



ACHIEVING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA THROUGH QUALITATIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

There are numerous problems and challenges facing Nigeria which militate against her successful evolution to self-reliance. One of such problems, and the major one for that matter, is that of governance. Fifty-seven years after independence, Nigeria is yet to attain political and leadership maturities. This country has suffered and still suffers from untold hardship under the tutelage of bad and corrupt leaders. And so the quest for responsible governance in Nigeria is very justified. There is every need to raise transparent and accountable leaders in Nigerian, who will nurture our democracy. Education is a veritable instrument for social change, social reconstruction and transformation. Education aims at making a person an ideal citizen and an ideal citizen is a good leader and a good follower. Unfortunately in Nigeria today, emphasis is laid on quantitative education at the expense of qualitative education. The social, political, economic and religious condition of the country will change positively when efforts are made to improve the quality of education. The moral attributes and sound personality development inculcated into individuals through education will obviously bring changes in the leadership styles of a potential leader. This paper therefore is of the opinion that transparency and accountability in governance are achievable through qualitative education in Nigeria.

KEY WORDS: Transparency, Accountability, Governance, Education.

INTRODUCTION:

The role of education in the development of the human person cannot be underscored. Education is very useful in the training of human person. It is the process of bringing up the young and the old members of a society morally; spiritually and intellectually. Education helps in character formation, personality molding, acquisition of appropriate skills and the production of citizens with proper and balanced personalities. Here Bloom's categorization of education objectives is in its proper place. Appropriate development of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains is the key to adequate personality development. Thus, the training of the mind, behavior and the acquisition of skills are the necessary prerequisites for all round and self-sufficing education. An educated person actually is one who has been trained mentally, morally and has acquired problem solving skills, which will enable him face the challenges of life. But in Nigeria today, emphasis is laid on mental development at the expense of moral development. A lot of people too conceive education in terms of cognitive development only. For such people, education should aim at the acquisition of paper certificates.

In the country today education is erroneously measured in terms of the grading of one's certificates. As a result, students resort to acquiring these certificates through fair or foul means. To this end, it is therefore not surprising to find A-First-Class- Honours-University- Graduate who is a criminal. Education against this situation should cater for the overall development of the individual; it is only in this way that an individual will be said to be educated. In line with this position, Ocho (1988:201) reflecting on Plato's view of Education, remarks that:

- (a) Occupation training alone is not education
- (b) Education aims at making a person an ideal citizen;
- (c) Mere cleverness without justice and understanding is not education.
- (d) Those who are rightly educated generally become good men.

From the above, it can be deduced that education is a vital tool in the building and making of the individual. A rightly educated person is disciplined, respectful and prudent. Consequently, he will most likely be transparent and accountable when elected into public offices. Our major problem in this country is that we have a wrong view of education and by laying heavy emphasis on the acquisition of paper certificates we tend to ignore absolutely and sacrifice the good moral and behavioural attributes, which education ought to inculcate into the individual. In the words of Lassa (1992) we in Nigeria have found ourselves in the clutches of deepening educational crises. For instance examination malpractices are increasing in an unprecedented proportion and variegated dimensions; secret cults are taking over the administrations of higher educational institutions; teachers are increasingly becoming cheats, the certificates issued by all educational systems are fast losing their credibility and "educational for all" is fast becoming "education for none". The youth are the leaders of tomorrow. Our secondary schools' and tertiary institutions' students are the youth of today. The high level prevalence of unruly behaviors and attitudes, which characterize our schools today leave any concerned Nigeria to think, ask and wonder whether the country at all has a tomorrow.

Education is to be highly rated in the national development plan because it is the most important instrument of change. And any fundamental change in the intel-

lectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by educational revolution (FRN, 2014). Since education is the instrument of change and transformation adequacy and normalcy in the educational process will go a long way to stabilize the socio-economic, religious and political crises in the country. The road to nationhood will be smooth and easy if the educational sector is in order. Nigerian education should strive for quality. In this way we will have educated and responsible citizens, well disciplined and morally sound. And no doubt, a leader with sound moral foundation will be transparent and accountable. How can we be talking about good governance in Nigeria, when criminals and ex-convicts sometimes take up leadership positions? The fact is that nobody gives what he has not. A leader who assumes office from a corrupt background will obviously be corrupt in the discharge of his duties. Embezzlement of public funds; looting of government treasury; bribery and corruption; money laundering; etc, are all as a result of greed; absence of discipline, self respect and control emanating from improper personality development and training. Qualitative education inculcates sound attitudes, respect for one another; regard for the dignity of the human person; respect for people's rights; spirits of nationalism, patriotism and citizenship. Qualitative education in Nigeria is a sine qua non, if we must achieve transparency and accountability in government.

Education: General Meaning And Goals:

The etymological definition of education like most etymological definitions, does not offer much. From the Latin root ex-ducere, education literally translates to lead out of. Commenting on the root meaning of the concept, Plato explains that education leads one out from obsolete, out dated and barbaric life. A further explanation of the concept in this perspective would refer to the specific role of education as an instrument of self-discovery, self-realization and self-assertion. In this sense too, education helps an individual to manifest his inner potentials and being. The actualization of one's self is the proof of one's autonomy and existence. As Jersild (1952:63) puts it: a person's self is the sum total of all that he calls his, which among other things, include a system of ideas, attitudes, values and commitments. Ocho (2005) follows the Platonic view, when he sees education as a process of discovering and living truth, expansion of one's vision of life and the world and of acquiring practical knowledge, aimed at transforming the environment. For Lawal (1989) education is meant to enable the individual discover his potentialities and make him contribute to developmental processes.

Another dimension of the conceptual definition is that, which conceives education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior, which are positive value to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1974 and Emenanjo, 2002). Closely related to this view is that of Otite and Ogonwo (2006), which describes education as the acquisition of knowledge and skills required to adapt to and exploit the social and physical environment. This view emphasizes the acquisition of problem solving skill through education and the application of such skill to the solution of daily problems and the adaptation to the environment. Ukeje (1976) differs from this view by seeing education as an activity of molding the character and the development of the mind of individuals by transmitting moral precept and forms of knowledge considered to be worthwhile by procedures that are morally defensible. Peters (1979) maintains that in education, something worthwhile is intentionally transmitted in a morally accepted manner. According to Locke, Herbart and Dewey, the chief aim of education is morality, acquisition

of virtues and habits (Rusk, 1974). In agreement, Ocho (2005) believes that education makes man a moral agent capable of living in the society.

From the sociological perspective, education is seen as the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. According to the sociologists, society is sustained by its cultural heritage and for any society to continue to exist and sustain it is necessary that the identities, traits and characteristics of such a society have to be guided. For Fafunwa (1972) and Alumode (2002), education is a culture, which each generation gives to those who are to be their successors in order to qualify them for keeping up and if possible raise the level of improvement, which has being attained.

Concept of Qualitative Education:

It has to be pointed out here that education as implied in this work is a formal education. Formal education is an educational system, which consists of several formalities and restriction such as age limits, formal teaching and predetermined syllabus. That means that it requires school structure to function.

Quality like morality is subjective to relativism and so, one may be right to ask some of these and related questions; what is quality? Who determines what is qualitative? For whom? With what yardstick and standard? How can quality be measured? What is the possibility of attaining a generally accepted quality? Of course, an attempt to answer these questions might give rise to an emergence of another catalogue of questions. In attempt to explain qualitative education Lassa (1992:70) writes: with respect to educational quality, it is important to note that education must be seen to be relevant and worthwhile. In the cultural context of a people at any period of their history other wise, that education could be said to be lacking in quality. But the questions are: What exactly are relevant and worthwhile to people at a given time? Who determines these things? What is the possibility of attaining what is universally relevant and worthwhile to people at a given time. The problem still persists when qualitative education is seen as type of education that cater for the needs and aspirations of a people. The questions that may arise in this regard are: what are needs? What are people's aspirations after all? This is because what is relevant to A may not be relevant to B and what is worthwhile to C may not be worthwhile to D.

To "solve" this problem of subjective relativism, reference has to be made to the national aims of education. Every country has its philosophy of education, which is derived from the country's national goals. According to the National Policy on Education (2014) the five main national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the national policy on education, are the building of:

- (a) A free democratic society;
- (b) A just and egalitarian society;
- (c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- (d) A great and dynamic economy;
- (e) A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. (FRN, 2013:1)

Actualization of the above goals is the major determinant of the country's successful evolution to nationhood. The challenges of nationhood, which are facing us today, boil down to the fact that the national goals have not been achieved. The only way to achieve the goals is through education, which is an instrument for national development. Education, it is also believed, fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individuals sake and for the general development of the society. The national goals are therefore derived from the nation's philosophy of education in line with the national goals, which aim at:

- (a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- (b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- (c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- (d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (FRN, 2013:1)

From the ongoing, qualitative education can be explained as education that is tailored towards the achievement of the national goals. Qualitative Education promotes a progressive and united Nigeria. Indeed any nation that is free, democratic, just, egalitarian, united, strong, self-reliant, economically dynamic and viable is really a great nation. Such a nation must have reached the zenith of her growth and development. The education of such a nation must be highly qualitative.

Transparency and Accountability in Governance:

Transparency is the quality of something that allows one to see through clearly. Accountability on the other hand is the responsibility for actions and readiness to explain activities that took place when called upon. According to Igbele (2007), transparency connotes a state of being open to people both at official and private levels and a condition of complete free flow of information on the activities of a given organization. Accountability requires that financial activities be reported,

explained and justified to the people from time to time. Accountability is equated with responsibility and answerability (Ejiogu, 1989). According to House (1987), accountability can be productive or responsive. While productivity accountability emphasizes efficiency in a system, and the use of funds in such a way as to reduce costs, responsive accountability is concerned with the extent a system responds to complaints suggestions, criticisms and appeals from various external bodies.

Governance means the act of officially and legally controlling a country by making all the decisions about taxes, laws, public services etc. Governance, according to Aghamelu (2006) refers to the political character of the society or the state in the attainment of the moral objective of human sociality. The moral objective here is the good life. Realization of the common good of the society is the yardstick for measuring good or bad governance. For Lenoir (1989), governance is directly concerned with the management of the development process, the functioning and capacity of the public sector as well as the rules and institutions that create the framework for the conduct of both public and private business. It is the exercising of legitimate political authority or power. Good governance then for Okolo (1993), is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Aghamelu admits that good governance is concerned with government's over sight of public decision making accountability and transparency. The power which is implied in governance is a representational power where upon those in charge of such power do so on trust and contract and are required to exercise it in the management of the affairs of the nation so as to promote the enhancement of the welfare of the people on whose behalf the power is exercised.

A transparent and accountable government is a democratic government. In support of this view Aghamelu (2006) remarks that a democratic society is characterized by among other things, good governance, which can simply be defined as responsibility and responsiveness of public officials - both elected and appointed - or the governors to the electorate - the governed, aspirations of the governed as well as acting in accordance with their dictates. All these entail transparency and accountability by public officers in discharging their duties, responsibilities and obligations (Jega, 2001).

Achieving Transparency and Accountability in Governance in Nigeria through Qualitative Education:

There are two senses which "qualitative education" has been used in this paper. In the pedestrian sense, qualitative education means a type of education that is based on standard; a type of education that has worth and value. An individual then who has acquired this type of education is bound to be properly trained; disciplined and morally sound. In the technical usage, qualitative education is synonymous with functional education, which pursues ends that are relevant, practical and comprehensive relying heavily on interest and ability as the determinants of an individual's direction in education. Qualitative Education in this sense aims at the inculcation of the following values:

- (a) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
- (b) Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
- (c) Moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations;
- (d) Shared responsibility for the common good of the society.
- (e) Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and;
- (f) Acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance (FRN 2013:1)

The inculcation of the above values is tantamount to the realization of nations philosophy of education, which consequently leads to the actualization of the national goals of Nigeria.

The relationship between qualitative education, transparency and accountability in governance is that qualitative education produces qualitative citizens and qualitative citizens make good leaders while good leaders are transparent and accountable in the discharge of their duties. Qualitative education produces citizens that have: respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, ability to make rational decisions especially in the areas of policy formulations and implementations, moral and spiritual principles while dealing with neighbours; the ability to pursue the common good of people; considerations for the feelings of others; spirit of patriotism and nationalism; sense of national consciousness etc. Such a citizen is a good man, a good follower and a potential leader, who is bound to display transparency and accountability in governance.

Problems Militating Against Qualitative Education in Nigeria:

These factors are summarized under the following headings

- (a) Poor implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.;
- (b) Lack of educational manpower;
- (c) Much emphasis on paper certificates;
- (d) Poor infrastructural development;

- (e) Lack of effectiveness in teaching and learning;
- (f) Teachers' bad and unruly behaviours;
- (g) Poor evaluation of standard;
- (h) Irregularities in the admission and selection of students
- (i) Lack of qualitative staff;
- (j) Lack of specialized equipments
- (k) Poor methodology of instruction;
- (l) Poor administrative structure;
- (m) Lack of support for research and development
- (n) Poor funding of education, and
- (o) Students' indiscipline.

The above problems should be tackled so that quality education would be achieved. In this way national growth and development will be assured.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This paper operates on the conviction that transparency and accountability in governance are achievable through qualitative education. The challenges of nationhood, for instance, leadership problems are all traceable to corrosion in the nation's educational sector. This is because no nation can develop beyond the educational status quo of its citizens. Qualitative education encourages transparency and accountability in governance.

A transparent and an accountable person is one with clean hands one with a track record of honesty and probity; a disciplined and decent person. Qualitative education aims at the inculcation of these positive values into an individual. The quality of a government to carry the masses along is based on the fact that those entrusted with governance understands and practices the principles of respect for autonomy of persons; the dignity and worth of the human person and regard for fundamental human rights. A government that is rooted in morality will be humanitarian, trustworthy and sincere. It is precisely this principle of morality that tells a conscientious individual that it is morally wrong to: withhold the salaries, wages and benefits of workers; retrench workers without cogent reasons; embezzle public funds; divert funds meant for national development into private purses; loot public treasury, inflate prizes of contracts; be insensitive to the people's plights, etc.

Qualitative education inculcates effective imaginative and manipulative spirits; intelligence, judgment, creativity and intuition. For instance, a good leader should possess high sense of judgment i.e ability to reach sensible conclusions and make wise decisions based on careful thought. He requires the ability to understand situations or people's feelings without the need for conscious reasoning or study (intuition). The problem of governance will be solved when Nigerian leaders cultivate the virtues of fairness (executions of assignments based on the rule of law without bias and prejudice); integrity (ability to be honest, thorough and conscientious in discharging public trust); empathy (participation and sharing in people's feelings and experiences); tactfulness (use of diplomacy and persuasion to convince people and avoid injuring their feelings); and discipline. Invariably the inculcation of these qualities and virtues are the primary role of any meaningful and qualitative education. To achieve transparency and accountability in governance in Nigeria, through education, it is recommended that:

- a. Government should intensify efforts to effectively implement educational policies at the various levels of learning in the country.
- b. The standard of teacher education should be very high because qualitative teachers imply qualitative teaching and learning. Effective learning outcomes bring positive behavioural changes on learners while learnt attitudes are internalized resulting to good citizenship and potential leadership.
- c. Moral education should be emphasized in schools to inculcate values in individuals. Emphasis should be placed on the need for good behaviour, respect for fundamental human rights, autonomy and prudence in handling public affairs.
- d. Administrative structure of schools should be very highly organized. Effective planning makes for effective execution. School administrations should portray discipline, high organizational ability and competence. Students are to learn from these examples for the enhancement of their leadership roles.
- e. School principals, heads and teachers should administer punishments, coercions, rewards and reinforcements as necessary strategies for praising and condemning good and unruly behaviours respectively. When students understand that there is reward for good behaviour they develop more positive attitudes needed for leadership roles.
- f. Much emphasis should not be placed on the attainments in the cognitive and psychomotor domains at the expense of affective variable behaviour. Acquisition of paper certificates should be accompanied with sound behavioural traits and characteristics culminating in the production of citizens with balanced personalities and all round education.

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- g. Civics and political education should be emphasized in schools to intimate students the rights and duties of the citizens and the way government works. In this way, school leavers will be acquainted with good citizenship, followership and leadership.
- h. Students should be made to occupy leadership positions while in schools by school heads, principals and administrators to inculcate in them spirits of responsibility and co-operation for effective leadership performances at later stages of their lives.
- i. Parents and guardians should cultivate in their children and wards God fearing spirit in their homes since the home is the smallest and most important unit of the society. A leader who is God fearing will be transparent and accountable in the discharge of his duties.

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