

**PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL REINTEGRATION IN NIGERIA: AN INSPIRATION FROM NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper is on providing quality education for social reintegration in Nigeria: An inspiration from the national policy on education. It will not be out of place to say that Nigerian ethnic and regional tensions were magnified by socio-economic and political differences, because appropriate teaching of unity in the light of integrated resource development is presently fading away from Nigerian schools. This paper highlights on countrywide unity as contained in National Policy on Education and identifies some obstacles to unity like; economic, political, communal factors and deficiency of proper education statements. It conceptualizes quality education, and quality education for national unity. Thus, the paper argues that the content and instruction should encompass an ideological free minded intent and content, divorced from the old segmented feelings of regionalism, ethnicism and statism. It however recommends that; social philosophy of the national policy on education should remain a tool for national unity, NPE should introduce and stress on laws against discrimination in educational institutions. Also education should be accessible, to every child irrespective of sex, status, tribe and regional location in Nigeria.*

**Introduction**

Nigeria as a nation reaches its climax of federalism considering various stages of integration, amalgamation and independence in 1960. Among the driving tools for strengthening the nation's social philosophy of federalism is the educational system, which was the first European tool used for the understanding of Christianity and second for the establishment of imperialistic motive in commerce,

politics and socialization (Fafunwa, 2004). After attaining the fiftieth years of independence in Nigeria, the minds and traditions of thinking of the populace is at a halt filled with the idea of conservative fragmentation, consequential from the numerous incongruent features that exist within Nigerians, which are; geographical, political, social and religious. The nation is populated with about 140,337,822 million people, with over 250 ethnic groups, in which 50% are

Muslims, 40% Christian and 10% African traditional religion, with a general literary rate of about 57.1%(Yin,2007). The major tribes are Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Fulani. To Mahuta and Inuwa (2008) regardless of the complexity and social fraction in societies education, peace, development, socialization, unity, productivity, move thoughtfully on an equal footing, where social agent "education" is given the priority of a unity tool.

To this background, policy on education, quality education on an equal footing will uplift progress, open ways for development and cement unity, which will accord global value and recognition to the Nation.

Wasagu (2009) postulates that, among the numerous problems hindering Nigeria as a country, with regard to sustainable improved modern technology and general development, to stand the fate of Global competition is the low and stratified level of education, low quality of education given to citizens and finally the issue of Government policy on education. Lack of proper usage of educational information, resurrects emanate from the regional to ethical, ethnic, and socio-religious bigotry. Ideally, education in Nigeria both traditional and modern encourages bravery, productivity, self-reliance, social,

economic, political development for sustaining unity (Fafunwa, 2004).

Nigerian is a custodian of people with conservation and skeptical ideologies because of the variation within and between groups. In the view of Nwangwu (2001). The extremism of segmented feelings promotes social instability as experienced during the Nigerians civil war of July 1967, Kano unrest of 1999, Kaduna catastrophe of 2000 and 2001, Jos civil conflict of November 2008 and January 2010. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), inspirational message in 1977 was to widely integrate regional ideas and philosophies of the social boundaries of various communities, groups and religion. The ideology and social philosophy of NPE is this is to form a basic stand where all to teach one value; same contents, and infuse the ideology that will uniformly build the mind of Nigerian youths towards unity. Universal Basic Education (UBE, 2003).

### **National Unity as Contained in National Policy on Education**

The framework of educational desire in Nigeria as a tool or instrument for national unity is contained in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The first National Policy on Education was published in 1977; this is an effort to put the goals of Nigerian education into a

workable plan for the integration of the social and political fractions of the Nation for unity. The second and third NPE documents were published in 1981 and 1988 respectively, in trying to live with the dynamics of social changes and the constant demands of the value of Education in Nigeria. FGN (2004), government and people formulate the policies on education so as to use this policy as a tool for National Development and to achieve the social ideology of the country with regard to building same interest toward nation building, sustaining peace and tolerance in a multicultural society. The nation overall educational philosophy toward national unity is linked to the achievement of quality education with functional contents via schooling system. FGN (2004) states that, among the objectives of the plan are to;

- a. Live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice.
- b. Promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.

The above, by intended principles will enhance social re-consensus of the nation by making every individual to be sound, effective, and to improve on integration of

the nation communities in the light of unity and social ideology. The FGN (2004) was committed to the provision of equal access to education, and educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation. This act cut across the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Perhaps this will only be possible when the quality of education improves by means of contents, quality, teachers' ability, and availability of infrastructures equal distribution of educational facilities and enabling access to educational institution at all categories across the nation.

#### **Prevailing Obstacles to Education for social Re-integration**

The nature of Nigeria social, economic and political foundations which is primarily traditional in its initial stage attracts cultural discourse. This influences quarrels and ginger disputes; that strain and hinders the effort of uniform understanding of the concept of unity and social re - integration. In the view of Singh (2007), the complexity of a nation does not result to menace of diversity of interest and values, but certain fissiparous tendencies that are also developing daily make social integration and re-integration, under national unity a failure. These factors paved their ways to Nigeria societies and create in communities sentiments within

themselves. FGN (2004) states that to achieve national unity, the educational institutions must constitute the bedrock and therefore, contribute to the development of habits, attitudes and qualities of character expected by means of moral education. In a related view, Ofuebe (2001) contends that, if educational contents in a country contain national values, it will harmonize social interests of the citizens. Nigerian citizens are nursing fear, a serious problem asserted to political differences, ethnocentrism and ideological variation which hinders smooth running of public activities.

### **Political Problems**

National issues on self governance emerged with series of regional skepticism and fear with regard to social and political convenience, after the attainment of independence and this keeps growing year in year out regionally in the midst and mind of Nigerian people evidently, are the factors that promote civil war 1967 – 1970. as a result of “power” i.e. government political institution. According to Ofuebe (2001), this resulted to problems of segmental political interest and ideologies, leading to regionalized political parties which in turn propagated communalism, regionalism and even religious sectism. In a related study Ofuebe contends that,

integrative national political ideology is essential for the promotion of political unity, cementing tribal differences, and enhances sound religious understanding. The ideology of gaining political power by all means is a threat to National unity and the re – integration of social ideologies this causes regional disparities, and led to domination of power by the strong and majority group to the detriment of poor, and minorities in the country.

### **Social Problems**

Nigeria accommodates many social groups among which are various tribes; religious groups and traditionalists, within many other social disparities yet hidden (ideologies), and not fully recognized or illusively identified and fenced in federalism (Otite,2002). Some variations are believes, creeds and ways of behaviour. Extremists in these social organs of society, gingers social unrest in the Nation, examples are riots and conflicts (social unrest) as briefly stated earlier in the introduction of this paper. The effects of these are chaotic on national unity and stability. The persistent misconception of the existing variations in societies is influencing the ideological premises of building a destructed generation, with persistent claim of rights, superiority and engineered



political differences (Otite & Ogionwo, 2006).

### **Economic Problems**

Politics today guides the vision of social and economic interest, as it is proved by Karl Marx (1818 - 1883), that wealth and natural resources are societal focus, this initiate bridge and gap of social and economic interest between and within class, group and communities. In the view of Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2006), Nigeria is rich in its physical natural environment, but the existing divisible factors are: social, political ideological creed. This has been proved considering the position of Nigeria in the production of oil, as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producing nation. The richness in natural resources, perhaps of endanger cultural multiplicity in crisis and influences ideological differences that led to rich political disintegration. But this richness in resources is equally richness in to crisis, due to differences in economic interests, politics in economic policies and poor sense of understanding within and between regions that produces different economic resources. This notwithstanding Schaefer (2004),highlight that, states were there exists great economic differences there will be instability, not until people are able to overcome poverty and illiteracy, unity is not feasible, as obstacles to

national unity are offshoot of political, economic, social differences, poverty and illiteracy. To this backdrop scholars like Wasagu(2009), Mahuta and Inuwa (2008) posits that, educational philosophy with customary social ideology of unity can bring the rural and urban, developing, underdeveloped and developed national in contact through social educational integration.

### **Quality Education and National Re - integration**

The unity of Nigeria education is seen and justified in the structured perfection displayed by the National Policy on Education as a result it is a silent consensus that was displayed outwardly by various part of the Nation, that education be and remain the tool for uniting Nigeria and Nigerians. Base on this, quality education entail the feature of unity and it is from quality contents delivery that this will be ascertained. As a result the following are viewed.

- Quality education, and
- Quality education for national re - integration (unity)

### **Quality Education**

Education deals directly with "human" this entails conduct formation and reformation, advancement in society, building of

unified minds, reconstruction of human social values, maintenance of positive attitude and aptitude. Its contents and context should foster development of human standard at all levels. To justify the term quality education, Enoh, (2003) sees the goals and objectives of education to be strongly affected as factors that determined the possibility of having good contents in terms of productivity and programme structure which determine the attainment of standard and creative value in society for uniform progress. Aggarwal (2007) is of the view that, quality education and quality in education are the degree of excellence in which an educational programme excels. This refers to the overall performance of educational contents, context and activities. This is pictured in human educational outcome in being hormone and human potentials in developing the structure of society. Education in this case should be firm, productive, and creative and with a relative impact improve vocational training of the citizenry education of this nature is towards self reliance (Inuwa, 2009). Quality education should also be sound to promote good citizenry with dedication toward development and efficiency. In a related view UNESCO (2002) contends that, quality in education and quality performance deals with excellence in the initiated educational

programme, qualities are therefore, contained in the excellence of educational climate completely.

According to UBE (2003) quality education, is regarded as the effective educational plan with the requirement of basic educational facilities to promote and sustain the learning environment. In pragmatic view, quality of education can be attained through the following;

- Provision of equality, accessible, affordable and productive education for every citizen of Nigeria, regardless of location, class and sex, the justification should be equal in content delivery, structural provision, and mode of facilitating productive teaching. Education of this nature promotes the feeling of fair treatment within the mist of citizens (Wasagu, 2009).
- Quality education should envisage higher enrolment rate, by means of accessibility, retention strength and attainable education for educationally challenged children, by making them to attain a productive and reliable system of education, which contents values relates to national spirit of patriotism (UBE, 2003).

- Increase number of teachers, not only in numbers, but in quality of standard and in the proficiency of job execution (Ornstein and Levine, 2006). Improve on teacher education programme, supervision and adequate budgetary allocation to every sector of education. This should be to the best and just ability of government criteria of employment, base on quality and merit (Farant, 2004).
- Education progress should be under constant assessment, review and evaluation; these practices will enhance improvement and promote efficiency. By the use of check and balance system. The society, teachers, government and people will be subjected to assessment in terms of quality provision in education, private sectors and donors (Farant, 2004, & Sing, 2007).
- Curriculum should be redesigned to meet the functional needs, by making it more of vocational and technical contents to meet the educational aspiration of people, and nation building that will be integrated and up to date with respect to global changes and challenges, in production and sustaining pride of unity (Farrant, 2004).
- Quantity education should be giving right from the early phase of educational initiative (planning stage), up to the assessment stage by planners, individual and stakeholders (Meighan, 2000). By implication the general teaching and learning environment have to be secured, rich in terms of teaching and learning materials, and also be lively and encouraging for learning. The prime interest of the National Policy on Education is to be reflective to the national pride at all educational initiatives (FGN, 2004).

### **Quality Education for National Unity**

Realizing that conflict is the vice for peace, and with the absence of peace there will be instability, which will hinder human progress in the nation, therefore quality education for national unity entails:

- Promotion of homogeneity among the citizens of Nigeria this is by having consensus within multicultural society (Ofuebe, 2001). However

- ideological differences can be resolved in educational policy of a nation. By effecting changes that will reflect common interest for national pride (Mahuta & Inuwa, 2008).
- Through quality education Citizens will be familiar with the issues of national unity. By providing basic knowledge of the common factors that binds Nigeria together and the united struggle toward unity that will strengthen unity and cohesion in the country. The information of unity should carry messages of united struggle that Nigerians had engaged on since colonial, neo-colonial eras to date. (Fafunwa, 2004).
  - Quality educational programme will focus on humane character, selflessness economic advancement, structural development and political integration of the country. It will teach the essentials of unity in diversities, inculcate in the students and pupils value of harmony, patience and tolerance.
  - Educational institutions are to unite the nation by making it one indivisible nation via contents, construct and philosophy of life. Schools should realize the importance of unity and build a reflective image of social solidarity among youths. No school in the country should use region, tribe as a basis for admission, these factors in its dominant sense have been itching on the success of science and development (Wasagu, 2009).
  - Facilitating regional integration by means of learning about social conditions and cultural tolerance of various region of the country. Nigerian youths should be exposed to other communities and region in the name of educational visits (UNESCO, 2002).
  - In providing quality education for national unity, knowledge about Nigerian economic potentials and resources for developments should be readily available to Nigerian students, which is presently lacking or not enough in our curriculum and teaching content. The essence of economic dependence should be revealed, students and resource allocation distribution lesson should promote sense of belonging and oneness in Nigerian youths. This practice is



presently fading, a complete description of the Nigeria environment should be provided to students to learn (Ofuebe, 2001).

- There should be stimulation of natural consciousness and that of national values through discussion and symposia about the nation's progress toward unity and should be encouraged.

### **Conclusion**

This paper concludes that since Nigeria is moving toward a strong and reliable future every day, the main factor that will help in building the strength of the country is Education. Unfortunately, the efforts toward building strong national unity is being jeopardized by extreme cultural, religious, political and economic sentiments. To uniformly pass one value to the entire nation, it needs quality education, which will be in terms of redesign contents presentation and the manner of information dissemination. This should be done positively with an ideal national feeling for re-integration of social, political and economic values. This is to sustain the existing structure of unity in the nation, via the National Policy on Education.

### **Recommendations**

The educational institutions of the country have major role to play

with regard to the provision of information, instructional and ideological framework to improve the pedagogies for the promotion of national unity. Sule (2003) opines that, Educational information should be assessed and scrutinized, teachers are to be oriented toward national unity, re-integration, and these should be engraved in the books and contents of teaching in Nigerian schools. Any book that gives negative impression on national issues should be banned from being used in Nigerian schools. This should be reviewed to reflect the present issues of national development.

Plays and dramas that advocate national harmony should be promoted in various schools of the nation. All religions, tribes be given chance to display and execute their activities in favour of youths, positive learning. Due to the growing sentimental views of youths, that are being influenced by regional feelings, graduating students national views should be tested, by providing a national test forum, this is to promote and redirect the minds and attitudes of Nigerian youths toward positive national interest, and to have conscious national view for unity and development, irrespective of state, local government, religions or tribes.

There should be law against discrimination in social

institutions, every student should be given equal right to partake in promoting national values, justice and fair hearing should be given to every individual in school, by means of having access to proper information, and admission in any institution of the country regardless of differences.

School should teach history, human and regional geography of the entire nation. Stories of Nigerians like, folk, songs and folks tales should be made to attract and build the consciousness of the students in respect of uniting the feeling of students and pupil's. Festivals should be celebrated in schools to encourage students and pupil's enthusiasm, and love for Nigeria. This is more relevant to the lower level of educational structures (primary and secondary).

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