

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND GENERAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

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### Abstract

*A critical look at Nigeria's national policy on education on tertiary or higher education reveals a startling chasm of gap between the goals of the policy through General Studies Programme and their expected actualizations. This problem, that is, the chasm of gap, is owned to the maladministration and immoral conducts of the people to whom the students are under their influence directly or indirectly. It is the effects of these chasms of gap that have resulted largely in unemployable youths in Nigeria's labour market per se, youth's restiveness and so many other ills that go with it. In this study, through the philosophical method of critical analysis, the researchers are poised to offer competent administration born of patriotism and good moral conducts on the part of higher institutions' hierarchies as valuable ideas that will bridge the existing gap between the goals of the policy and their expected actualizations, and as such, yield the desired results.*

**Keywords:** General Studies, Nigeria, National Policy, Education

### INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, it is a common knowledge that educational system in it is not what it ought to be. This is evidenced by the fact that, above all, the good number of graduates from this system is unemployable, leading to so many ills in the society. It is not unconnected with this fact that national policy on education was formulated in order to correct the anomaly. But the question is, has this policy in a realistic manner solved the problem it was set out to solve? A juxtaposition of the policy with the state of higher education in Nigeria shows that the policy is far from actualizing its ends. To examine the issue at stake properly, this paper is divided as follows: section I looks into the import of education in Nigeria and its strands of traditional and western system of education and, higher education in particular; section II discloses the origin and the aims and objectives of general studies programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions as it is geared towards addressing higher education problems in Nigeria; section III critically investigates the goals of the National Policy on Education through the General Studies Programme in relation to the overall situation of tertiary or higher education system in Nigerian; section IV proffers solution to the problems exposed and finally; section V ends the discourse with summary and conclusion.

### I. EDUCATION

In the opinion of M. N. Amadi, J. K. Adeyemi, S. O. Ogundiran and Bolanle Awe, Education focuses on the individual and society. It is the act of methodic development or training of the mind, capabilities or character by means of instruction or study. Education differs as broadly in its forms, philosophy, contents, and systems as there are various societies in the world. Education is a life-lasting practice that has interpretation in purpose, type and level. It is a way of socializing people into the community, for sustaining customs and traditions in addition to the modification or changing of same in line with extant ideologies, ideological expansion or reformation. Education is a tool for bringing about national development. Education can be seen

as production and reproduction of knowledge of people's way of life with the intention of preserving and maintaining the social structure that will be able to vouchsafe social order and modifications in the society.<sup>1</sup> Continuing they maintain that, as way of life varies from one society to another; every society cardinally has its own method for nurturing and educating their youth. Thus, the aim of education and the manner of approach may vary from one locality to another, nation to nation and people to people. By way of example, they enthused that the Greek idea of an educated person was someone who was mentally and physically well balanced. For the Romans, the stress was on training. In the mediaeval times in England, the Knight, the Lord and the Priest were seen as good example of thoroughly educated elite. In France, the Scholar was the benchmark of excellence; and Patriot for Germans. In ancient Africa, the warrior, the hunter, the noble man, the man of character or anyone who combined the latter trait with a known skill is acknowledged to be a well-educated, well-integrated and socialized member of his community.<sup>2</sup>

For some scholars, variously, "Education is a process that start from birth and ends in death; Education is the sum total of the culture which a society deliberately gives its younger generation in order to qualify them and raise the level of improvement it has attained; Education is the totality of life experiences; Education is the process of developing knowledge and ability in learners for personal and societal enhancement."<sup>3</sup> According to A. Esu and A. Junaid, in general, education is seen to be the means through which a people's culture is handed down from one generation to another. It is an exercise that ushers in relatively a lasting change in human behaviour. Being the oldest industry, it is the major tool used by society to preserve, standardize and improve its social balance. Hence, a society's future lies greatly on the quality of its citizen's education.<sup>4</sup> In furtherance they maintain that, in every human societies, education is the instrument used in passing on to the new generations the extant knowledge of their physical environment, a means of orientating individuals to the organization of society, a means of passing on skills for performing their daily jobs and enjoying their leisure, cum instilling sound morals in them for their own good and that of the society. That is to say, education is a process by which the society helps the younger generation to know the heritage of their past, participate creatively in the society of the present and as well contribute to the future. Sequel to the above reasons, "education draws inspiration and nourishment from a society, but in turn, it contributes to the growth, renewal and development of that society."<sup>5</sup>

Talking about education in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general, one cannot but recall the systems of education that exist, namely, traditional and western systems of education, respectively.

#### **a). Traditional System of Education**

Prior the advent of Europeans in Africa, African societies were remarkable for their rich cultural heritage which was preserved and handed down from generation to generation through a system of education. This system of education in Africa was for the induction of members of the society into activities and mode of thought that were deemed valuable. This system of education is variously called indigenous, pre-colonial or informal or tribal or community-based or traditional system of education. Though there were almost in all the cases no schools and, professional teachers so to speak, there were certain designated areas for initiation and adult members of the community helped as teachers. Such a traditional system of training had not the modern classroom arrangement under the close supervision of teachers. This arrangement was marked by absence of students/pupils with uniforms, departmentalization and permanent teachers.<sup>6</sup>

Ultimately, it was a practical training fashioned to enable the individual be of good use to the community. Its philosophy was very pragmatic and was arranged to form a sluice to the life of the community. It was premised on the philosophy of functionality and productivity. Although there were few theoretical abstractions, the major aim was to instill a sense of social responsibility of the community to individuals to become productive members of the society. Among the core features of traditional African education was the apprenticeship system of learning whereby people learned under masters.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, traditional education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage to foster continuously the well being of mankind. The content of the curriculum of traditional education was very comprehensive and based on the philosophy underlying the various job responsibilities in society. The curriculum, though not documented, was very elaborate embracing all aspects of human development. These ranged from mental broadening, physical fitness, moral uprightness, religious deference to good social adjustment and interaction. Both children and adolescents took part in such activities as wrestling, dancing, drumming and acrobatic displays. There was emphasis on mastery learning, which also features in contemporary educational process. Individual training included the learning of certain virtues such as honesty, respect for other peoples' property and rights, and the dignity of manual labour. Hard work, productivity, self reliance and collective orientation towards the maintenance of the existing social order were emphasized.<sup>8</sup>

With regard to vocational studies, young ones were schooled in the art of farming, fishing, weaving, cooking, hunting, carving, knitting, building of houses, mat-making and creating local farm implements. Different societal concerns formed political traditional education. To give an instance, children were taught rules and regulations governing family, village and the individual, relationship between members of society and villages. Intellectual formation had within its ambient the study of local history, legends, poetry, reasoning, riddles and proverbs. People found proficient in these areas were highly regarded in the society as their prowess was of great advantage to their community. "An individual's intellect in these directions was developed to enable him fit into such professional groups as rain makers, herbalists, hunters, cult leaders and priests."<sup>9</sup> In terms of mode of inculcating education, the traditional education method was "do - as - I - do" and story-telling which was deployed effectively in teaching local history to children. The art of imparting profound knowledge and understanding of the moral codes and principles of traditional medicine, carpentry, sorcery, or cultism was an exclusive reserve of particular families and training for these was by means of apprenticeship system. "Practical objects were handled by the learners during the course of their training. Assessment of learners' performances was on a continuous basis (an idea that is being revisited in contemporary educational system today). A practical test relevant to the learners' experiences and level of development was the final examination."<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that most of the features of African traditional education system are prominent in the contemporary educational system. For example, people who studied certain trades or vocations spent a specified period of time and at graduation through a ceremony were given either tools or materials to start their own trades. It seems that the idea of specified period of training, awarding of degrees or diplomas or certificate and convocation ceremony is derived from

the traditional system of education. How to meet the needs of African society in current parlance was a major concern of traditional African education (Obebe 1993). Education was functional and relevant to social life or realities of the community. Equal opportunities were provided for adults, females, males and children alike in all areas, academic, recreational, vocational, and social. Hence, there was no problem of unemployment as men and women were engaged in meaningful activities which they lived on. Traditional African education system was an indispensable factor for the smooth integration of the growing children into society.<sup>11</sup>

#### **b). Western/ Formal Education**

Historically, western or formal education in Nigeria can be linked to the concerted efforts of European Missionaries around 1842. Schooling within this period was seen as an irreplaceable element to the propagation of the Christian faith. Sequel to this, education embarked upon at this inchoate stage was comingled with Christian evangelism.<sup>12</sup> The early missionaries set up and manned the budding schools in Nigeria. Equally, they fashioned the curriculum for such schools and committed their little resources to the establishment of schools for Nigerian youths. As their wont, every missionary who landed on Nigerian soil doubled as an evangelical worker and an educational worker. As a result of this, early mission schools were established by the Methodist Church of Scotland Mission, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Roman Catholics. "By 1882, the CMS had seventeen elementary and infant day schools for boys and girls in various parts of Lagos. Nine of these schools were under the direction of the Lagos Church of England School Board while others were managed by the local board of the Church Missionary Society."<sup>13</sup> In contrast to the southern and western part of Nigeria, the expansion of western education in the northern part of Nigeria was not all that easy. This was owed to the fact the north had already got an established Islamic system of education many years back before the broaching of western education to them. The above notwithstanding, efforts were made by various missionaries to open primary schools in the north. Where they succeeded, the subjects taught in most of the primary schools included: Scripture, English Compositions, English Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Music, Singing, Reading, Writing, Dictation, and for girls Sewing. The focus in the infant learning was on the teaching of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. However, the growth of schools was obstructed by inadequate funding and in some cases parents' and guardians' indisposition to allow their children and wards, in most cases girls, to attend school.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike the traditional system of education, the western system of education had an organized class room setting, with pupils/students having uniform they wear to school; textbooks were made use of with trained teachers to teach and guide the pupils/students through; students are promoted to the next stage of learning, class, if they have successfully completed the preceding stage after an examination had been conducted and having spent the required period of time. In a nutshell, the western system of education unlike its traditional counterpart is formal while the latter is informal.

#### **c). Tertiary/Higher Education in Nigeria**

In the opinion of M. N. Amadi *et al*, the definition of higher education varies in accordance with the context. For them, in most cases, all definitions purport the fact that higher education refers to post-secondary education or study that has passed the stage of post-secondary

education where a degree, diploma, or certificate is awarded at the end of study.<sup>15</sup> Higher education builds and consolidates on the level of competence, knowledge and skills usually garnered at the secondary education level. The accurate definition of this level, of higher education institution or programme, however, differs from one country to another. As a result, the concept of higher education institution may as well differ. As an instance, in some countries, teacher education is said to be an area of higher education. For some other countries, it is seen to be part of post-secondary education instead of part of higher education. The Association of African University's (AAU) Working Group on Higher Education prescribes that higher education ought to add tertiary education institutions that are not universities. Also added, at the second African Union (AU) Meeting of Experts, higher education was explained as including all post-secondary education, including universities, polytechnics and technical colleges, teachers training institutions, institute for medical training and agriculture and allied fields, distance education centers, and research centers and institutes, with the vision of broadening to include other forms of post-secondary education.<sup>16</sup> For *National Policy on Education and Major Reforms and Innovations Recently Introduced into the Nigerian Educational System*, "Tertiary education is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses."<sup>17</sup>

From a global view point, economic and social progresses are growingly propelling the improvement and application of knowledge. Education in general and higher education *per se*, are primary to the formulation of a knowledge economy and society in every countries of the world today. Every nation sees in higher education, via its traditional roles of teaching, research and community service to evolve manpower and transmit needed knowledge that are required in industry and other spheres of the nation's existence. "The Nigeria higher education system comprised of universities, polytechnics, and colleges offering programmes in teacher education and agriculture. Higher education is a community of scholars, free to pursue knowledge without undue interference from anywhere."<sup>18</sup> Arguably, the truism that every nation sees in her tertiary or higher education, through its normative roles of teaching, research and community service to build manpower and transmit needed knowledge that are required in industry and other spheres of the nation's existence, may have triggered the introduction of General Studies Programme in Nigerian universities for speedy actualization of the above aims. What is General Studies programme all about?

## II. GENERAL STUDIES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

One may ask, what is the origin of General Studies programme in Nigerian universities? It is through the approval of a minimal standard for academic activities that, the National University Commission (NUC) launched the General Studies programme into the University's curricula. This was done in order to satisfy the longing for students in Nigerian Universities to be well grounded and, perhaps well rounded as well, in interdisciplinary studies so as to compare conveniently with their mates in universities in other parts of the globe.<sup>19</sup> With this lofty idea in mind, the aims and objectives of the programme could be seen from the articulations of different universities in Nigeria.

For the University of Ibadan, the aim of the General Studies Programme is to open students up to a course of liberal education by which they can grow and broaden their knowledge of their social, cultural and natural environments. With the inclusion of this programme to the specialized courses offered by the students, it is hoped that graduates would go out better equipped to deliver in the society. Particularly, the General Studies Programme aims at helping

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students build necessary and enough competence in the use of English language as an instrument for their studies and effective way of communication in society and in their would be employment/enterprise. Equally, it will empower them to gather a body of situational relevant awareness beyond their individual areas of specialization for a better and successful living.<sup>20</sup>

For the University of Ilorin, the objectives of the programme are: a). To better the language and communication skills of all students and to assist them build enough fitness in the use of English as an instrument for their now and would be occupation. b). To aid students to grow and develop the knowledge of their social, cultural and physical milieu which automatically will equip them to operate actively in their society. c). To socialize the Nigerian students to cultivate acceptable behaviours, attitudes, patriotism, nationalism and value the status of the constitution as well as create the awareness in students about the roles and obligations of Government at all levels.<sup>21</sup>

An insight into some of the courses offered at General Studies Programme will aid us more in this discussion.

GST 101: USE OF ENGLISH, this course was ushered into Nigerian Universities and other tertiary institutions due to incessant complaints by lecturers and employers of labour that many undergraduates and even graduates themselves lacked the ability to express themselves competently in the English language. It was rather shameful and actually disheartening that Nigerian graduates could not even write common application letters for employment in a language considered a national language. Hence, use of English was brought in as a finishing course in Nigerian Universities with the following main objectives:

- a). To offer students in all departments a sound foundation and functional mastery of the English Language in its various uses.
- b). To breed able and inspiring users of English who can assert themselves as expected.
- c). To enable students understand adequate approaches of organizing time; taking, organizing and developing notes.
- d). To enable students understand how to utilize the library adequately.<sup>22</sup>

GST 102: PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC. Among the aims and objective of this course, it is geared towards investigating numerous areas through which students on graduation, would have been greatly prepared with requisite potentialities for the most responsively active citizenship. This is obtainable via its inherent ability for interrogating other areas of study like religion, education, Mathematics, Science, Literature, Social Sciences, History, Language, and even newly opened area of Oil and Gas. This is the brain behind the description of philosophy as a 'second-order discipline'. Philosophy as such targets developing a complete knowledge of the Universe by means of investigation of the facts of our knowledge. This dovetails well with Bertrand Russell's stand that the target of philosophy is to explore knowledge emanating from a critical and understanding investigation of the basis of our conviction and equally to free our minds from the unquestionables and elements of redundancy in traditions and customs. This aim of philosophy has merited for it the approval of the Federal Government of Nigeria via the agency of NUC which instructs all Nigerian Universities to teach students its fundamentals and methods so as to inculcate in students the values of positive and moral character and the custom of rational enquiry which are prerequisite for the struggles of life in a post-tertiary society.

**GST 103: NIGERIAN PEOPLES AND CULTURE.** Establishing the indubitability of culture as the fundament of Nigeria's national policies, whether economic, education, politics, religious or social lives, this course, as such, is needful in order to assist students understand and accordingly be able at the completion of the course content, build and promote the cultural heritage of the indigenous Nigerian and African, cum other world traditions. This Course hopes to instill in students, the knowledge of the plurality of Nigerian culture and equally the likelihood of establishing a melting pot of this pluralism into one Nigerian (National) culture in the African and other world cultures. Ultimately, the course will adequately engender Nigeria's unity with stress on the common ties that bind Nigerians in diversity and homogeneity out of the heterogeneity of cultures. "Finally, it will enable the students to know that the University exists to serve Nigeria as a whole, and each student has an important role to play in fostering national unity, which is the basic pre-condition for growth and development."<sup>23</sup>

**GST 104: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE** is targeted at familiarizing the students with primary knowledge of the humble beginning of science and technology while keeping them informed of contemporary happenings and improvements in different areas of science and technology. Emphasis is placed on how different avenues in these different areas of study directly touch the society, the environment, the individual, the nation and the world in general. The cardinal function of science and technology in sustainable national development is made abundantly clear while emphasizing the feats of some scientific establishments in Nigeria. Nigeria's national policy on science and technology is laid bare. The students are then required to welcome scientific reasoning, employ technology accurately and become trustworthy agents of positive change in the society.<sup>24</sup>

**GST 222: PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STUDIES,** among other things, this course is fashioned to open students up to Peace and Conflict Resolution as necessary recipes for national development. Making use of case studies from within Nigeria, Africa and other parts of the world, the course targets at awakening in students' consciousness the desire for peace and the hunger for working towards it at both the individual and collective levels of human existence, most importantly in their immediate societies. The core areas of interest for this Course are: Basic concepts of Peace Studies – Conflict, Violence, Peace, Mediation, Ceasefire, Peacemaking, Peace Enforcement, Peace building, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Terrorism, etc.

**GST 223: ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES.** The ideal for creating this curriculum is to breed graduates with some added values beyond their particular area of study for the sole aim of self reliance. Its focus is to re-channel education/training for relevance and quality by building in the undergraduate/graduate an entrepreneurial frame of mind and furnishing each with the skills requisite to begin and manage a business successfully.

#### **ESP 311: SKILLS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The Centre for Entrepreneurship is furnished with a Lab/workshop/Resource room to interface skills acquisition hands on testing of prototypes for interested students from all areas of study on the academic offerings in the University. This is based on a demand/pull criterion to form economical class sizes. Skills requisitions are in 3 categories, A, B, and C. They are listed below.

**GROUP A TRADE (SKILLS)**

1. Soap/Detergent, Tooth Brushes and Tooth Paste Making
2. Cloth dying/Textile blocks making
3. Rope making
4. Brewing
5. Water treatment/conditioning/packaging
6. Food Processing/Packaging/Preservation
7. Tanning Industry
8. Vegetable Oil and Salt Extractions
9. Fisheries/Aquaculture
10. Bakery
11. Leather tanning

**GROUP B**

1. Photography
2. Paper Production
3. Farming (Crop)
4. Tailoring
5. Interior decoration
6. Printing
7. Animal Husbandry (Poultry, Piggery, Goat Etc)
8. Book - keeping.

**GROUP C**

1. Bricks, Nails, Screws making 2 Plumbing
3. Vulcanizing
4. Glassware Production/Ceramic Production
5. Metal Working/Fabrication-Steel Aluminium doors And Windows
6. Refrigeration! Air-conditioning
7. Plastic Making
8. Domestic Electrical Wiring 9 Radio/TV Repairs
10. Carving
11. Weaving
12. Brick Laying/Making
13. Iron welding
14. Building drawing
15. Carpentry
16. Metal Craft- Blacksmith Tinsmith etc
17. Sanitary Wares
18. Vehicle Maintenance <sup>25</sup>

**III. QUESTIONING**

Having defined tertiary or higher education as the education offered at the successful completion of secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses, the *National Policy*

*on Education and Major Reforms and Innovations Recently Introduced into the Nigerian Educational System*, went ahead to pronounce the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria as, to:

(a) contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; (b) develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; (c) develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; (d) acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; (e) promote and encourage scholarship and community service; (f) forge and cement national unity; and (g) promote national and international understanding and interaction.<sup>26</sup>

As earlier on stated, in order to actualize the goals of tertiary or higher education effectively, General Studies Programme was introduced into Nigerian universities. Number one of the goals says, contributing to national development by means of high level suitable manpower training. By manpower is meant, "The number of workers needed or available to do a particular job."<sup>27</sup> The goal thereof is to train students who will after their graduation be suitably qualified to do specific jobs, having supposedly been trained in particular areas. But the question is, the supposed trainers, in terms of lecturers, are they adequately trained themselves in terms of sponsorship into advanced skills acquisition that will enable them impart more meaningfully on the students the high level training that they require? That is to say, are the lecturers sponsored to attend conferences, seminars, workshops, etc., that will enable them possess the necessary skills needed to train the students in the required form? Do they even have suitable and conducive offices that will facilitate quality output? Are there provision of classrooms, library, laboratories, etc., that are worthy of the name that should enhance the required training? Different suggestions have been proffered by well meaning scholars on the issue of adequate funding of tertiary or higher education in Nigeria. But the problem boils down to the fact that there is insincerity or rather unpatriotism on the part of those saddled with the responsibility of adequate funding. In the institutions of higher learning, one witnesses the situation whereby Vice chancellors, Provosts, Rectors, etc., refuse funds to lecturers who are supposed to attend one conference, seminar, and workshop or another under the pretext that there is lack of fund. But it is the same Vice chancellors, Rectors, Provosts, etc., and their cronies that will go out buying landed properties, exotic cars, etc., for themselves in choice areas in the society. Some will have their wards and children schooling overseas at a very high cost but they will not give necessary empowerment to the lecturers in Nigeria in order for them to give the students high quality training. What of the cases where the Vice chancellors, Rectors, Provost, etc., short change the excellence required in these institutions of higher learning by bribing the hierarchy of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to approve and accredit Departments, Faculties that do not qualify for such accreditation or NUC refusing to accredit those due for accreditation because there was no form of inducement for them? All these go a long way in militating against the platform for high quality training for the students.

What of the attitude of those in government and private sector under the umbrella of public private partnership initiative funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria? What more evidence can one ask for when these individuals send their children and wards to study overseas out of the money they make in Nigeria? It means that they have no faith, confidence in Nigerian educational system whereas they are the people meant to uplift and sustain the required standard. All these make the issue of high level relevant manpower training for students to be a mirage due to lack of adequate funding. What will facilitate the lecturers in giving students such quality

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training in a system that is impoverished and stifled by those whose primary responsibility is to provide the enabling environment for such?

The second item on the goals says, to evolve and instill correct values for the survival of the individual and society. Efforts have been and are still being made to inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society but the obstacle to this noble vision is the attitude of the people who are supposed to be the role models. What value will a student learn when a lecturer who is supposed to be looked upon is seen selling out grades to the students without the normal process of passing continuous assessment and examinations? What value will students assimilate where a lecturer throws morality to the wind by insisting that he or she must have a carnal knowledge of a student before he or she passes a particular course? What value when a lecturer hardly comes to deliver lectures or comes late but proceeds with the lecture without apology for lateness? What value when some lecturers and some personnel in the administrative sectors are members of secret societies and yet pay lip service that students should not be cultists? All these culminate in most students not having the right, desirable values. Who is to be blamed? This ugly phenomenon has its replica in the Nigerian wider society. A situation whereby a leader embezzles the money meant for all and leaving almost everybody in an unspeakable conditions of hardship is enough an example for the students and others to selfishly struggle for their own survival. The situation is strengthened by the ethnic chauvinism and religious bigotry being exhibited by the leaders. All these have left in their wake high rate of criminal activities to the extent of vandalizing the oil pipelines that sustain, majorly, the economy of the nation.

The third goal is to build the intellectual capability of individuals to comprehend and value their local and external environments. The ESP 311 Skills in Entrepreneurship according to M.N. Amadi *et al* seem to capture very well the idea of Nigerian University curricula being local content driven. But the question is, how has it been made enticing and practicable enough to attract the attention of the students? The course is quite attractive in its details in the course contents but the attractiveness is only on paper and not in practice. And that is why it is unpopular among the students; and this unpopularity is not unconnected with the fact that the emphasis is on courses that will mainly guarantee one white-collar jobs to the detriment of those locally driven ones that will make the students to be self-reliant in the first place.

Goal number six implies building and consolidating on national unity. This goal seems too tall a dream to realize. Its realization is doubtful in a situation where students are aware of the divisive nature of the country as a result of the utterances, actions and inactions of the so-called leaders. Today, Nigeria youth corps member who are posted to some areas other than their states of origin almost immediately begin to plan for redeployment for fear of their lives. And there is no way one can meaningfully talk about the idea of forging and cementing national unity in the minds of Nigerian university students whereas the supposed leaders through their utterances, actions, inactions, etc., suggest otherwise.

All these perceived negative factors constitute serious obstacle to the realization of the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria. And they have in turn, in one way or the other resulted in the churning out of graduates that are almost always unemployable due to lack of required quality training; youths prone to crimes because the leaders have failed to live by good example; hatred, fear and distrust among fellow Nigerians when they are not within their own states of origin and; lastly, high sense of religious consciousness which has in recent times given rise to division and disunity among Nigerians especially, among the youths.

#### **IV. WAYS OUT**

One can argue unequivocally from the questioning above that the gap between the goals of the National Policy on Education pertaining to tertiary education and their speedy actualization through General Studies Programme borders mainly on lack of patriotism and immorality on the part of the hierarchy in the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria and, by extension, our political leaders. This is evidenced by the problems discussed above. For a way forward, there is need for the spirit of patriotism to be etched in the heart of every Nigerian especially among the leaders both in the institutions of higher learning and political office holders before it trickles down to other Nigerians especially the students. It is the spirit of patriotism that will make our leaders, both policy makers and otherwise to see to the fact that Nigeria is the only country we have and therefore everything humanly possible must be done to make it as enviable as other nations they admire to the extent of sending their children and wards to them for education. It is the availability of adequate funding resulting from patriotism that will make the course contents of most General Studies courses that are local content driven more attractive and realizable, and as such, leading to the much needed sustainable national growth and development. It is the patriotic spirit that will make them fund the education sector in such a way that it will become the envy of other nations, hence, rendering the attraction of oversea studies unattractive. Besides funding, patriotic spirit will make our leaders imbibe and discharge the right values which will in turn be easier for our students to cultivate. It is the same patriotism that will make disciplinary commissions in tertiary institutions to mete out adequate punishment to erring lecturers without fear or favour. It is the patriotic spirit that will make our leaders to jettison the mindset of ethnic jingoism and religious chauvinism shown in their utterances, actions and inactions which has left the country more divided than united which in turn is influencing the students to the extent that they find it difficult to associate freely with their fellow countrymen and women outside of their own state of origin. It is when this mindset is in place that the actualization of the goals on tertiary education will begin to make meaning and the vision of General Studies Programme as the foundation for a rounded tertiary education a reality. But the big question one may ask is how can we come about this patriotism?

It is clear to every well meaning and observing Nigerian that we have not been where we ought to be in every aspect of our existence. This is enough a burden on us to have a rethink. And for Nigerians to be patriotic, it means that the injustice in terms of lopsided political structure in Nigeria must be addressed through a genuine dialogue. It is when every part of the country is positively carried along without any premeditated marginalization and other attendant ills that the spirit of patriotism will result. This is because for now most Nigerians see the country as a place where one should struggle to get whatever one can get and make the capital out of it because there is no sense of belongingness pervading among all. That is why some who have made the money prefer overseas education for their children and wards. This call for genuine dialogue to carry every Nigerian along should be propagated in conferences, seminars, workshops, etc., pointing out the negative consequences of our unpatriotism. Until this is done, the chasm of gap between the goals of the National policy on education fleshed out through General Studies Programme and their actual realization will continue to widen much less having a rounded Nigerian graduate.

## **V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In this paper, we x-rayed the gap between the goals of the National Policy on tertiary education in the background of General Studies Programme in Nigeria universities and their actual realization. Fundamentally, our research showed among many problems leading to this chasm of gap, that unpatriotism is the chief cause. It therefore maintained that the gap will continue to widen and the noble vision of General Studies Programme as the foundation for a well-rounded tertiary education a mirage in Nigerian educational system if the mindset of unpatriotism pervading every Nigerian especially the leaders are not constructively addressed. This unpatriotism will be addressed, the paper maintained, if a genuine dialogue is called up to address the imbalanced socio-political arrangement in the country which has left most Nigerians more divided than united. It is when this is done and everything is put in proper perspective that the hierarchy in Nigerian tertiary institutions will more seriously do the needful in terms of adequate funding and good moral conducts and the students will automatically be trained aright and imbibe the needed values as well.

In conclusion, the paper maintained that until this fundamental issue is addressed, the maxim that General Studies Programme is a foundation for a rounded tertiary education will not be realizable in Nigerian context.

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