowledge creation different from the traditional cum classical discipline-oriented approach is highly recommended.
6. Mass mobilization and value re-orientation among students, to emphasize the virtues of hardwork, morality, integrity, self-discipline, patriotism, selfless service and inter group relations in a plural society like Nigeria.
7. There is an urgent need for the Federal and State Governments to stop playing the ostrich. They must therefore stop pretending about functional education in Nigeria. They appeared satisfied with the present situation by their actions through dwindling budgetary allocations to education and less priority for education enterprise over the years. It is a known fact that government knows what is good for her citizenry; the efforts that government has taken to fight and stem the spread of Ebola and COVID-19 Pandemic can be replicated to reposition and fix education. It is quite unfortunate that this is not the case, probably because education is not life threatening.
8. Anti-graft agencies in Nigeria must be strengthened to deal with issues of financial leakages and corruption within the education sector.
9. An appreciable percentage of stolen and confiscated asserts both home and aboard should be channelled to fix education.
10. Youths that pride themselves as leaders of tomorrow must therefore be alive to play this role, the need then arises to expand access to education and allow them participate in the courses of their choice without compromising standards otherwise they would be no tomorrow.

11. Insurgency, armed banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria must be urgently tackled beyond rhetoric of journalistic narratives. It is advocated that the use of Christians and Islamic clerics and more particularly sheiks of the Zellas, Sunis, Shites and the Derica to initiate peace talks with those who are aggrieved with the government of the day to lay down their arms, should be explored. But how can one negotiate with faceless people which is another puzzle. An attempt may be necessary.

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