

Character Formation: Has Education Failed Us? An Academic X-Tray on Today's System of Education in Nigeria

Azebeokhai Benedict O

B.Ed. (Nig.), M.A. (Philipp), St. Monica Catholic Church, Ikenga-Ogidi, Anambra State, Nigeria

How to cite this paper: Azebeokhai Benedict O "Character Formation: Has Education Failed Us? An Academic X-Tray on Today's System of Education in Nigeria" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-5 | Issue-3, April 2021, pp.1022-1032, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd40038.pdf



Copyright © 2021 by author (s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



BACKGROUND

Education

The Oxford Dictionary defines Education as "The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university". It is "a kind of teaching, an enlightening experience". For Mark Smith, "Education is the wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life" ... "Education is seen as a deeply practical activity – something that we can do for ourselves (what we could call self-education), and with others." Smith, M. (2020).¹

Hutcherson opined that "Education is the most valuable key to success. The power of education is not only in the academic knowledge but also finding your place in the world and acquiring life experience. It takes all the necessary steps to facilitate our life and give us skills which will be appreciated by our families and employers. Valuable education prepares people for life and work and creates a bridge to the secured future." Hutcherson, Kristen (2019).²

For the UNESCO, "Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits" UNESCO (2020).³

Basic Education aims at providing adequate knowledge and developing skills, attitudes, values essential to personal development and also necessary for living in and contributing to a developing and changing society. It provides learning experiences which increases the child's awareness of and responsiveness to the changes in the society. Basic Education promotes and intensify knowledge, identifies with and promotes love for one's country and one's community. It also promotes working experiences which develop orientation to the world of work and prepare the learner to honest gainful work.

The Secondary Education on its part aims at continuous promotion of the objectives of the Basic Education, the discovery and enhancement of the different aptitudes and interests of students so as to equip them with adequate skills for productive endeavors and or to prepare them for Tertiary Education or Schooling. Herbst (2015)⁴ explains in his power point presentation that education is purposeful and it is concerned with outcomes that are expressed at several levels.

The Tertiary Education aims to provide general education programmes which will promote national identity, cultural consciousness, moral integrity and spiritual vigour. It will train the nation's manpower in the skills required for national development. It aims at developing the professions that will provide leadership for the nation. It advances knowledge through research and apply new knowledge for improving the quality of human life and respond effectively to changing society.

This implies that there can never be education without aims and goals. The aim of education is to build the human person, and that itself is a holistic project. Its goal being the development of the person who in turn builds a better society with the knowledge so acquired. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009)⁵, assert therefore that, "Aims serve to be general statements that provide shape and direction to the more specific actions designed to achieve future product and behavior. It is the starting point for ideal or inspirational vision of the good future." What then is the problem of education in our global community? Why has education not been able to better our world? Rather, the more learned and enlightened personalities produced by our institutions of learning around the world, the more insecurity, inhumanity, poverty, criminality of various dimensions and wickedness thrive. Even in a family where there are learned sons and daughters of different professions and successful each in

¹ Smith, M. (2020) What is Education? A definition and discussion. Retrieved from: <https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-education>. April 1, 2020.

² Hutcherson, Kristen (2019) What is Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.quora.com>. April 7, 2021.

³ UNESCO (2020) Education Transforms Lives. Retrieved from: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education> April 8, 2021.

⁴ Herbst, W.B. (2015) Aims, goals and objective purpose in curriculum development. Retrieved 6th April, 2021.

⁵ Ornstein & Hunkins (2009) Curriculum: Foundations – Pearson. Retrieved From: <https://www.pearson.com> 6th April, 2021.

their businesses, in such families there is still no peace and harmony.

What is lacking in our global educational system? This is a big question this article is set to investigate, to see how much education may have contributed positively or negatively to global peace and unity, and towards common good. In this article, the author will be using Nigeria as a common ground for analysis, though few references shall be made to some other nations of the world in order to show-light the globality of the situation under study.

COGNITIVENESS IN LEARNING

Education is about learning and beyond that, the holistic formation of an individual, this is why education does not begin from the classroom and does not end up in the classroom. Education of a person begins from the moment of conception. The child at its early stage of life begins to unconsciously adapt to and adopts the rhythms around the mothers' body. It perceives the smell of its mother; it knows when the mother whispers her soothing words into its ears. The child as it develops learns from its immediate environment, learns to hear and understand the language of its parents and siblings and differentiates who is who, begins to feel and realizes who shows him or her love and affection and begins too to respond to such affection, and so on.

In all these instances, learning takes place, and each stage in its life projects a new topic to learn and acknowledge and the child's learning processes progresses from a simple cognitive to a more complex cognitiveness. No wonder in his research to understand the functions of cognitive in learning process, Bloom (1956)⁶ describes several categories of cognitive learning in the following Hierarchy; "Knowledge – Comprehension – Application – Analysis – Evaluation."

Bloom agrees that Cognitive objectives are designed to increase an individual's knowledge. Cognitive objectives relate to understanding, awareness, insights, etc. Starting with basic factual knowledge, the categories progress through comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Knowledge - Remembering or recalling information.

Comprehension - The ability to obtain meaning from information.

Application - The ability to use information.

Analysis - The ability to break information into parts to understand it better.

Synthesis - The ability to put materials together to create something new.

Evaluation - The ability to check, judge, and critique materials.

If the above learning hierarchy of Mr. Bloom is holistic, why has it failed to make a better person after learning through School? If not complete, then what exactly is lacking? There is therefore an urgent need to search out that which is

lacking and initiate and accord it its rightful place in our education.

PARENTS IN CHILD EDUCATION

The role parents play in the holistic education of their children cannot be over-emphasized. The school teacher cannot achieve much when cut off from the child's parents. This is because apart from the fact that the parents remain the first and permanent teacher of the child, the child as student will always return home to meet his or her parents and siblings and to continue in practice where the school teacher stops at the end of the School hours. Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for their children that they forget that they themselves are really the experts. (Edelman, 2006). Parents know so well about the psychological make-up of their children even when they are themselves not learned and they know how best to approach their children. The future, success and behavior of their children must be put ahead of every other preoccupation.

Parents are expected to show great concern about the welfare of their children generally, especially in educational matters – how they felt daily at school, all that transpired while at school, go through their work at school, see that they do their take home assignments and more importantly, help create time for them to study after school. It is very painful to note today that most parents do not give room for their children, especially those who are not biological children, to study at home. It is observed that most of these children are saddled with whole lot of house chores, from the moment they return from school until the time they go to bed at late hours. They are made to sometimes eat very late and sleepless and others watching movies into late nights so, they get wearied and worn-out while in class the next day. Some children are visibly seen sleeping during classes, what a shame on such parents and Guardians.

Some parents seem not to be interested in the education of their children instead they are prepared to spend huge sums of money on matters not really important to the education and growth of their families. Rather than pay the fees of their children or wards in Schools, however small it maybe they complain. They prefer to spend money on drinks, clothes, latest shoes etc. than to invest on the future of their own children.

Sometimes parents who have children in school, two biological and one House help would always prefer to pay first for the biological children while the non-biological child waits until money is raised or sourced for his or her school fees at a later time. Such attitude should be discouraged amongst parents and Guardians. It has always been re-echoed that it takes a lot to train a child in school especially the girl-child whose training is seen as investment on half of the nation. This is why Bill Clinton insisted that "Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens." (Clinton, 1994).⁷

"Parental involvement in the form of 'at-home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's

⁶ Bloom, B.S. and Krathwohl, D. R. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, by a committee of college and university examiners. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. NY, NY: Longmans, Green.

⁷ Clinton, B. (1994) on International Literacy Day, September 8th 1994

⁸ UNESCO, (2020) in AIU, (2020) [hppt://www.aiu.edu](http://www.aiu.edu).

achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation.” (Desforges, 2003).⁸ Parents are therefore, encouraged to take time to scrutinize the notes of their children while at home, monitor their activities closely, ensure that the type of movies they watch are edifying, bring them to the common room to listen to the National News, share your views with them to assess and improve their understanding.

It is very important that parents attend the Parent-Teacher Dialogue (PTD) of the children’s schools, this will help the parents to rub minds with the school/class teachers and Management on the welfare of the child. The teachers may not know the actions of the child while at home just as the parents do not know what the child does at school. The child also may not relay the correct information from school to the parents when he or she returns home. So, the parents can only get the correct reports or information when they visit the school from time to time.

It is good to have a teacher-guardian for your ward at school, but the parents must not rely on such link with 100% assurance. The parent’s physical presence will encourage the teachers and also motivate the child to work harder.

Teale and Sulzby assert that “Home background plays a significant role in a young child’s orientation to literacy and to education. But home background is a complex of economic, social, cultural, and even personal factors.”⁹ According to most researches done on the parental involvement in their children’s education, the most influential of these four interconnected elements described are the personal backgrounds and the economic backgrounds of parents. These two components also largely contribute to the home environment that they provide for their children. With this information, it is important to note that parental factor is one of the most influential yet significantly underrated factors in their children’s education and society should encourage more parental participation in public education.

Parents’ personal educational backgrounds and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children’s education. However, if parents are positive influencers in their children’s everyday lives and most importantly in their everyday education, the future of our society will look brighter and brighter every day.

Parental involvement in school can help solve this problem by emphasizing the importance of a good education and getting their children excited about learning. For most children to succeed in school, their parents’ interest in their learning is of paramount importance. But this interest ought to be with what happens on a daily basis, because this is how the child lives and this is how he understands his life. The essential ingredient in most children’s success in school is a positive relation to their parents.” (Bettelheim, 1987).¹⁰

⁹ Teale, W. H. and Sulzby E. (1986) “Background and Young Children’s Literacy Development.” Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading. Pg. 193. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1986.

¹⁰ Bettelheim, B. (1987) *A Good Enough Parent: A Book on Child Rearing*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff, Inc., 1987: 55-69.

The Ministry of Education may initiate compelling activities as part of the annual educational activities to educate the parents, either through the individual School PTD or through the Local Education Offices of the States, to organize programmes like enlightenment campaigns or seminars/workshops to educate parents on the need and ways to assist the schools in education of their children.

Also, in some parts of Nigeria, women (mothers) are mostly left to cater for their children alone while their fathers are busy with other affairs, sometimes affairs which has no impact on the family. So, hardly do we find men attending to their children’s challenges in schools or attending their parent-teacher’s meetings. The impression is that they have the duty to provide the money while it becomes the duty of the woman to attend to the children. For instance, in the Philippines, we have children who are under the sole tutelage of their mothers while their fathers are far away in the United States or Canada, or South Korea. Many children in the Country are also living all by themselves due to parents migrating to find greener pastures overseas without their children.

The web CNN reports that “more than 2.2 million Filipinos worked overseas in 2019, and the top five destinations were in Asia and the Middle East.” Continuing, it reports that “their incomes at a high personal cost. Mothers can miss out on entire childhoods. Sometimes their relationship with their children remains damaged and distant, years after they return. Other times, their children’s lives can veer off course without a parent at home.”¹¹ Within my few years in the Philippines, I had the opportunity of talking out many youths and students out of frustrations which would have ended up in planned suicides due to family separations. Such situations could also be found in most other countries in Asia, even in other parts of the world, especially in the United States were luxury life style mostly introduced to teenagers below the age of 17 as a normal thing.

Many men also, especially in Nigeria and some other African countries do not care whether the children’s fees are paid or not, hence you see mothers going to school offices to appeal for extension of time to pay up bills and many other issues. This is not a good mentality for our men. Fathers should be more concerned about their children’s welfare especially in matters regarding education than the mothers, although, they are encouraged to be equally involved in the day to day affairs of their children.

One solution to the challenges of parents which may seem oversimplified, is returning home to assist children with reading every night instead of watching television or playing video games. Sclafani (1989) says, “A parent should begin reading to a child as soon as possible...Books provide interesting visual stimuli to infants, which forms the basis for future interest in books and reading. Keeping a child in age-appropriate books is one of the best investments any parent or grandparent can make.”¹²

¹¹The Philippines’ migrant workers, and the children left behind (2020): <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/11/asia/hong-kong-filipino-helpers-dst/>. Retrieved from android, April 6, 2021.

¹² Sclafani, (1989) In Kurth-Schai, R. (2006) *The Impact of Parents’ Background on their Children’s Education*. Jen

Today, there is more and more emphasis on the use of television, video games and computer games in the education of children and less and less emphasis on the simple act of reading. Parents need to go back to the basics of providing a warm, supportive home environment that supports exploration and self-directed, autonomous behavior and that will greatly increase the chances of having an academically successful child. An emphasis on the parental involvement in education is the key to their children's successful education because they are their first teachers and therefore, establish the beginning of the learning process.

Comments by significant number of people from sample villages, towns and cities in Nigeria and from other nations prove that among the causes of juvenile trancies in Nigeria, parental factors have contributed more than half of the causes. From these comments, it could be deduced that the bane of the rampart and alarming phenomenon of drug addiction, cultism both within and outside the schools, thuggery and the likes in our society today could be traced to the inconsistency in the attention given to children in this century. Parents of today have and give little or no attention to their children as they grow up. It has been noticed rightly that most parents these days, deposit even kids of less than two years of age to the care of Nannies on the streets or in the new trend of the so-called "Crèche" introduced in our Nigerian primary schools today and these kids are left sometimes at the mercy of unqualified and inexperienced hands of "Baby Sitters" for about ten hours, that is, till they return from their jobs. And this is repeated for such an unreasonable length of time, days and years.

Young Nigerian women introduced the idea of pressing out their breast milk in a feeder bottle, kept with the Nannies or strange teacher daily to provide alternative method of feeding for the child. A surprise! A little child insisted on calling her biological mummy "Auntie" while she calls her nanny mummy, and continued that up through her adult age. She was much closer to the baby sitter than her actual mother. Do we consider such as psychologically healthy for the development of the growing infant? Such parents actually do not afford the child an opportunity to feel the warmth of parental weaning. The length of time left for the growing infant to enjoy the influence of her mother becomes too small. Of course, most times, the breast milk reserved in the bottle for the baby gets contaminated due to improper preservation and unprofessional handling by the baby nurses.

Another alarming phenomenon is the scenery where parents are so concerned with their trades and jobs to the detriment of their growing children. Some parents who leave their homes as earlier as 6:00am for their daily routine business to return home as late as 7:00pm, worn-out and hungry. Mostly, while the mothers rush into the kitchen struggling in pains to fix the supper for the family, the fathers are busy showering and rushing to watch some football matches while at the same time impatiently waiting for the table to be set for meal. The children who equally returned from school not too long ago, are saddled with the kitchen assistance – washing of the plates, getting one or two items to the busy mother, to see that the meal is ready in good time. What

next? Everybody becomes very tired and sleepy as soon as they are done with the supper. Half-awake and half asleep, they manage to give half-baked attention to the pressing psychological, social, religious and academic needs of the children.

This is why, teachers observe regularly that most learners in their classes often do not return their take home assignments well prepared or even done at all. Experience as a class teacher and Administrator, revealed that most parents actually see some of their wards or children's take-home assignments, especially "Practical Projects" as a burden on them at home so, they are not always making themselves readily available to assist their children to come up with reasonable solution or assistance to their academic requirements.

Do we expect a child who has no breathing space at home for study at the right time to do well in school? Do we expect a child who sees his or her parents scantily at night but rather spend almost his or her whole day daily with outsiders, to grow up into a well-groomed, responsible child of that parent? Or do we expect a miracle to be made out of a child who has no formidable home-upbringing, to do well and to become a wonderful citizen of the nation? Except the Grace of God catches up with such a child at adult age, if he or she is lucky to fall into the blessed hands of a good and God-fearing citizen who might work extra mile with him or her through prayers and close attention. This becomes a personal decision taken by the individual at adult stage. The teacher's major role is purely academic, though they extend to social and moral touch, but the duty of parents extends to every aspect of their children's living, academic inclusive.

Parents should therefore, be careful to see their children as the first and priority assignment or job they must perform. "Give a lad a training suitable to his character and, even when old, he will not go back on it". (Prov. 22: 6). We must be careful also not to hide under the cover of "poverty" in the country to neglect the proper up-bringing of our God-given children.

EDUCATION AND CIVILIZATION

Education as we rightly understand can be seen as the holistic eye-opening through both academically and socially. Education has been globally proven as the bedrock of personal and collective development. It is the key to national building and enlightenment, however, the system of education in many African countries, especially Nigeria today is so undeveloped and seemingly not adequately planned. There are no much practical and developmental innovations in the national curriculum and mode of instruction. This has resulted to the continuous developmental setbacks and increase in poverty rate in the society. The existing educational curriculums are not prepared or geared towards self-reliance, where it is, there would be no adequate implementation or technical facilities to train the trainers. Africa, Nigeria, and many developing Countries need more functioning and well equipped "Mono-technics and Polytechnics well designed in par with the Universities and awarding degrees like the Universities. There should be Schools of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts wherein every professional is trained to teach others in the field.

Being civil comes from being adequately educated, that is to mean that one can only be civilized when one is holistically tutored to know, understand and live out one's refined

character or attitude towards the civil society. Being civilized is when you are able to impact the environment and community you lived with your wealth of knowledge acquired through your education. Civilization is a way of being socially balanced, maturely, physically, intellectually, religiously, academically and emotionally balanced. The nation could only enjoy infrastructurally, politically, socially and economically civilized if the people living in it are or becomes civilized. Many brains are being wasted because they are not properly guided intellectually at School. There is therefore an urgent need for innovation in learning and teaching in our Schools from the Basic Schools to the Tertiary Institutions of learning, and an on-going educational programmes for character formation and development so as to build up a civilized and organized Society.

Another important area to be addressed by the respective countries and governments is the growing mentality of exportation and migration of individual countries to already developed nations for the sake of greener pastures. In Nigeria, for instance, it is of record that "Nigeria is a destination country for highly skilled migration. According to the 2004 data, immigrants figure prominently in categories such as general managers (2.73%), corporate managers (0.89%), and physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals (0.43%), and less so in clerical work such as customer service clerks (0.21%) or manual work. Most of the immigrants working in the professional/technical and related worker's group are from Europe (47.37%), while most of the immigrants working in clerical jobs are from the neighbouring ECOWAS countries (42.84%)".¹³

The above document also reported that "Although Nigeria is also an important destination for immigrants in the region, there are more people emigrating from, than immigrating to, Nigeria." according to the data, 1,041,284 Nigerian nationals live abroad (DRC, 2007). Most Nigerians abroad live in Sudan (24%), rather than the United States (14%) or the United Kingdom (9%)." Many Nigerian emigrants, according to the data, also settle in neighbouring Cameroon (8%) or Ghana (5%)."¹⁴

It is very difficult to ascertain the data of skilled professionals in diaspora, but it is very glaring that as at 2020, more than 60% percent of Nigerians, males and female alike are highly skilled professionals in various works of life. I may not be wrong then, if I say that these so-called developed countries lure professionals from the poorer nations into their countries, enticing them with good pay. They are mostly educated in Nigeria, and then, the move abroad after their first or second degrees, they are "brushed up" through some kind of professional exams and then employed into the labour force to develop the host country to the detriment of their own motherland.

Is it not interesting to know, that research has shown that the propensity to emigrate from Nigeria is particularly high among the highly skilled? By the year 2000, estimates show that 10.7% of the highly skilled population who were trained in Nigeria work abroad, mostly in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. It also

shows that in the United States and Europe, 83% and 46%, respectively, of the Nigerian immigrant population are highly skilled, and most of them are medical professionals.¹⁵ This is a clear indication of a very poor management of the manpower and resources of the nation. It is not enough to attend school and be educated, but what is important is what the governments make out of the education and training. Education develops the individual, education refines personality, forms and reforms characters, education brings knowledge, education creates wealth, education eradicates poverty, education creates and innovates infrastructure, and above all, education boosts the socio-economic strength of every nation. And this leads to civilization.

Education system in Nigeria:

It is only by bringing in adequate innovations in classroom activities and educational/technological curriculum in general that we can boast of great impact on our youths and in the development of the entire nations in Nigeria. The system of educational delivery in Nigeria has not yielded much fruits, our teachers are not properly formed in their training and for this reason they give half-baked knowledge to the students. observations in the field of education as school administrator for more than twenty years and in various schools, and my experiences with young graduates from most of our Colleges and Universities keeps one wondering. Many are not able to defend their academic certificates, many are not able to create jobs for themselves (Self-employment), and many still cannot find jobs due to improper training. The streets of Nigeria are filled with "young graduates" roaming about without anything tangible to show for their education. Could this be because our young ones are no longer interested in learning, or that those who train the trainers are no more well equipped themselves to do the job? There is a need to shift the present paradigm of education in Nigeria. there is need for the government to invest more money in education sector than any other. No matter how much we invest on other infrastructures, we need well trained professional citizens from the country to manage and maintain those infrastructures. A good maintenance culture involves the availability and sustainability of those hands to do the maintenance and management. There is no gain saying that we need to step up our system of Education in Nigeria and Africa. The United Kingdom and other developed Nations achieved this through persons, and the Nations are where they are today. Africans too, are to take the bull by the horn to make African nations better.

Education and its Accessibility

Offorma (2016), in his opinion asserts; "the essence of education is to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would empower them to solve the problems of their country, and that would lead to sustainable livelihood."¹⁶ It becomes imperative therefore, that for the citizens to attain the goals of education, they need to have access to education. Access to education means the opportunities in institutions of learning, created for the citizens to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes or character and values that will empower them to live a sustainable life. In a nutshell, it is the child's right to education. It deals with the availability, affordability, convenience and ability to be educated. The present curriculum type operational in

¹³ National Manpower Board, (Migration in Nigeria – A Country Profile 2009-Nigeria). (<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/migration-nigeria-country-profile-2009>).

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Offorma, in Offorma and Obiefuna, 2016:2.

Nigeria appears to be lacking in the ability to meet with the assertion of Oforma expressed above, either in content or in implementation because, where it has succeeded in inculcating in the learners the knowledge and skills, it lacks the credential required to effectively inculcate the attitudes and values which are required to make the skills and knowledge acquired homely.

Although it can be noticed that there is visible geometric increase in both public and private owned schools, especially in Nigeria, statistics internationally proves the fact that education is yet to be accessible in high rate within Africa and middle East. In the recent data analysis of children in and out of school, the United Nations presents that "Enrolment in Primary education in developing Countries has reached 91%, but 51 million children still remain out of school." The document further writes that, "More than half of children who are not enrolled in schools live in Sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 50% of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas. 103 million youths worldwide are still illiterates, and more than 60% of them are women." UNESCO, (2020)¹⁷

From the report above, we may conclude that UNESCO's Goal of Quality Education is very important in so many ways. Like we have seen earlier above, education is the only gateway to exposure and knowledge. Without quality education human beings would remain in total darkness, economic and social paradigms would never be achieved since only those who are educated can provide adequate ideas and make good decisions towards the progress of the society. Then, if only a few are enlightened, there would be a serious monotony in ideas from the only few educated, good dialogue and progressive debates will sure be retarded, and through good education good characters and morals could be transferred from one generation to the next. As the saying goes; 'two good heads are better than one good head', this means that a tree, no matter how important and mighty, can never make a forest. This is a good reason why quality education should not be limited to only those who can afford it. There should be logistics put in place in the government policies wherein those who actually cannot afford higher education may have some kind of "support" packages to help them attain this education, formal or informal, through commonly accessible scholarships, grant-in-aid or by way of subsidized payable loans while working. The children of the rich should go through the same processes of admissions, pay same fees as fare as those of the poor persons. There is never to be special schools for the rich separated (in deed) from those attended by the poor children, that is talking about parity of treatment. Everybody also cannot at the same instance attend conventional institutions, for instance, we cannot all go through the University of Nigeria, or the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, there must be a way to assess and recommend those who are intellectually gifted in technical creativity to attend the technical and creative Universities and Colleges, so that such candidates could be trained to be the technical powers of the nation with same recognition and credentials awarded those from other mainstream Universities and Colleges. Dele College of Technology, Ondo State Nigeria was such a great Institution in Nigeria that produced high technically recognized personalities of which my elder brother was one, a highly groomed mechanical Engineer.

¹⁷ UNESCO, (2020) in AIU, (2020) [hppt://www.aiu.edu](http://www.aiu.edu).

This College was a private owned citadel, but come to think of it, what support did it receive from the Federal and State governments to sustain the Institution? Were those Engineers and Technicians valued and utilized by the government to develop the nation? A reflection for another day.

Education opens the horizon of knowledge, and as a Latin proverb says: "*Ne optimusquidem preceptorial omnia docebit*" (Preceptorial will teach all things, indeed, not to obtimus) so, it becomes abundantly clear that no matter how learned or knowledgeable one may be, one cannot know or teach everything to an **optimus** level. *Not even the best teacher can teach everything there is.* It becomes important too, that the UNESCO proposal be taken very serious by all governments and people. No single person should be left out, no matter how poor and helpless. When everyone is learned, there will be no more over-superiority of people over people, the so-called developed nations would have respect for those they tagged underdeveloped because every nation would then have all it takes to build their own resources. Imperialisms and colonialism would stop and modern slavery will be eradicated. Above all, poverty rate would reduce to a relatively zero per cent, and characters will be adequately formed because, 99 per cent of those involved and or used in all sorts of criminality are either School dropouts, those who did not see the four walls of School, children of already made illiterates and those who in the first place did not have any kind of home training. These are same guys indulging in cult activities when they managed to go into tertiary institutions of learning, rarely in classes for lectures, womanizing, etc. their parents may be rich in cash flow, yet it is obvious that money can never purchase good character.

EDO STATE, NIGERIA

For the purpose of this paper, since we cannot discuss all States of Nigeria in this one paper, I crave the indulgence of my own State, Edo, to use our own situation to bring home our discussion on the damage access and affordability of education has caused and still causing our teeming youth population. Like we discussed earlier above, The quality of education in Nigeria is supposed to be one of the highly rated first five in the world, however, this has not been despite the fact that Nigeria has all it takes to be at the top position – the quality of school structures, the quality of Nigerian academic professors and professionals worldwide, and the number of Basic and Tertiary institutions available within Nigeria – these are enough ingredients to place Nigeria very high but today the reverse being the case.

The problem of Edo educational system is that of curriculum implementation and affordability of school fees by the poor and intelligent youths in the villages and cities which has adversely affected the youths of the State. And this has consequently led to adolescent crimes of all kinds. The National Bureau of Statistics Abuja in its 2017 National crime report identified Edo State as prominent in the crimes against humanity and properties; rating "Offences against Persons 697 and Offenses against Property 307, making a total of 1,004 crime cases in 2016 (0.8% of total crimes for the year in Nigeria)" ¹⁸

¹⁸ Bureau of Statistics (2017), Crime Statistics: Reported Offences 2016 – Edo State. file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Crime%20Statistics%20Reported%20Offences%20-%202016-min.pdf

“Offence against persons are those offences against human beings – e.g. murder, manslaughter, infanticide, kidnapping, concealment of birth, rape and other physical abuse, etc. Offence against properties are those offences against human belonging... Properties of any kind - e.g. stealing, receiving stolen properties, obtaining property by false pretense, robbery, burglary and house breaking.”¹⁹

Our field observation shows that there are so many out of School young boys and girls roaming around the streets of Edo communities especially in the major urban areas and many of these migrated into the major urban areas under the cover of searching for greener pastures but only to engage themselves in unpleasant and inhumane activities to make themselves “relevant” financially in the society, perhaps, because there are certainly no available lucrative jobs awaiting their arrival. What kind of jobs could they possibly engage themselves without at least basic Secondary and higher education? Perhaps, they meet with their likes and peers in the Cities with whom they form gangs and create groups. What kind of relevance could they achieve with truancy and delinquencies? What is the use of education in development of the human person and community if it is meant for only the “well-to-do” members of the community?

It is on records too that many tertiary institutions in the country grant admissions into special courses to candidates who are able to lobby and pay unofficial fees to certain officials before they can be admitted, departments such as Medicine, Engineering and the likes, I guess there are those at the top who benefit from the back door fee. Others are subjected to the injustice of what Nigerians define as “Quota system” or “slots”, whereby the children and candidates of special personalities, Politicians, Vice Chancellors/Rectors, and money mongers are granted admissions first (Mostly not on merits) before the second and third list candidates of those who have no “godfathers” and sponsors are considered. On these final lists are usually found those who merited the admissions and the children of the poor citizens and that is if there are more spaces available. The culture and Traditions of Nigeria holds the life, success and happiness of every single Nigerian to a very high esteem. Every child or youth of Edo origin is also a bona-fide citizen of the Federal republic of Nigeria and enjoys every constitutional right and privilege available in Nigeria and for Nigerians. Many of these rights have been stipulated and promulgated in the revered constitutions of the Federal Republic and includes the right to affordable quality education.

The Psychology Today, 2018, describes adolescence as “the years between ages 13 and 19 and can be considered the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. However, the physical and psychological changes that occur in adolescence can start earlier, during the preteen or “tween” years (ages 9 through 12). Adolescence can be a time of both disorientation and discovery. This transitional period can bring up issues of independence and self-identity; many adolescents and their peers face tough choices regarding schoolwork, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and social life. Peer groups, romantic interests, and appearance tend to naturally

increase in importance for some time during a teen's journey toward adulthood.”²⁰

For the World Health Organization, Adolescents are “The second decade: no longer children; not yet adults! Adolescent age is from 10 years to 19 years old, and youths from 15 years to 24 years. They are also classified as young people (10 – 24 years). Adolescent are a diverse population groups with different interests and changing needs. Adolescent age is a time of rapid physical and psychological (cognitive and emotional) growth and development. A time in which new capacities are developed. A time of changing social relationships, expectations, roles and responsibilities.”²¹

This is the reasons nations should pay much attention on their youth and adolescents and create serious developmental platforms for them right from the rural villages where they come from. Having them brought together, in Schools without exception is an ideal way and means of getting them for developmental and character formations in order to prepare them for adulthood.

In Anambra State, a South-East prominent State in Nigeria, the story is much more alarming, where Streetism has become the alamide of the day. It is an observable fact that Anambra State is regarded as economically, politically, socially, and religiously viable as far as Nigeria is concern; it is the commercial nerve of the nation. Empirical evidences based on data generated from reviewed studies provide a holistic picture on the predominance of male street children among an estimated total sample size of 80,220 street children in Nigeria as a nation. Analysis of variance results showed that there exists a significant variation within the towns investigated (Living condition, education, gender, and livelihood strategies). According to Habtamu and Arindam, children coming to the street may be due to push factors like coercion by family, lack of access to education, and the existence of displeasing life in Africa.²²

In a recent field academic research conducted by Azebeokhai, B. O, it was gathered that lack of Basic Education of some parents topped the list of factors pushing young ones into the streets, topping with the highest value of 4.58%, followed by very poor economic situation of parents which has 4.36%, non-commitment of the State government to the well-fare of her citizens 4.04%, lack of jobs and source of livelihood 4, while the failure of the Church to carry her pastoral care to meet the children has mean value of 3.79%.²³ The above data show that irrespective of the many

²⁰Psychology Today (2018). *Adolescence: Puberty, Teenagers*.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/adolescence>

²¹ World Health Organization – Geneva (2012). *Introduction to Adolescence and to Adolescent Health*. Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research. <https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2012/adolescent-health/pdf/Introduction-adolescence-adolescent-health-WHO-2012.pdf>

²² Habtamu, W.A. and Arindam, L. (2016), *Livelihood of Street Children and the Role of Social Intervention: Insights from Literature Using Meta-Analysis*. *Child Development Research (Journal)* Volume 2016, Article ID 3582101.

²³ Azebeokhai, B. O. (2018:25), *Pastoral Care to Street Children of Anambra State, Nigeria: A Case for Public*

¹⁹ Ibid

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions scattered all over Anambra State, education is yet to make serious applaudable impact in the lives of the people, especially the poor due to affordability and curriculum organization. The way and manner people behave on the roads and public places, especially market places, drivers and commuters on the roads, the “task force” boys who represent the revenue collection agencies of the State, even the law enforcement agents, name them, is a clear picture of an area where character formation is generally lacking, and it affecting everyone, the big and the small alike. If education is truly the bedrock of societal civilization, then the situation beckons on the government and the people (stakeholders in education and policy designers) to quickly develop her educational programmes towards achieving human character formation, developmental and economic results. The curriculum and educational policies are to, without prejudice to other academic areas, respond and revitalize the cultural values of the specific areas, because every tribal culture doubtlessly places high value on the sacredness of the human person and drives to protect the lives of its people.

Disability of the Character

Any human who has a character deficiency is for sure incomplete, it is that deficiency that makes the individual behave awkward. Character deficiency is a psychological disability which only education and community collaboration can remedy especially if the individual child is accompanied from the very beginning. In a broader sense, disability does not only imply physical deformities, but it involves inabilities in our social, economic, political and psychosocial and religious state of life.

The ICF²⁴ produced by the World Health Organization, distinguishes between body functions (Physiological or psychological). It defined impairment in bodily structure or function as involving an anomaly, defect, loss or other significant deviation from certain generally accepted population standards, which may fluctuate over time. Activity is defined as the execution of a task or action. The ICF lists nine (9) broad domains of functioning which can be affected: **Learning and applying knowledge, General tasks and demands, Communication, Basic physical mobility, Domestic life, and Self-care (i.e., activities of daily living). Interpersonal interactions and relationships, Community, Social and Civic life, including employment.**²⁵This is why education a child from the onset holistically is very crucial, as the individual gets older it becomes more difficult to change his or her already acquired character, he or she is almost already formed that it takes extra effort to redirect. Psychologically, younger ones learn faster and assimilate what they learn which registers in their sub-conscious shelf. The individual refers back to these stored materials to defend and protects himself or herself unconsciously as the need arises. “A dried fish cannot be bent”, its already dried so, it only needs to be handled with

care to keep it going. Only a humanized educational curriculum may achieve this goal.

The Church and Character Formation Through Education

One of the pastoral functions of the Church is to educate the people in a manner that they will be liberated from the burden of ignorance. Education, social or religious, is a sure way the Church evangelizes the world, and education can be done in various ways. In Nigeria today, like in many other Countries, the Church is noticeably involved, if not at the forefront, in the education ministry, even though she does that as a form of industry instead of as a ministry. The Church should prominently engage herself in the ministry of “Special Education” (SD) as part of her numerous pastoral cares.

A special School is a school catering for pupils or students who have special educational needs due to severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities, behavioral problems, or inability to meet up with financial requirements. Special schools may be specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide the appropriate special education for children with additional needs. These schools can be adequately equipped to meet the learning IQ of the children, especially who have been on the streets for a long period and can no longer meet up with the level of their counterparts or who have been diagnosed of character disorder. Special schools provide individualized education; addressing specified needs. Student-teacher ratio are kept low, often 6:1 or lower depending upon the needs of the children.²⁶ I do also believe that the Church can reorganize the available mission schools to accommodate those children whose parents cannot afford to pay the exorbitant school fees which presently prevents them from entering classes or enrolling in schools. If the existing government schools were properly organized, managed and funded, the government would not have conceded to handing back most schools to the Church. Therefore, for the church to meet the required pastoral excellence through education, and school system, the children on the streets and with other character problems should be put into consideration, without discrimination of any sort. This calls for inclusivity in all church’s pastoral institutions. In public theology, exclusivity is evil.

Way Forward

A typical African Traditional Community trains every child in an informal way, having no formal way of teaching skills or imparting knowledge to children. Traditional culture and values have positive impact in the education of an African child. This is taught mainly by doing, listening, watching etc. African society is inclusive by nature and so education takes place everywhere being functional or appropriate. Traditionally, the curriculum was designed and taught in a manner that was community oriented, practical and usefully applied to meet the diverse needs of all children. Any child, whether able or incapable was the responsibility of the entire community, because of the strong extended family bond.

African tradition is inclusive in nature and does not believe in the existence of individuals but of family, community and society. It believes in the celebration of unity in diversity. Because these cultural norms and values of the society were

Theology. (Master’s Degree Thesis Submitted to Saint Louis University, Baguio City, Philippines) June 20, 2018.

²⁴ International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icfmore/en/>

²⁵ World Health Organization (2004) in Azebeokhai, Ben (2011). *Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse?* St. Stephen Press Inc. Onitsha. Pp. 12.

²⁶ Azebeokhai B. O. (2011). *Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse?* St. Stephen Press Inc., Onitsha Nigeria.

not documented in a written form, the influence of formal education and inter-culture caused most of these original traditions to gradually be replaced with other beliefs, which characterize inability as a manifestation of mysterious fate, perhaps God's will. This has led to some people interacting with these "special" children (with questionable character) with reservation and some parents beginning to hide their affected children from the public view, because of shame over having such child in the family who may bring misfortune upon it. Such beliefs led to abuse, neglect and abandonment, and children's potentials to contribute to the development of the nation is dismissed irrespective of the fact that they could be helped. Gradually, society is beginning to isolate them, segregate them and become less interested in their well-being, so, less attention is given to their education. They are already marked for karma, and they are avoided by neighbours and family members, this pushes them further into finding companionship among his or her likes since birds of same feathers flocks together.

In the 1950s, two movements converged to address the issue of educating children with disabilities of all kinds; the Civil Rights Movement in the wake of the Supreme Court decision (1954). The UNSS²⁷ stated the principle that children should be educated in inclusive schools and inclusive schools are the most effective at building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Solidarity between children lead to one population of children being educated, not two; the challenged and non-challenged children, the children of the well-to-do and the children of the not-well-to-do.²⁸

Despite encouraging developments, there are still an estimated 113 million primary school age children who are not attending School.²⁹ 90% of these children live in low and lower middle-income Countries and over 80 million of these children live in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Of those who do enroll in Primary Schools, large numbers drop out before completing their primary education. This is because current strategies and programs have largely been insufficient or inappropriate regarding needs of children and youths who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

For the children on the street and of course, all special needs children, the whole project of special educational-pastoral program is to be rehabilitation oriented. Its purpose is to teach them basic skills needed for independence such as academic skill of reading, writing, speaking, social skills of getting along with other children, following instructions schedules and other daily routines while career and job skills are taught in vocational rehabilitation centers for the academic non-functional ones, although, I recommend all without exception to willingly embrace skill acquisition programs, seeing the present heart-breaking economic situation in Nigeria, the present day "no available jobs" syndrome.

However, special education entails the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of physical settings, special equipment and materials, teaching procedure, client-counsellor approach system of counselling and other interventions designed to help these special needs children to achieve the greatest possible personal self-sufficiency or actualization and academic success. Features in this educational rehabilitation would include: -

The residential school, The special school, The regular school with these alternative services – 1. The special class, 2. The inerrant teachers, 3. The tutorial services, 4. The teacher consultant and, 5. The resource rooms.

The Residential School: this is a boarding school for a group of challenged children. Good for character reformation.

The Special School: this is a school for single class of disability, example is school for the gifted, although it may include some other group together, however, they attend from homes.

The Regular School: this is the normal school with these other alternative educational plans that help the special needs children to benefit from the studies in the normal school. This is the type of school system which BEMSI foundation wishes to embark upon to enhance holistic training for the children. It is also all inclusive.

These correspond to segregation, partial segregation and integration in special education procedure. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) is supportive of integration of the challenged and poor learners with the other normal children in regular schools with these alternative plans. **Partial segregation** provides for units or classrooms, for instance, for the physically challenged in ordinary schools with their own specialist teachers teaching them separately as according to their needs. **Segregation** denotes those in residential schools who are separated even from their families and other children except during holidays when they will mix with the other children. **Integration** allows for youngsters to learn to live early in life with the non-challenged, thus the prejudices, and discrimination and stigma will be eliminated, these are the different ways of educating the youngsters according to their various abilities.

It is hereby encouraged that the governments and other agents of social and pastoral care, and academics who are into education industries take up this challenge and make education in Nigeria a realistic venture for every individual. The Christian Church especially, who have already embraced Educational industry as a sure means of pastoral mission, have the capacity to redirect her education mission to benefit the children, making their schools and other institutions of learning accessible and affordable to them with the provision of Basic Academic Skills, Personal and Social competence, Occupational Skills, Self-help skills, Social skills, Household skills and character formation or development skills.

"Functional literacy" of course, depends on the intellectual ability of the child. The motivating factor is aiding the individual to maximize and realize his or her academic and behavioral potentials. But above all, the educational rehabilitation should have some strong prevocational education programmes preceding vocational training aimed at introducing the youngsters into a variety of opportunities and skills.

²⁷ UNSS (1994)

²⁸ Culled from: *Lecture by the coordinator of Lilian Foundation (NGO) to Lilian Mediators Nigeria at a workshop on disability management, Enugu 2010.*

²⁹ International Consultative Forum on Education for All (2000).
<http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/education.shtml>

Recommendation

As a follow-up to this research article, we recommend the following for a lasting and sustainable outcome:

1. The government and its relevant ministry in charge of Education should, as a matter of urgency, review the present schools' curriculum to make room for character formation lessons and activities, and to ensure continuous on-going formation and monitoring of individual all through the school period.
2. More school counsellors should be trained and deployed to both primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to work and accompany the pupils and students all through their learning period. The counsellors should be encouraged to make effective use of the student's assessment and behaviour development folders and never to be tired of working with those clients with more frustrating traits.
3. The education department are to do well to continuously convince and encourage private owned schools to employ and engage the services of Guidance Counsellors in their schools.
4. The deployment of trained Guidance Counsellors into classrooms as subject teachers is detrimental to the enormous services of the school counsellors, therefore it should be completely discouraged in Nigeria. the Counsellors must give full time and attention to the many cases of the many students and pupils in the school. He or she is to devote quality and undistracted attention to the needs of the counselees.
5. The Governments should also consider the necessity of deploying social psychologists, clinical psychologists, and forensic psychologists into various communities and/or Local government areas with well-organized offices at strategic areas, to work with community leaders, law enforcement agencies and recognized church leaders in the areas, this is to ensure adequate and prompt access to the services of these professionals by both parents and their children. This will help to sanitize the communities from cases associated with character imbalance which in most cases are the causes of the present-day crime rates and insurgencies of different appearances.
6. Finally, BEMSI (**Better Education and Medical Support Initiative**) Foundation, a non-governmental and non-profit organization, should be encouraged and supported, to include programmes on responsible parenthood and population control through her school programmes and Parents/Teachers Dialogue (PTD) Meetings and seminars. This is to educate parents and children on the negative implication of bearing many children without adequate means of training and giving them adequate parental attention from the grass root, and providing necessary means of livelihood for them.

Bibliographies

- [1] Azebeokhai B. O. (2011). Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse? St. Stephen Press Inc., Onitsha Nigeria.
- [2] Azebeokhai, B. O. (2018:25), Pastoral Care to Street Children of Anambra State, Nigeria: A Case for Public Theology. (*Master's Degree Thesis Submitted to Saint Louis University, Baguio City, Philippines*) June 20, 2018.
- [3] Bettelheim, B. (1987) *A Good Enough Parent: A Book on Child Rearing*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff, Inc., 1987: 55-69.
- [4] Bloom, B. S. and Krathwohl, D. R. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, by a committee of college and university examiners. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. NY, NY: Longmans, Green.
- [5] Bureau of Statistics (2017), Crime Statistics: Reported Offences 2016 – Edo State. file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Crime%20Statistics%20Reported%20Offences%20-%202016-min.pdf
- [6] Clinton, B. (1994) on International Literacy Day, September 8th 1994
- [7] Herbst, W. B. (2015) Aims, goals and objective purpose in curriculum development. Retrieved 6th April, 2021.
- [8] Habtamu, W. A. and Arindam, L. (2016), Livelihood of Street Children and the Role of Social Intervention: Insights from Literature Using Meta-Analysis. *Child Development Research (Journal)* Volume 2016, Article ID 3582101.
- [9] Hutcherson, Kristen (2019) What is Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.quora.com>. April 7, 2021.
- [10] International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icfmore/en/>
- [11] International Consultative Forum on Education for All (2000). <http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/education.shtml>
- [12] National Manpower Board, (Migration in Nigeria – A Country Profile 2009-Nigeria). (<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/migration-nigeria-country-profile-2009>).
- [13] Offorma, in Offorma and Obiefuna, 2016:2.
- [14] Ornstein & Hunkins (2009) *Curriculum: Foundations – Pearson*. Retrieved From: <https://www.pearson.com> 6th April, 2021.
- [15] Psychology Today (2018). *Adolescence: Puberty, Teenagers*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/adolescence>
- [16] Sclafani, (1989) In Kurth-Schai, R. (2006) The Impact of Parents' Background on their Children's Education. *Jen Gratz Educational Studies 268: Saving Our Nation, Saving Our Schools: Public Education for Public Good*.
- [17] Smith, M. (2020) what is Education? A definition and discussion. Retrieved from: <https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-education>. April 1, 2020.
- [18] Teale, W. H. and Sulzby E. (1986) "Background and Young Children's Literacy Development." *Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading*. Pg. 193. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1986.
- [19] The Philippines' migrant workers, and the children left behind (2020):

- <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/11/asia/hong-kong-filipino-helpers-dst/>. Retrieved from android, April 6, 2021.
- [20] UNESCO (2020) Education Transforms Lives. Retrieved from: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education> April 8, 2021.
- [21] UNESCO, (2020) in AIU, (2020) <http://www.aiu.edu>.
- [22] UNSS (1994), Culled from: *Lecture by the coordinator of Lilian Foundation (NGO) to Lilian Mediators Nigeria at a workshop on disability management, Enugu 2010.*
- [23] World Health Organization (2004) in Azebeokhai, Ben (2011). *Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse?* St. Stephen Press Inc. Onitsha. Pp. 12.
- [24] World Health Organization – Geneva (2012). *Introduction to Adolescence and to Adolescent Health. Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research.* <https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2012/adolescent-health/pdf/Introduction-adolescence-adolescent-health-WHO-2012.pdf>

