

## WASTAGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SOKOTO STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*Wastage in education cuts across all levels of instruction, primary, secondary and high education. This paper examined the concept of wastage in the field of primary education. How such wastage affects the social and educational status of Sokoto State. The causes of wastage were highlighted and the constraints emanating from socio-social, religious and governmental were examined and recommendations offered. All stakeholders in primary education have to join hands together to control wastage in this vital sub-sector.*

### Introduction

Education in Nigeria is an instrument “per excellence” for affecting national development. It is as such, on the concurrent list of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is organized and administered by the three tiers of government i.e. Federal, States and Local Governments. Education in Nigeria is provided in four stages, namely; Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.

Primary education has been referred to in the National Policy on Education (NPE), third edition (1998), as the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. This form of education has equally been described in the same document, as the key to the success or failure of the entire system of education in Nigeria, for

the fact that, the whole educational system is built upon it.

However, looking at the primary education sub-sector and its implementation/operational problems in Nigeria today, with particular reference to Sokoto State, we would certainly not say that there are prospect for its effective delivery. Specifically, when we take into consideration, the fact that educational resources (both human and materials) have not been properly managed at the primary level, in the past and are not in a better position of utilization at the moment, then we would certainly a knowledge the problem of wastage in this vital sub-sector, even more.

### **The Concept of Educational Wastage**

Wastage in education may be described in terms of inefficiency in the management of educational resources. Efficiency in the context of this paper, is measured in terms of the value of product output per unit of resource (both human and material). Wastage in education may therefore be simply defined as the degree to which human and material resources, developed and made available to schools are grossly underutilized or neglected.

However, educational researchers interested in the issue of wastage in education have given several definitions to educational wastage. The definitions were equally based on specific dimensions of wastage that are almost similar. For instance, Rogers (1971), Nwagu (1976), Haddad (1979) and Adesina (1980) have all considered wastage in education mainly in terms of drop-out, repetition rates in the flow of a cohort of students or pupils, while others such as Tinto (1975) and Pantages (1978) view wastage as a concept with either voluntary or non-voluntary, permanent or temporary dropping out, or attrition (the rate of students/pupils morality), withdrawal, transfer and repetition. Haddad (1979) while reviewing several studies on promotion and repetition pointed out that:

Educational wastage (in the form of dropout) leads to wasteful investment of educational services.

It should be noted here, that in the past two or three decades, educational wastage (especially in the primary education sub-sector), was considered to have been streamlined to the following problems:

- (i) Dropout or non-completion of scheduled course for one reason or the other.
- (ii) Repetition or inability to complete the school course within the stipulated period of the educational program.
- (iii) Failure to obtain the terminal certificate at the end of the school course.

### **The Causes of Wastage**

- (a) **Problem of Dropout:** Dropout is a term used to refer to those who left the school system or were thrown out of the system before the end of the course (Fafunwa, 2004). In the school system, dropout figures are obtained by deducting the number of those promoted and those who are to repeat, from the total enrolment in any single year.

- (b) **Problem of Drop in:** Fafunwa (2004) described the drop in as those learners who entered into the school system, stayed until the very end of the course or program and at most passed out as failures or unsuccessful in the exit examination. This is simply referring to those children who were unable or who fail to obtain the terminal certificate at the end of school course.
- (c) **Problem of Stay out:** The stay according to Fafunwa (2004) are those children who have never seen the inside of a formal classroom. In other words, the stay out are those children who have reached the school going age but have not been opportune to be enrolled into the formal school system.
- (d) **Problem of Repetition:** Repetition in the school system is a term referring to a situation whereby school children that fail to perform creditably well, are detained or disallowed to proceed from one grade to the next.
- (e) **Problem of Unqualified Teachers:** "unqualified" has been defined in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, as to mean; "without legal or official

qualification for doing something" or "not competent" or "knowing enough to do something" going by this dictionary definition therefore, unqualified teachers are those teachers without teaching qualification or those who have not the kind of official credentials legally required in the teaching profession.

### **Effects of Educational Wastage on Social Life and Education in Sokoto State**

Wastage in the field of education has been considered as a universal problem by UNESCO (Brimer and Paul, 1971). In Nigeria, Sokoto State has been ranked among the educationally backward states. And today, the state is consequently in the list of those states that are in the forefront in terms of high rate of unemployment, social vices and absolute poverty. These ugly social trends are not known in Sokoto State in the past two or three decades. Their coming to the surface now, is a clear indication that there is something wrong within the educational system in the state.

Carefully looking at the caliber of school leavers, coming out of our primary and secondary schools in the state, at the end of every academic year, one will certainly

understand the factor or factors responsible for the state's lack of improvement in literacy rate.

Take for instance the incidence of dropping out at the primary or secondary level of education, in the state which over the years had become daily routine: as learners do pull out of the school system, at the very beginning of each stage or halfway through. It is certainly a problem situation, signifying wastage that affects both the individual child (who is learning) and the educational system (the framework providing the learning opportunities). These children, who unfortunately drop out before completing the six year duration of primary education, could not possibly achieve numeracy and literacy skills in their mother tongue and in English, there by lacking the ability to communicate effectively. On the contrary, such children (because they could not find it easy to re-integrate into the formal school system) could be found roaming about on Major Street within the state, either hawking or begging.

Another serious effect of educational wastage felt by the state is in the issue of drop-in (i.e. those learners who are in the schools up to the time of completion of their course but passed out as failures). This situation is most certainly a problem situation not only to

Sokoto State but also to all the states in the Federation.

In this respect, the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) in its 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2002, in Port-Harcourt Rivers State, described the large-scale failure in the Senior School Certificates Examination (SSCE) as a major source of educational wastage in the secondary education sector.

The Senior School Certificate is critical to the survival of the teeming youths in our society; it serves as the entry-point qualification for admission into our higher institution of learning. It also serves as the basic meal ticket for those who do not wish to go further with their schooling.

In Sokoto State, today majority of the youth that formed the bulk of the political vanguard groups (otherwise known as Area-boys and their counter parts, the Area-girls), are those Secondary School Leavers who passed out as failures. The activities of such youth are known to all of us here, and such activities are clear testimony of the effects of educational wastage in our society.

Another effect of wastage in education that constituted greater problem to the society is the issue

of those children who have reached the age of schooling but were not opportune to be enrolled into the formal school system. Without prejudice, these categories of children formed the bulk of the "almajiri" group.

The issue of "almajiri" stem out of the misconception of western education. Islam is the predominant religion in the northern part of this country. Many Muslim families still misconceive western education as Christian education, thereby rejecting it in totality.

In most rural parts of Sokoto State, the parents send their children only to Quranic schools. Even the effort made by government to established "Islamiyya" schools (a schooling system in which Quranic education is integrated with the western education) does not help matters, as the situation does not improved as expected. This however, explains why the almajiri is popular in Sokoto State. The Problem associated with this issue of almajirai is that, far from receiving the intended Quranic education, the children in almajirci, end up in the streets, begging and washing plates for roadside food sellers.

The issue of unqualified teachers is another serious area of wastage in education. It is in fact the mother of all educational wastage. The

problem of drop out, repetition as well as that of drop in, might not be unconnected with the problem of having unqualified teachers operating at the primary level of our education system.

### **Efforts to Reduce the Effect of Wastage**

Several efforts have been made by stakeholders in the education industry to address the problem of wastage in education (particularly wastage in the primary education sub-sector) which is the key to the success or failure of the entire education system.

### **National Effort**

The Federal government of Nigeria, initiated, launched and implements a Universal Education (UBE) with the sole aim of revitalizing the education industry through an effective and sound instructional delivery and quality output at the lower level of the educational system. It is hoped that the UBE scheme will address all the key problems faced by our educational system, including the problem of wastage in primary education sub-sector.

### **State Efforts**

The Sokoto State government made several efforts to promote the quality of primary education in the state. Both the UPE scheme of

1976 and the UBE scheme of 1999 were launched in Sokoto State. The primary school teachers in the state have been engaged in various educational training, such as the recently introduced Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP) which is in collaboration with Federal government. This is with the aim of making the primary school classroom teacher very effective in instructional delivery.

#### **Efforts of Donor Agencies**

Other non-governmental and world bodies, such as UNICEF and the likes, have been rendering educational services in various primary schools throughout the state.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the assessment of this paper, Wastage in Primary Education is a serious factor that affects the socio-educational status of Sokoto State. Failure to address the issue of educational wastage could be dangerous to any society.

All amounts to effort, money, or resources committed to this sub-sector would not be appreciated unless the quality of services and product of our schools could be used to affect national development: which is very vital as the nation aims to achieve the goals of its present insightful development programme of action

– vision 2020.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the problems highlighted in this paper, the following recommendations could help in controlling wastage in education; there by eradicating its effect on the socio-educational status of Sokoto State, so that the State could bridge the education gap between it and other states in the Federation.

Stakeholders in education should intensify efforts to eliminate the causes of dropping out of school by our children. There should be an effective and systematic integration of Islamic and Western Education in order to make Muslim families to accept western education and eradicate the *almajiri* problem.

Government should direct more attention at the rural areas through the provision of facilities, resources, economic empowerment, and enlightenment campaign for the promotion of western education.

Stakeholders in education, Traditional leaders, women, religious scholars, should mobilize the rural populace to promote girl child education. Government should create means of increasing employment opportunities for school leavers.

Above all government should intensify the training and retraining of teachers so as to make them attend higher level of professionalism.

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