



## EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMANCIPATION IN NIGERIA.

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### **Abstract**

*Secondary education is planned to offer diversified curriculum that could among others, provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. Basically it is meant to prepare the school leavers for the world of work and help them to contribute positively to societal growth and development. Today, the secondary school system in Nigeria is far from achieving this purpose. This paper therefore, examined how secondary education could be effectively managed to promote the realisation of its objectives and make its products essentially autonomous and relevant to the demands of today's competitive global markets. In doing this, the paper examined the concepts of effective management and socio-economic emancipation among others. The paper also inter-relates the state of education and socio-economic emancipation in Nigeria. The challenges facing effective management of secondary education and true emancipation are also examined. The paper identified problems like poor implementation of government policies, poor funding of education sector, corruption and mismanagement of available resources among other challenges hindering true emancipation and effective management of secondary education in Nigeria. The paper concludes that no meaningful socio-economic and political emancipation can be attained unless the identified challenges are effectively addressed. The paper suggested among others, that adequate funds should be made available to the education sub-sector and laudable educational policies should be faithfully implemented so that the system could run smoothly and its objectives achieved.*

**Keywords:** *Effective Implementation, Socio-economic emancipation, Secondary education, Funding, Economic Development.*

## **Introduction**

Education has been widely accepted as a powerful instrument of change especially in the patterns of life of the individual and of the society as a whole. It is about the most potent tool for speedy socio-economic development and stable political emancipation in all nations of the world. According to Osuji and Koko (2018) education is commonly perceived as the most powerful weapon in alleviating poverty, elevating economic growth, producing skilled human resources, creating a healthy and enlightened social environment and creating self-reliant/sufficient nation. It is against this backdrop that the National Policy on Education submit that education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (FRN, 2004).

Education is an instrument for national development, social change and a vehicle for developing skills, competencies and imparting knowledge; it is believed that without education, various socio-economic activities in the society will remain stagnant and the society will continue to wallow in ignorance (Osuji & Koko, 2018). This perhaps make Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019) to conclude that no nation or people can have meaningful development without paying proper attention to its education.

Secondary education as a level, occupies a critical and strategic position in view of the crucial role it plays in preparing the students for higher education and useful living in the society. In essence it serves as a link between the primary level and higher level of education. As rightly submitted by Osuji and Koko (2018), secondary education is very important as it gives the youths the right to acquire necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which enable them to lead live and become productive individuals and discharge their social duties as global citizens.

Unfortunately today, the secondary school system is besieged by series of challenges ranging from inadequate supervision to indiscipline on the part of teachers and students, cultism, examination malpractices, mismanagement of allocated resources, poor teaching facilities, and failing academic standards among others (Adeniran, 2019). In a similar vein, Awolola (2017) identified problems like inadequacy of instructional supervision, lack of infrastructural facilities and lack of qualified teachers as some of the challenges facing public

secondary schools in Nigeria. Also Chidobi and Okenwa (2015) listed factors like inadequate funding, lack of qualified teachers, lack of infrastructural facilities, examination malpractices, and poor policies implementation as challenges constraining education from being an effective instrument for development and national security.

These challenges may pose serious threat to socio-economic development and political emancipation in the country. Even as a nation, Nigeria is faced with series of problems. According to Salman et. al (2011) cited by Okeke (2014), Nigeria as a developing country, is being confronted by enormous economic social, political and educational challenges. These challenges, Okeke (2014) wrote further, tremendously affect national attempts to institute sustainable development.

When national development becomes difficult to be sustained, socio-economic and political emancipation may become a mirage. According to Osuji and Koko (2018) socio-economic emancipation has to do with the youths having the ability/freedom and power to determine the own social and political rights and determine their own financial position and future. It has to do with one developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence. It was further affirmed by Osuji and Koko (2018) that socio-economic emancipation of youths refers to the economic, social and political empowerment of citizens/youths after receiving basic secondary education especially on the area of earning sustainable means of living.

It is however instructive to note that, much as this socio-economic emancipation appears and sound as a way out of the present quagmire in which we are enmeshed by the followership/leadership problem and the crisis of confidence that follows, the current state of Nigeria education system may make socio-economic and political emancipation difficult. The question at this juncture is: how many youths/citizens of this country are economically, socially and politically empowered, or can boast of a sustainable means of livelihood after receiving basic secondary education.

According to Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), the Nigerian education system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is known to be faced with lots of serious challenges. Attempted solution of one type of crisis inevitably led to another. Similarly Ogalor (2013) cited by Okeke (2014) observed that the Nigerian state operates a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy with a 19<sup>th</sup> century education system. A system whereby much

emphasis is still placed on the conventional classroom environment with much reverence for certificate for graduates, who in most cases are trained to be job-seekers, as evidenced in the present high unemployment rate in the land.

Since the nation's system of education appears to be running contrary to the principles of socio-economic emancipation and development, there is a strong need to re-examine and fine-tune the educational system with a view to producing graduates who shall not only be autonomous but also have self-confidence in their abilities to fend for themselves and be equally relevant to the present market economy.

**Conceptual Clarifications:** The study shall make a brief clarifications of the following concepts: Emancipation, Socio-economic emancipation, Effective management, and Socio-economic development.

**Emancipation:** A state of being free from legal, social or political restriction, freedom from slavery (Soanes, Hawker & Elliot, 2006). Originally emancipation was a concept of the ancient Roman legal terminology. Through a ritual act, a son was released from the overall authority of the father. The son was ceremoniously taken out of the hand of the father and became a legal person and a self-reliant member of Roman civilization. The destination of the act was to acknowledge the independent status of the son by abolishing the representation through the father (Gross, 2010).

Discussion about, and action around, emancipation has often been used in relation to the rights of specific, sizeable groups within society such as the emancipation of slaves (freedom from bondage) or the emancipation of women as part of the suffrage movement (freedom to vote in elections). It implies a power relationship whereby one group within society is, consciously or sometimes unconsciously, oppressing another group in society that is looking for or expecting equality of treatment (Lane, 2016).

Emancipation is also seen as any effort to procure economic and social rights, political rights or equality, often for a specifically disenfranchised group, or more generally, in discussion of such matters. Emancipation stems from *ex manus capare* i.e evading being captured by someone else's hand.

(Wikipedia; <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emancipation> - 28/03/2020).

**Socio-economic emancipation:** This has to do with youths having the ability/freedom and power to determine their own social and political rights and determine their own financial position and future. It has to do with one

developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence. Socio-economic emancipation of youths refers to the economic, social and political empowerment of citizens/youths after receiving basic secondary education especially on the area of earning a sustainable means of living (Osuji & Koko, 2018). Emancipation was regarded as a solution to the inherent normative problem existing in every educational situation (Gross, 2010).

Osuji and Koko (2018) clarified socio-economic emancipation further as improvement of youths lifestyle through improved and effective education delivery services which impacts on their income, skills development and employment opportunities and empowers them to be global citizens.

**Effective Management:** Effectiveness is accomplished by achieving stated objectives (Kriectner 1980). According to Hornby (2010), the word effective refers to producing the result that is wanted or intended or producing a successful result. In other words, effectiveness is attained when the expected or intended result is achieved.

Management can be defined as the coordinating of the resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain organisational objectives (Idoko, 2015). In the context of this study, effective management entails the process of coordinating, controlling and mobilizing both human and material resources of an organisation (including the school system) in order to produce the intended or expected result. According to Certo (1980), management effectiveness is defined in terms of resources utilization in relation to organizational goals attainment. In essence, the basic focus of management activities should be how best to effectively utilize resources to attain organisational objectives.

**Socio-economic development:** This is the process of social and economic development in a society. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society. Causes of socio-economic impacts are, for example, new technologies, changes in laws, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes (Definitions of socio-economic development, [www.definitions.net/definition/socio-economic+development](http://www.definitions.net/definition/socio-economic+development), 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2020).

### **Objectives of Secondary Education**

The following are the objectives of secondary education as contained in the National Policy on Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, (FGN), 2013)

1. Provide holders of the basic education certificates with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background.
2. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles.
3. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub- professionals grades.
4. Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
5. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage.
- f. Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence
6. Foster patriotism, national unity and security education with an emphasis on the common ties in spite our diversity, and
7. Raise morally upright and well adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour. (pp29 – 30)

### **Effective Management, State of Education and Socio-economic Emancipation in Nigeria.**

According to Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), educational management is the coordination of all resources made available to education through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Educational management is the theory and practice of the organisation and administration of existing educational establishments and systems like secondary education (Chidobi & Okenwa, 2015). Effective management of secondary education therefore entails the proper utilization of available resources through the process of coordinating and organizing such resources to accomplish the goals and objectives of secondary education.

In socially, economically, religiously and culturally diverse nations like Nigeria, secondary education is a central mechanism that trains young people to be skilled and be able to raise the declining social and economic infrastructure of the country upon graduation (Osuji & Koko, 2018). However, the state of education in Nigeria today, has made this goal and other goals of secondary

education (previously highlighted) difficult to achieve. As rightly observed by Muoghalu (2013) cited by Okeke (2014), Nigeria's education system, while improving, is not fit for the demands of competitive markets, as the system does not provide Nigerians with the skills they need to get jobs. Ayodele (2006) described the education content as irrelevant, bookish, theoretic and "white-collar-job" oriented. According to Oguntimehin and Nwosu (2014), the inherited colonial educational policy and subsequent reforms after independence had not been able to equip most of our school products to become self-employed or employable.

Functional education states that the purpose of education is to acquire skills of adapting to it and acting to influence it thereby contributing to its development. The later functions require specific skills which education should seek to inculcate (Osuji & Koko, 2018). Education provided to the youths in Nigeria is hardly functional. Okonjo-Iweala (2010) cited by Okeke (2014), posited that the education most Nigerians receive is of dubious quality and illiteracy remains high, even among those who attend schools. Only 45% of primary school children in urban areas and 19% in rural areas can read a simple sentence. Okeke (2014) stated further that facilities such as comfortable classroom, good hostels, laboratories, standard libraries and sporting facilities for recreation and physical development, are either in short supply, dilapidated or totally non-existent. Similarly, Chidobi and Okenwa (2015) observed that the dilapidated and unfriendly atmosphere that characterizes our school system has watered the ground for general unseriousness among the students.

Furthermore, many teachers lack the skills to do their jobs, while many still are frustrated due to poor working conditions or non-payment of salaries which in some instances are in arrears for months (Muogholu, 2013; cited by Okeke, 2014). As rightly submitted by Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), the incompetent teachers are mostly relying on out-dated methods of instruction even in the face of innovative techniques and challenging technology. The same they noted, is also applicable to our tertiary institutions as some of the lecturers lack resourcefulness.

It should be noted that the role of education and that of emancipation are sometimes intertwined and one may not be separable from the other. As noted by Checkland (1999) cited by Lane (2016), education as a significant human activity systems is itself seen by many as both a means to achieve emancipation for all groups within society (emancipation of people *through* education) and as a process within which there can be restrictions placed on certain groups within society by other participants that need to be overcome in that process (emancipation of learners and teachers *within* education). Similarly, emancipation was regarded as a solution to the inherent normative problem

existing in every education situation (Gross 2010). In the same vein, Adu (2015) opined that education is not only regarded as a very vital instrument of socialisation, scientific and technological development, it is also a crucial factor in economic development and socio-political emancipation of the citizenry. Also, Osuji and Koko (2018) submitted that education is the key to socio-economic emancipation of sustainable living, therefore all efforts should be channeled towards the realisation of secondary school objectives.

Today, the state of education as briefly discussed above has made it difficult for education to serve as an instrument for socio-economic and political emancipation in Nigeria. At this juncture, it would not be out of place to consider other factors hindering effective management of secondary education and true emancipation in Nigeria.

### **Factors Hindering Effective Management of Secondary Education and True Emancipation in Nigeria.**

Some of the factors affecting effective management of secondary education and true emancipation in Nigeria are briefly discussed below.

- a. **Poor Implementation of government policies:** A major contending issue dominating the education sub-sector in Nigeria is not that of policy formulation but of the effective implementation of formulated policy decisions (Adeniran, 2018). According to Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), Nigeria government and many developing countries are known for the formulation of laudable policies. But in most cases, these noble policies are either not implemented or left half-way. Hence inconsistencies in policy formulation and lack of political will to execute formulated policies are some of the major problems facing education system in Nigeria today. For instance, paragraph 41 of the National Policy on Education stated that the teacher-pupil ratio at the post basic education level shall be 1:40 (FGN, 2013). However, since 2004 till now, Nigeria has not attained the pupil-teacher ratio of 20, 35 and 40 in the pre-primary and secondary schools respectively. Instead what we see is overcrowded classes mostly in the public schools located in urban areas. In city centres, children are even up to 100 in a class in the junior secondary schools (Akanbi and Jekayinfa, 2019).
- b. **Poor funding of education sector:** Education sector has not received the necessary attention in terms of funding. According to Olagboye (2004), one of the major aspects of educational management is the provision of adequate funds for the development of education and for educational services to enable the education system function smoothly and optimally all the time. As stated by Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), education is an



expensive and capital intensive projects and this implies that adequate funding is one of the basic pre-requisite for its success. Okenwa (2013) cited by Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), noted that education in Nigeria is in serious financial crisis which threaten its collapse. In this situation, quality has been sacrificed in favour of quantity because the demand for education tends to out-strap its supply. As pointed out by Adeniran (2011), budgetary allocation to education between the years 1983 – 2005 shows a maximum percentage allocation at 9.2 (2002) and the lowest at 1.8 percent (1991). In Nigeria, and in recent times, the highest budgetary allocation to education has been 10.4% of the annual budget in the year 2006 to all levels of education (Akanbi and Jekayinfa, 2019). Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019) and Adeniran (2011) therefore concluded that budgetary allocation to education generally has not met the UNESCO (2014) prescription of 26% minimum standard allocation of the total annual national budget of every nation and is infact a far cry from that minimum standard.

- c. **Corruption and mismanagement of resources:** Corruption and mismanagement of available resources has eaten deep up into the fabrics of the bureaucracy, socio-economic and political system of Nigeria. In the words of Adeniran (2018), the pervasive influence of corruption in almost all facets of Nigerian life including education has made corruption the most fundamental stagnating factor in education policy implementation and national development. According to Bolaji, Gray and Evans (2015), corruption has adversely affected infrastructure, funding and standards of education and every sector of society in general. They stressed that corruption is a major threat to the present education policy which should be decisively investigated if the current UBE programme is to be achieved. Bribery and corruption has become a chronic problem of Africa. Policy actors both at the top level and at the field siphon financial resources to satisfy themselves. Agents and institutions put in place to ensure accountability are also bribed to falsify their reports and massage their probing (Makinde, 2005). More worrisome is the fact that available but scarce resources are sometimes mismanaged and funds misappropriated. According to Okoroma (2006), the improper use of available funds appear to be a more challenging problem. He stated further that if the low allocation were properly used the quality of education generally in Nigeria would have appreciated.
- d. **Lack of qualified teachers:** Teachers play very crucial roles in the development of knowledge, attributes, skills, abilities and attitude of students who are to become leaders of tomorrow. According to Adu, Akinloye and Adu (2015) educational programmes cannot achieve set

goals and objectives if the required caliber of teachers are not available in the right quantity and quality. Similarly Akindutire (2010) affirmed that the success of an educational enterprise particularly in terms of quality, depends to a very large extent on the regular supply of teachers in adequate quantity and quality.

Quality teachers elicit and encourage the spirit of competitiveness amongst students to take on tasks that seems beyond their capacity to grasp, to discover and develop their talents and take responsibility for their actions (Osuji & Koko, 2018). Unfortunately, some teachers who are not qualified are still found within the nation's educational system and classrooms. According to Okeke (2014) there is dearth of qualified teachers at all levels of education in Nigeria. In the words of Chidobi and Okenwa (2015), teacher training institutions in Nigeria are producing teachers who are half-baked and incompetent in their profession. This, they maintained, can be attributed to the crisis ridden education sector. Moreso, the incompetent teachers are mostly relying on out-dated methods of instruction in the face of innovative techniques and challenging technology. Adeniran (2014) concluded that teachers' quality not only affects the educational enterprise, it equally affects the quality of output from the system. The quality, he asserted, of a nation's human capital and the effectiveness of educational programme is therefore a direct function of teachers' quality.

- e. **Inadequate facilities and poor working conditions:** Physical facilities are very important in teaching and learning process. No level of education can survive in the absence of physical facilities (Chidobi and Okenwa, 2015). It has been observed that most public and private schools do not have adequate facilities to cater for students and staff needs. As observed by Mudassir, Norsu-haily and Ado (2015), poor facilities and inadequate space, as well as the arrangement of items including seats in the classroom, library and laboratory could affect the organization of learning environment.

Coupled with inadequate facilities is the fact that teachers' salaries and allowances are sometimes not paid as and when due, making them to be less committed to their jobs. This sometimes forced teachers to demand for better conditions of service which usually results in one form of strike or the other. According to Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019), non-payment of teachers' salaries and other staff in the education sector sometimes forced schools, colleges and universities to shut down for several months due to strike actions, hence no learning can take place. They observed further that, essential education for emancipation are given haphazardly when

teachers eventually resume for work and maintaining standards becomes absolutely impossible.

It should be pointed out that during such periods, the quality of instruction and instructional time suffers, and students' performance in public examination is negatively affected. Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019) added that such development is also responsible for brain drain (on the part of students) as students who are financially capable always opted to study outside Nigeria.

- f. **Faulty training received by students:** The training received by students at various levels of education in Nigeria is not balanced enough to make them relevant in the ever dynamic labour markets. According to Muoghalu (2013) cited by Okeke (2014), Nigeria's education system while improving, is not fit for the demands of competitive global markets as the system does not provide Nigerians with the skills they need to get jobs. Similarly, Osuji and Koko (2018), observed that the training acquired at the end of secondary education seems inadequate to make the school leavers competent and self-reliant, hence cannot contribute to nation building.

Ayodele (2006) described the education content as irrelevant, bookish, theoretic and "white-collar-job" oriented. According to Oguntimehin and Nwosu (2014), the inherited colonial education policy and subsequent reforms after independence had not been able to equip most of our school products to become self-employed or employable. Although, technical, vocational education and training were largely provided for (from paragraph 48 – 54) in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) effective implementation of such curricular provision is always the problem. As rightly noted by Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2019) the technical and vocational colleges are not available in adequate numbers to cater for those who are unable to continue to the senior secondary schools.

### **Conclusion:**

Education is the bedrock upon which societal and individual development rests. It is about the most powerful instrument of empowering the individual and liberating the society from stagnancy and backwardness. Secondary education is planned to offer diversified curriculum that could among others, provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance and economic development, but in reality this is far from being achieved. Effective management of secondary education to bring about socio-economic and political emancipation or empowerment cannot be achievement in a system faced with serious challenges of corruption and mismanagement of resources,

poor implementation of formulated policies and poor funding among others. Hence, there must be a proper re-examination of secondary school system, implementation and management strategies of policies with a view to ameliorate the identified challenges and make the secondary school products self-reliant and fit for the demands of competitive global markets.

### **The way forward:**

The following suggestions are made to address the issues raised in the body and concluding remarks of this paper.

- a. Funding is germane and critical to the success of any enterprise or system. Adequate funding of the nation's educational system to make it achieve its stated objectives and make the schools run smoothly therefore becomes necessary. Hence, government is enjoined to re-examine its priorities and make appropriate budgetary provision to the educational sector.
- b. Government must make sincere efforts in implementing laudable educational policies to meet the demands of the dynamic global markets and acceptable global practices in education. To this end, there should be a shift from general education to functional entrepreneurship education and training. This will equip, develop and empower the youths to make them self-reliant and change their mental orientation from job-seekers to job-givers.
- c. There is a need to encourage proper management of available resources and funds. A reliable self-reporting, monitoring and accounting system that would make school managers honest, transparent and accountable should be put in place. In fact legislation against fraudulent practices in the school system to check corruptive tendencies should be enacted.
- d. The quality of secondary education should be improved by employing only qualified teachers to teach at the secondary school level (both public and private). Teacher quality could also be improved through regular instructional supervision and by updating their knowledge through conferences, seminars, and workshops. In addition to this, a solid foundation for the advancement of studies in technical, vocational education and training, basic sciences, engineering and other related areas that are important for socio-economic emancipation and development in Nigeria should be laid.
- e. Government should endeavour to provide adequate and modern facilities in the schools to aid effective teaching and learning. Education personnel must equally be well remunerated with

improved conditions of service and conducive working environment. This will boost teachers' morale, enhance more commitment and promote job satisfaction in their disciplines.

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