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Education and Human Capital Development through Appropriate Utilisation of Information Services

Achugbue, Edwin Iroeroavwo (CLN) - Department of Library and Information Science, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria
E-mail: edwindelsu@yahoo.com; edwin12ng@gmail.com
Tel: +2340835676771

&

Ochonogor, Wilson C. (CLN) - Department of Library and Information Science, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria
E-mail: wilch_ochonogor@yahoo.com
Tel: +2340835027145

Abstract

The study examines education and human capital development through appropriate utilisation of information services. The paper is essentially a descriptive analysis of the state of education and human development in Delta state and assesses the readiness of Delta state government on the development of education and human capital. The study from various literature consulted revealed that government contribution to education and human capital development is inadequate and maintain that government use of information machineries and services are unsatisfactory and so

beneficiaries of education and human capital are starved. In view of the above, it was recommended that Delta state government should increase her budgetary allocation to education and adopt appropriate strategies for training and retraining of teachers in all categories of academic institutions in Delta state and also overhaul her information service delivery machinery.

Introduction

Education is an extremely important element in the organisation of modern society. There is now growing awareness in both developed and developing countries of the role of education. According to Adawo (2011) Nigeria had the fastest growing educational industry in the African continent. For instance in 1960, Nigeria had two universities (university of Ibadan and university of Nigeria, Nsukka) with student enrolment of about 1,400. Forty years later, Nigeria had 77 universities, an increase of 75 universities and percentage increase of 3750 (Umo cited in Adawo, 2011). Today, the total number of universities in Nigeria has increased geometrically without a corresponding increase in funding and undermines the place of education on the current legislative list in the 1999 constitution that provided the legal framework for educational management in Nigeria. Primary and secondary schools at 1960 were 15,703 and this has increased to 50, 741 in 2004, an increase of 35,038 or a percentage increase of 233%. The number of secondary schools was 833 in 1960 and increased to 10913 in 2004, an increase of 10030 or percentage increase of 1136% (Adawo, 2011).

Webster's universal dictionary and thesaurus (2010), define education as a process of learning and training, instruction as impacted in schools, colleges and universities. In the light of the above, education therefore means a process by which an individual gains knowledge, insight, develop attitudes or skills. It can therefore be summarised as a process of transmitting cultural values and skills that will help to develop human knowledge. Adedeji (2010) holds the same view and posits that education is a process of transmitting cultural values and other information from generation to generation. According to Nakpodia (2010), education is a systematic instruction for the development of character or mental power.

Roa (2001), cited in Nakpodia (2010) noted that there is an immediate and urgent need for giving education to the people in order to build up our future. Education is synonymous to learning instruction, teaching, acquiring knowledge and guidance. The success of every educational system depends on the quality and quantity of factors of production, that is, human and

material resources. According to Nakpodia (2010), all of the factors, the human resources appear to be the most important because without human efforts, all other factors are inept.

Accordingly, Delta state should invest strategically on education so as to develop her human capital. Young-lee (1996), Obisi (2003) and Obisi and Anyim (2012), asserted that educational enthusiasm has enabled South Korea to have highly educated people who will help to develop the Korean economy. This implies that education and human capital development are catalysts to national development, which will impact positively on the country's economy, infrastructural development, and other facets of the social system. Young-lee (1996) explained that the more people are highly educated, the more positive impact they will make in the country's development. This is because through education, specific human capital abilities would be acquired. This will include acquisition of conceptual knowledge, development of capabilities, development of skills attitudes and orientation.

In the light of the above, the success of our education depends on the level of human capital development, and utilisation of information machinery and services. Aniekwu and Ozochi (2010) explain that education is the key to creating, adopting and spreading knowledge. Basic education increases people's capacity to learn and to interpret information. However in Nigeria, the standard of education is dropping. Blumende (2001) reported that the decline in the quality of education cannot be ignored by anyone who is aware of the significant role of education as an instrument of social transformation and development.

This potential role of education particularly in developing countries is to fulfil its responsibilities frequently. However this is thwarted by long standing problem of finance efficiency, equity, quality and governance (Saint, Hartnet & Strassner, 2003). The financing of higher education is placed within the context of overall education sector financing. Although tertiary education presently receives a larger share of the education vote the latter portion of the federal budget has diminished using data from 1962. Callaway and Musone (1965) concluded that Nigerian education expenditure represented 3.5% of GDP and 15.2% of total government expenditure. From the above, it means that education both at the federal and state level in Nigeria is underfunded; whereas good quality education and standard of

school, according to Asiyai (2012) depend largely on the provision, adequacy, utilisation and management of educational facilities.

In Nigeria, school enrolment has continued to increase without a corresponding increase in facilities for effective teaching and learning as a result of underfunding of education in Nigeria (Asiya, 2012). The above situation, suggests that education is accorded secondary value in Nigeria's value system. This is also evident in the state budgetary allocation to schools. According to Aigbokhan, Imahen and Ailemen (2007) cited in Aluko and Aluko (2011), noted that a cursory look at the magnitude and trend of increases in allocation might be misleading in passing judgement on the budgetary performance until they are placed side-by-side with their percentage allocations. They further noted that the characteristic pattern of the government allocation to education and health in Nigeria as a percentage of the total budget revealed inconsistency. The implication is that education is not given primary attention in the budget and since the late 70's, budgetary allocation to education has not matched the increasing needs of qualitative education for Nigerians to be globally competitive. Research grants are administered discretionally instead of systematically when they are available (Aluko & Aluko, 2011). As a result of this, government attitude towards education has been very poor and Nigeria's educational system tends to produce graduates who lack job skills for employment than those the economy requires to remain vibrant.

Human capital development

Human capital is strategic to the development of any nation; this includes education, health, labour and employment. Human capital according to World Bank cited in Igun (2006), Is the total stock of knowledge, skills, competencies and innovative abilities possessed by the population. Among the most important changes that characterize the 21st century is the increasing importance of knowledge of economic growth and the advent of the world wide labour market and the global social and political transformation. Obisi and Anyim (2012) also noted that human capital development are talents, skills, competencies and other advantages which people possess, and can be put to better use to give organisation and nations more benefits. Nigerian Economic Summit Group (200), Obisi (2003) further posited that human capital can be understood from the perspective of the masses that have acquired the relevant education and skills that can be put to positive use toward the development of the nation. Apparently, human capital

represents the fundamental infrastructure from technological development and by extension economic development (Obisi, 2002).

However, it is important to note that the higher human capital of a society is the higher will be the potentials for economic development. For example, Korea has no outstanding material resources except her human capital which has been supremely important for the growth of the Korean economy. This means that her human capital is a catalyst to economic development (Obisi, 2003; Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2000 & Young-lee, 1996). The concept of human capital formulation according to Adawo (2011) refers to a conscious and continuous process of acquiring and increasing the number of people with requisite knowledge, education, skills, and experience that are crucial for the economic development of a country. Burneth as cited in Adawo (2011) postulated that investing in education raises per capita GNP, reduces poverty and supports the expansion of knowledge. From their views, it means that for any nation to be fully developed, it must give priority to human capital development. This will impact positively on all sectors of a nation's economy, education, and even the social strata.

Human capital development is something that must exist or happen for national development to take place. In addition, human capital development teaches people how to utilise the power of diverse thinking styles (analytical and intuitive) so that we can achieve holistic best practical solution. Human capital development, training and development are basically the same. This is about development that supports investment in human capital, coaching, training, internship and human capital management (Enyekit, Amachule and Teera, 2011). Human capital development is about investments, activities, and processes that produce knowledge, health and skills. It means building the balanced human resources base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to fully engage and contribute to the achievement of the goals of an organisation or nation. It is an effort to increase human knowledge, enhance skills, productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of individuals (Erhurua, 2007; Enyekit, Amachule & Teera 2011).

Challenges of human capital development

Education affects every individual of a country, the general consensus has been that there is a high positive relationship between rise in educational expansion and economic development (Aluko and Aluko, 2011). According to Babalola (2003), cited in Iyeke (2011), the contribution of education to economic growth and development occurs through its ability to increase the

productivity of existing labour force in various ways. Babalola, (2003) and Olamyan and Okemakinde (2008) posit that the rationale behind human capital is based on three arguments:

- a) That a new generation must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been articulated by previous generations.
- b) That a new generation should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes and production methods and social services.
- c) That people must be encouraged entirely to develop new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches.

This seems to be a major challenge because realising these points advanced above look impossible due to low priority in budget allocation to education by the Nigerian government at all levels, vis-a-vis countries like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Aluko and Aluko, 2011). However, non-commitment of government at all levels to human resource development has posed a major problem that resulted in brain drain to universities in Nigeria. According to Aluko and Aluko (2011), brain drain from the universities is as a result of lack of motivation for lectureship post amongst students within the African sub-region. Oni (2000) noted that resources and market for industrialisation are evident but the poor managerial capacity and weak technological institutions constitutes major constraints. According to Aluko and Aluko (2011), in a country where the education and training systems are not geared to the development of national capability, more productive technology cannot be employed. That means that human resource development institutions must be strengthened to develop the needed capacity for Africa development. Such a policy should incorporate the strategies for Technological Capacity Building (TCB) as a continuous social process. To develop this capability, a nation therefore needs to have the appropriate policy, building the necessary institutions and structures which must be sustainable (Aluko and Aluko, 2011).

However today, according to Aluko and Aluko (2011) Nigeria is dismally ranked 151 among the 171 countries weighted in 2004 human development report, Malaysia is ranked 59th , Thailand 76th , Tunisia 92nd , South Africa 119th , India 127th and Ghana 131st . A basic interpretation of this is that Nigeria is only better off than 26 countries in the measurable Human

Development Indices (HDI) and by implication the quality of life of citizens. Two (2) major indices are considered in the ranking include:

- a. Economic performance (Gross Domestic Product – GDP), Gross National Product – GNP).
- b. Per capita income (life expectancy, literacy rate, water, nutrition, sanitation status, health, risks and technology diffusion and use).

It is sad to note that life expectancy in Nigeria is as low as 51 and that about two-thirds of its citizens are poor, living under 1US dollar per day. The above situation is unimaginable in a country and state with natural resources as in Delta state. The economy is still largely import dependent with high rate of unemployment; health care is still infancy whereas a large number of her citizens are key practitioners in the best health systems abroad (Aluko and Aluko, 2011). In contrast, many developing countries have neither articulated a development strategy linking knowledge to economic growth nor built up their capacity to do so.

Although it is Africa's largest country with 20% of the region's population, Nigeria has 15 scientist and engineers engaged in research and development per million persons. This compares with 168 in Brazil, 459 in China, 158 in India, and 4,103 in the United States (World Bank, 2002 and Saint Hartnett and Stratner, 2003), the above scenario is an evidence of the fact that in Nigeria human capital development is not given attention both at the federal and state level. Aluko and Aluko (2011) noted that the Nigerian predicament can be placed squarely on poor human capital development and utilisation of policies encompassing balance and progressive educational development and creation of enabling environment for the full and useful engagement of product of the educational system.

Accordingly, the national manpower board survey cited by Aluko and Aluko (2011), asserted that Nigeria lost more than 1500 professionals to other countries in 1986 alone. Today, the movement of professionals to other countries particularly in education and health is on the increase, this being due to bad leadership in all levels. In Delta state for example, there is no defined policies for human resource development, and so academic staff that through their personal effort, develop themselves in other countries are reluctant to come back while others at home are looking for ways to seek for greener pasture. The UNDP (1996) reported that more than 21,000 Nigerians are in the United States practicing medicine. What this means is that there is unfavourable condition of service in the state in particular and Nigeria at

large coupled with lack of proper information provision machinery and services. The implication is that supposed beneficiaries are not aware of the various human resource development avenues.

According to UNDP a report cited in Obisi and Anyim (2012), Nigeria is rated low in its human development balance sheet on various fronts ranging from education down to infrastructure. Obisi and Anyim (2012) noted that Nigeria has become one of the poorest countries in the world. This is sad indeed and the reason for this sorry state of affairs is that Nigeria's human capital is being neglected and entrepreneurship is not deliberately encouraged and supported. Suffice it to say that without a well nurtured harnessed and developed human capital, entrepreneurship abilities and successes would not develop and grow and Nigeria will continue to lag behind in economic growth.

The role of information

The role of information in the provision of human capital development is very essential, this being because when people are not informed, they will be deformed. However, proper dissemination of information will help to establish a link between the people, government and their environment, so when information delivery machinery is biased then the people or the beneficiaries may not get the desired information. Tidline (2000) noted that development of information and communication technology has resulted in ever increasing expansion of the flow of information. Information therefore can be defined as an assemblage of data in a comprehensible form capable of communication and use (Cawakell, 2003). Information is not restricted to printed words or word of mouth alone, and so whatever form it takes, part of it should be deposited in the library of any status for the purpose of reference. What this means is that, information relating to human capital development can be deposited in the library for the purpose of accessibility.

Libraries are sanctuaries of learning, and all types of libraries provide similar services which include: support education and lifelong learning, gain access to information and communication services and engage in civil activities (American Library Association, 2012), additionally, the library promotes literacy, advancing research and connecting communities and so they serve as agent for change. Therefore government can make information available to people through the library in addition to any other medium.

Conclusion and recommendations

From the review of literature, it was obvious that education and human resource development is at the foundational state. Findings suggest that education is not given the needed attention both at the federal and state levels, nether is there any concrete policy nor programmes for human capital development for Nigeria both at federal and states. In Delta state for example, there is no noticeable impact of the state government in educational development, particularly in tertiary institutions. The state of institutions facilities is very deplorable; there is lack of human capital development initiatives, inadequate utilisation of information machineries and services. The implication is that it has led to brain drain or exodus of some academic staff to other countries.

There is also lack of strategic management of human capital in education on the part of the institution and government and so most of the programmes are not skill oriented, so that most Nigerian graduates cannot compete with their counterparts abroad due to poor learning environment. The research therefore recommends that:

1. Government should put in place appropriate strategic management policies to enhance human capital development.
2. Increase funding for education
3. Intensify efforts towards the development of human capital; this will to a large extent reduce the issue of brain drain.
4. Provide well equipped school practical's laboratories as this will enhance teaching and learning process.
5. Develop attitude toward unbiased dissemination of information by utilising the information service delivery machinery at their disposal and
6. There is the need for improved organisational performance by identifying stake holders in the education sector that are supposed to be beneficiaries of human capital development.

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