

Education: The Deserving Insulation from Territorial, Economic and Technological Disasters of the Vision 2020 Saga

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Doi:10.5901/jesr.2012.v2n7p167

Abstract

Education has been described by many experts and even novices as the sum total of the outcome of human exposure to experiences in different environments. The outcome usually manifests into change in behaviour. The paper sought to x-ray different opinions on outcomes that are capable of insulating countries from disasters inherent in their quest for the first 20 (twenty) best economies by the year 2020. The 20:2020 vision has been ascribed for that magic condition that would create territorial, economic, technological freedom, etc. the paper discussed the issue under the following headings: economic emancipation, technological freedom, educational disasters, the vision 20:2020 saga, the NPE (National Policy on Education) and educational systems changes and the way forward/deserving insulation. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations proffered for teacher education to be made free and rich, books to be captured in Internet, CDs and DVDs, student peer-review assessment for tests and class-work, certification for mid-way dropouts in order to reduce High Dropout (HDO) risk. These were seen as necessary ingredients for achievement of the vision 20:2020.

Keywords: *emancipation, disaster, simulation, brainstorming, insulation demonstration and technology.*

Introduction

Events trailing the 2020 global vision have thrown Nigeria into conscious efforts in order to key into the processes necessary for the race of being one of the world's 20 largest economies in the magic year. Various approaches have been applied in the form of reformation and transformation agenda for various sectors of the economy, but the success rate seems to be too low for achievement of the goals. This paper has taken the bold step of looking at the role of education in the achievement of the vision bearing in mind Patrick Awuah's (founder and president of Asheshi University, Ghana) belief that boldness has genius, power and magic in it. We can apply it in our quest for success in this gigantic vision. Education, the blended real-sense perspective, territorial integrity, economic emancipation, technological freedom, educational disasters, case points, vision 20:2020 saga, the National Policy on Education (NPE) and educational changes, the way forward/deserving insulation: have all taken the total discourse aimed at giving insight into a reliable advocacy approach towards achieving the vision 20:2020 goals. Practicable recommendations were proffered for high-powered policy-making.

Education – The blended real-sense perspective

The history of education is as old as the life of man on earth. From the education of the ancient Egypt, Hindu, Mesopotamia, Jewish (all of which were based on religions); to that of the Spartans, Athens, Rome and Greeks that are based on culture: none seem to digress seriously from the basic

elements involving humans with experiences aimed at giving positive effects on the society. Hence the notable philosophers of our times like Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, etc who theorized the philosophy of education into readable and consumable materials did not mince words in projecting the need for behavioral change. Only the changes can guarantee initiative, pragmatism, and innovation, among other traits in man that are aimed at better living for the reduction/eradication of disasters.

Education has been described by many present renowned authorities and scholars as the agglomeration of well organized experiences of teaching and learning that could lead to change in behaviour. The change must be measurable, testable, transferable and of benefit not only to the individual but also to the society as a whole. Uzoagulu (2004) expects university education to equip the individual to be valuable to self and society while the National Teachers Institute (NTI, 2008) portray 'education' as the experience that starts from birth, sum total of cultural and organized activities, and the development of knowledge and abilities in learners for personal and societal enhancement. Entrepreneurship education was viewed by the NBTE (2007) as depicting that blended education that prepares graduates to match knowledge with actions for the satisfaction of personal and societal needs.

As far back as 1993, Shaeffer's study revealed that educational growth in developing world (countries) subsequently lead to deterioration in the quality of the system. Such growth often lead to increased enrollment, new (often sub-standard) textbooks published, new hands hired to teach and new structures without a commensurate increase in the effectiveness of teaching and values. The situation is sadly bleeding into lethargy for serious studies on the part of students, especially with the way and manner examinations misconducts are spreading like cancer. Bajah (1997) therefore solicited for planned educational activities in a stable setting to guarantee effective teaching/learning resulting to real-sense education.

Territorial Integrity

Territorial boundary connotes area of Power, control and/or authority. This boundary has long been very wide, as a result of which people have often muscled to protect what they consider their territory. Technology has recently broken these barriers, it is believed. Educationists believe that only education can truly guarantee the broken barriers. The space has now been broken by the US, Russia, China, etc and they could only have achieved this through their organized educational system.

Integrity, on the other hand, means the possession of high moral principles and professional standards. Without an organized system, society and standard (SSS), it will be difficult to achieve what America, Russia and others have boasted to the world on. Taking care of the greenhouse emissions, climate changes as well as space visitations, laboratories and researches; problems of population sizes and other similar but differing problems which the developed countries appear to be handling with all amount of seriousness; (though only just maximally succeeding) should be faced squarely by developing countries as well.

Their applications of innovations using residual knowledge and intrinsic values of education in the area of cheap solar technologies which are very relevant in energy conservation are quite applaudable. What are the possibilities that the developing countries (especially Africa) can cope with terrorism, the recent flooding, earthquake, tsunamis and other natural disasters which are no longer restricted to 'big/advanced countries'? Academic dishonesty is the most brutal part of our current educational reality and calls for concerted initiative or we allow it to put the system in grave danger of battering our generation, as is being witnessed in some parts of the country/world today.

Economic Emancipation

The economy of a nation or individual involves the financial affairs of production and consumption of goods and services taken as a whole. Emancipation, on the other hand, signifies the state of being free from restriction. Economic emancipation, therefore, relates to the situation whereby a nation or individual is considered to be able to take care of personal or national needs without being encumbered by others (individual or nation). In 2003, the Obasanjo Administration was able to secure debt relief (economic restriction by the Paris Club) from the group of nations that make up that club. This was enabled by the then and present Minister for Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Without her well grounded education in Finance/Economics, this would not have been possible. It is also noteworthy that her educational background gave rise to her occupying good position with the World Bank and this was an edge the government took advantage of to achieve the debt relief.

Emancipation simply put means the act of securing freedom from disenfranchisement (Wikipedia, the free dictionary, 2010). Nigeria being one of the third world countries does not have as much privileges as the developed countries. As such she has undergone lots of deprivation educationally, economically, technologically and so on. Education holds the key to her avoidance of charity from other nations and embracing of justice in the world body polity.

We can say categorically, that ethically, none can invalidate this knowledge with superb insight, else they will impede a genuine dissection of our educational sector. It is obvious that no particular system can be taken in abstraction without including the knowledge-based management entrenched in education.

Technological Freedom

Technology is nothing but the application of tools, methods and people through well articulated processes/systems in order to achieve greater performance and initiate new ideas leading to developmental strides. As long as the materials of application are borrowed, one cannot be said to be free. This triggers up the importance of education (i.e. real-sense education) which alone is capable of ensuring technological freedom. State of the art technology cannot be achieved through mediocrity but through dint of hard work at education.

Sometimes we allow difficulties to obscure our good sense of judgment. Our youths therefore, need to imbibe the fact that the difficulties encountered in some subjects or programmes are not really sufficient (should not be) to shackle the need for zeal and efforts at being empowered by education. Present realities may not appear to validate this truth but it is worth all the trial one can commit to it.

We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled – in short from the perspective of those who suffer. The important thing is that this 'experience of incomparable value' should be allowed to foster an enlarged generosity and humanity rather than enmity. We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune. This perspective from below must not become the partisan possession of those who are eternally dissatisfied; rather, we must do justice to life in all its dimensions from a higher satisfaction, whose foundation is beyond any talk of 'from below' or 'from above'.

(Clement, 1986)

Nigeria can do much better if she has the political will to tackle it. There should be no Sentimental Gap-Filing (SGF) – others must not suffer because we did but using our experiences, we can help the world better. More so, as educated men and women, let us resign ourselves to core facts (core values) knowing that no idea prevails in all its rightness but calls for consideration of others i.e. (positive compromise). Real-sense education is the only weapon with which to ensure that our country and indeed the future generation are equipped with innovative initiative that can transform the nation into a giant one like the Asian tigers have and who are enjoying the privilege of an enviable technological freedom.

Educational Disasters

Having described education, it can be deduced that a half-baked educational experience could only lead to disasters. According to Wikipedia (2010), "A **disaster** is a natural or man-made (or technological) hazard resulting in an event of substantial extent causing significant physical, psychological, biological, educational, economical damage or destruction, loss of any such values that can guarantee comfortable living. According to www.fafunwafoundation.tripod.com/fafunwafoundation, Nigeria is one nation that is wonderful in developing policies but poor and deficient in implementation, especially with relation to educational matters and this culminates into a disaster, as implementation is the key to a useful policy.

Disaster is destructive end-results or events that could cause serious loss, hardship, unhappiness or death and therefore, is unsuccessful and unproductive to any individual or nation. According to Karns (2002), much has been said about the decline in the American public school system, more so the Nigerian educational system. As a result, requirements, once stringent, have been lowered over the years to allow the lazy, the unmotivated and the uncaring to pass through. Many students then receive certificates and diplomas but have never been adequately challenged academically – thus the message has been dumped down.

Our infrastructure for the present is underfunded and deteriorating and the quality of our educational curriculum and teaching is not adequately equipping students with the skills needed to compete in the global economy. Those who venture to update and upgrade teaching are seen by government, parents and students themselves as wicked because that entails the student working hard.

In Nigeria, it is evident that the decline in education has been appreciated by those in charge of the system, hence the myriad reviews, reforms and ideas advanced by the Minister (Prof. Ruqayyatu Ahmed Ruffa'i) and Prof. Godswill Obioma (Executive Secretary of NERC). In the face of technology, can these reforms work?

The quagmire we suddenly discover has come upon our educational system did not happen in one day but took a gradual downtrend (nose-dive). Can we then expect that they will disappear suddenly? Many of our teachers from primary to secondary and then tertiary institutions are half-baked. There are lots of malpractices in our system, from examination misconducts of different types to certificate racketeering, then money/employment laundering and appointments depicting mediocrity. Visionary dreaming breeds pride and pretentiousness, and is destructive. The visionary person demands that the community should conform, willy-nilly, to his ideal, which is doomed to failure. But a well blended idea demands that many peoples' ideas are put together in taking decisions as to what should constitute the mandate of the people for a good vision. These vices have only dragged the nation to a pitiable one and we, certainly, cannot continue this way.

Case point

Ghana World Ranking 2007

Organization	Survey	Ranking
Heritage Foundation/Wall Street Journal	Index of Economic Freedom	91 out of 157
Reporters with borders	Worldwide Press Freedom Index	29 out of 168
Transparency International	Corruption Perception Index	69 out of 179
United Nations Development Programme	Human Development Index	135 out of 177
Vision of Humanity	Global Peace Index	40 out of 121
CIA – The World Fact-book	GDP (PPP) per capita	162 out of 164
CIA – The World Fact-book	Real GDP growth	78 out of 216
United Nations	Population growth	53 out of 230

Source: Wikipedia

The above case point shows Ghana ratings by different world bodies. This country happens to rank highest in the continent, followed by South Africa, Kenya, etc. Nigeria did not rank 4th or 5th. It can, thus, be inferred that we rank abysmally low in world rankings and it calls for soberness and a fervent determination to right all the wrongs of our systems.

Other World Rankings – 2007 Global Economy in Brief
Leading economies in World GDP of \$48 Trillion

United States of America	\$13.4 trillion
Japan	\$04.2 trillion
Germany	\$02.8 trillion
China	\$02.6 trillion
United Kingdom	\$02.3 trillion

In continuation, Africa has a total of \$1.092 trillion; as follows;

Countries	US \$Billion
South Africa	\$255 billion
Nigeria	\$191 billion
Egypt	\$107 billion

These globally shrank in 2009 – Source:

It is noteworthy that Nigerian Human Development Index (HDI) is 154 out of 170 with a value of .499 out of .999 while her university ranking is 61 out of 62 in Africa.

Further rankings on Nigerian economy

Macroeconomic environment	20 th
Benefits from large market	42 nd
Functioning regional standards	62 nd , 61 st & 57 th

Weak institutions	102 nd
Security	117 th
High level corruption	122 nd
Perceived wasteful spending	120 th
Infrastructure	127 th
Health and primary education	132 nd
Technology penetration	Very low level

According to Sani (2010), Nigeria's economic growth appears to be at the mercy of incessant volatile international market and unless she diversifies by insulating her markets from external disruptive effects, the transformational programmes being put in place would only end up in the archives. Again, real-sense education is the key insulator, where it is built to encourage high incidence of creativity without a bottom line. It is then pertinent to train our youths on change management and adaptation thus making thinking/learning environment very essential.

The present administration's decision to send our 1st class brains for further studies abroad with the idea of using them to transfer learning/knowledge, when they return, is laudable. However, there is need to ensure that these brains are truly 1st class. Without appearing to be pessimistic, the level of academic dishonesty being witnessed in our institutions must be checked to ensure that we do not send our 'best brains' out to further reduce Nigeria's world rankings.

Efforts being made by well meaning citizens to re-position the system should be improved upon and appreciated by all and sundry (parents, children, adults, leaders, etc.) for it to positively impact upon our lifestyles and develop the nation. It is obvious to an educationist that only a conscious, consistent and organized effort will yield the desired result.

The Vision 20:2020 Saga

Many nations of the world are clamoring to be included as first top twenty most developed nations. Nigeria is also struggling in the race. A saga however can be described as complicated series of events or personal experiences stretching over a considerable period of time. Thus we can regard the vision of a country aspiring to be part of the world development vision as a saga since it involves numerous but myriad events, several years and experiences requiring interlinks for better achievement.

As the country pursues her quest for a place in the global vision, care must be taken to note the following Development Key Indicators (DKI):

Institutions	Basic factor
Infrastructure	"
Macroeconomic stability	"
Health	"
Primary education	"

Higher education and training	Efficiency enhancers
Goods market efficiency	"
Labour market efficiency	"
Financial market sophistication	"
Technological readiness	"
Market size	"
Business sophistication & innovation	Innovation and sophistication factors

In the bid to face challenges headlong, the country has set up committees to map strategies for achieving the goal. Despite the human, material, natural endowments and coastal location available to the country as potentials for growth, very little has been realized. Previous and present administrations thus, seem to lack the political will to attain considerable/substantial growth rate. This is seen in their intention to pursue the vision amidst economic stagnation, declining welfare, social and economic instability without the desired vigor. It is obvious that action is demanded; not packaged portfolio and rhetoric.

Global warming, emergency response rate, global health record, economic growth, great technological innovations and entrepreneurial skills, among others, will all count in the global achievement assessment. The preparations, the actions, reactions and counteractions are all the desired penultimate aimed at achieving the ultimate – 20:2020. The superb insight demands that;

"For the sake of the ultimate, the penultimate must be preserved. Any Arbitrary destruction of the penultimate will do serious injury to the Ultimate." Clement (1986:59)

The NPE (National Policy on Education and Educational System's changes

The Policy as is practiced today seems to have digressed from what was originally intended by educational developers and curriculum planners of old. On the premise of the decline, Prof. Obioma according to vanguardngr.com/category/education (2012), has been charged with a holistic review of the 2004 NPE which has been rendered obsolete by current educational realities both nationally and internationally. Its defects and deficiencies are very obvious and as such complicity in handling it will not suffice at this time.

Nigerian national goals derived from the philosophy of her educational system include: knowledge for national consciousness and unity; knowledge for right type of values and attitudes that are helpful for survival; knowledge aimed at imparting understanding of the world around; and knowledge for the acquisition of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies necessary for individual survival and for purposes of contributing to national growth. The philosophy therefore, demands that concepts and principles are important ingredients for knowledge impartation. This is the only way we can breed citizens who will not only know how to use a machine, but who will also know the overall workings of the machine in order to develop the initiative on how best to use, maintain and care for it as well as develop a better one in future.

Technology, which has somewhat simplified knowledge, demands that knowledge be properly managed in order to make it more useful. The idea of introducing too many examinable subjects

into the primary and secondary curricula at the whims and caprices of political office holders in order to pacify their professional ego would only lead to a disastrous educational system where students are churned out with little or no knowledge at all. This idea would run contrary to the current global educational realities where different people are trained in different areas to cover so much that will equip them to diversify and contribute to the system, something new as they progress.

The Way Forward/Deserving Insulation

Insulation can be viewed as a condition or situation that provides protection against something undesirable or unpleasant (Encarta, 2009). From the foregoing, therefore, it is obvious that for the country to be protected from undesirable unpleasantness of backwardness, underdevelopment, recession, there is the need for insulation through real-sense education. We must catch our children young in this plan and groom them through all triangular pinnacle of education in order for success to be beneficial. The President has started well by directing that all first class graduates of our universities be tipped for higher degrees overseas so as to equip them to lecture in our universities for at least five years. This is good news but there is need for a strategy to ensure that this selection is not marred by malpractice of 'grade sale' and that our institutions are well equipped for studies.

It is a distinctive thing in the life shape of an individual that elements and developments are triggered up during his educational career. This positive benefit should kick-start with parental home and progress, in order to make real sense that would create devotion for both parents and nation. This opinion was projected by Clement (1986) as he delved into the issue of patriotism. It would be more relevant today.

As opined by Ezichi, Kenebara, Anele and Achilike (2009:33) "Researches must be occasioned by the need to:

- (a) Provide answers to the following operational questions – happenings in classrooms, offices and beyond
- (b) Advance knowledge that would help current practices (c) improve creative thinking and simulations
- (d) Better re-ordering of educational programmes planning and materials
- (e) Build up a body of new knowledge that will reflect technological innovations, and
- (f) Give a guide for future predictions that could use sound theoretical constructs and/or modules on educational processes."

There is no doubt that weighing and assessing researches through the above bases by A Research Censor's Board would go a long way in improving researches for Government decision-making that would increase or improve the dividends of democracy, via education, to the people. These assessments should be publicized in the Internet and other media.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the text that the need for a real-sense education that would prepare our generation for bracing up for the challenges sequel to the achievement of vision 20:2020 is a necessity that must be faced by the nation. This would demand a critical review of all the sectors allied to education in order to give education a holistic overhaul. Borrowing a leaf from philosophers of old and the immediate past, we can fashion a present and future that is better blended just as the developed nations (china, America, United Arab emirates, Britain, etc) have done in the area of technology. Our children can be groomed to develop interest from home and to

enjoy being useful in the scheme of things. Little incentives provided in yearly budgets to get to 26% would get the nation there albeit with little difficulties. This would ostensibly involve developing our early-child education, primary, secondary and tertiary education with uniform standard, bearing in mind Jean Jack Rousseau's philosophy that every child (especially the healthy child of today – through a well developed health system) is born good and intelligent; only the right input would elicit the right outcome, thus ensuring the desired insulation from disasters and other difficulties associated with the move for a successful vision 20:2020.

Recommendation

The paper, drawing from the conclusion, recommended as follows;

- That pre-school education should be taken more seriously by all agencies concerned with it, to ensure a well grounded foundation for our children's training.
- That the psyche of our children should be tailored with or to the fact that failure to pass an examination does not signify dullness but inability to cover sufficiently what needed to be known for a particular examination.
- That teachers should be well trained so that they can impart what they have, bearing in mind that a nation cannot grow above the level, knowledge and standard of her teachers.
- That teacher education in our colleges and universities of education should be sponsored by government in order to develop interest and skill in teaching.
- Since this generation has much interest in chats through network, lessons, manuals and books should now come in CDs and DVD plates as well as through internet websites in order to capture the interest of our youths for education.
- That prize be awarded for excellent performance in different subjects each term, semester, and year; as an incentive for encouragement.
- That simulations, brainstorming and demonstrations be emphasized during lessons. Case studies should also be generated to develop interest which will form basis for brainstorming group sessions. This will help develop critical thinking in our youths. These could form practical sessions for pupils and students.
- Students should be made to peer-assess their tests, coursework, course tests and practical work before grading is done by the teacher. That way, improvements will be done on pupils and students before exams.
- Knowledge and change management should be entrenched for enrichment purposes into sub-curricula.
- Rusticated students could be assessed and offered certificates (for programme participation) to go for lower jobs.
- Higher qualifications like Post Higher National Diploma (PHND), Master of Technology (M.Tech) and Doctor of Technology (Tech.D/TD) should be commenced in our Technological institutions, to prevent brain drain to the University sector.
- Government should provide seed funding for private universities, polytechnics, mono-technics and colleges of education.

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