

POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE MARGINALISED GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Whereas, Nigeria operates a huge network of educational services of various types and levels, there are yet, groups that are marginalised Given the 1984 UN declaration of education as a human right and having covenanted to the ensuing conventions and protocols, as well as the pursuit of Education for all and Sustainable Development Goals, a number of education policy responses have been formulated to meet those needs. In so doing, the paper highlights those special interest groups, their educational needs and policy responses. It also seeks to unearth the effects of the policies and the role of politics in the process. Drawing from those, it provides the way forward as ideas for export that should benefit the entire Sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world generally.

Introduction

Good educational policies and programmes are not gotten accidentally, neither are they extrinsically determined. They are designed by those who have the necessary tools, with a good knowledge of the potentials of the system and a clear vision of its long term objectives, and above all, see it as their business to undertake such a task. They are also attained, holding the prime beneficiaries in view, with their constant engagement at appropriate times and benefitting from their inputs. This calls for a close communication between policy makers, researchers and implementers of educational policies and programmes. In spite of a satisfactory synergy, extreme politicisation and overbearing dominance of the political class, can still ruin the outcome such is symptomatic of policy errors that are costly and very devastating. On the other hand, the full benefits of education to the targeted beneficiaries may be realised by the marginalised groups, if the policies and programmes are sound and sustainable.

The focus of this discussion is to identify the marginalised groups in Nigeria and do a critical appraisal of the policy responses to their educational needs, with a view to charting a way forward to meet those needs. The beginning point however, is concepts clarifications of politics educational

policies and programmes, the marginalised groups as well as **The politics of educational policies and programmes for these groups** in Nigeria. This is followed by an identification of the various underserved groups and assessment of educational politics and programmes response to the individual group needs and how politicisation is adversely affecting the expected outcomes. Logically before conclusion, solutions are proffered as the way forward and how that highlights ideas for export to sub – Saharan Africa and the developing world as a whole.

Conceptual framework

Whoever engages in an intellectual discourse must first define his terms. Hence, the conceptual clarifications of the key concepts, including;

- **Politics:** The ordinary dictionary meaning of politics relate to activities in getting and the use of power and influence to diplomatically influence decisions. Here, it specifically refers to sourcing power and influence to influence decisions that affect education of the disadvantaged groups in Nigeria
- **Policies:** A stratagem generally construed to be managerial, financial, political and administrative principles, instruments and mechanisms adapted to guide the individual and organisations in their rationale pattern to achieve the desired impact in an effective and efficient manner. Here, policies are plans of action intended to accomplish specific goals of meeting the educational goals of the disadvantaged groups in Nigeria. Here, we draw from the principles and mechanisms that guide our response to the need for inclusive education that should satisfy the yearnings of the underserved groups in a particular manner, for their improved knowledge and skill development.
- **Underserved:** These are the marginalised, who are disadvantaged, therefore not having enough of access, equity and quality of educational service delivery. Here, we consider the interplay of how policies influence the educational policies and programmes of the groups as well as their implementation.
- **Politics of educational policies and programmes for the underserved groups:** This is concerned with decisions that affect the direction of systematic educational pursuit to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of the marginalised groups in terms of access, equity and quality considerations. The underserved include out-of-school children, such as Almajiri street children, Area boys, the boy-child, the girl-child, nomads, women, adult illiterate and the internally displaced in emergency and post-conflict situations, the special needs group,

orphan and vulnerable children. Let us take a closer look at the groups and properly define their categorisation as underserved, disadvantaged, marginalised or short-changed in access to quality education.

The underserved groups in Nigeria

In spite of the pool of school-age children in Nigeria, the country is far from meeting the target of education for all in the Sustainable Development Goals or the UBE Act (2004). Quite a number are out-of-school, either due to their parental background, peculiar socio-economic orientation or sheer circumstance of birth for example nomadism (as in cattle herdsman, migrant fishermen and migrant cocoa farmers). Arising from the out-of-school menace, other societal nuisances have arisen. These include among others, streeting, alms begging, domestic and sundry services phenomena. Thus, there are 20.5 Million school age children that are out-of-school children. According to Global partnership for Educational Report (2012), these include,

- a) Household socio-economic status. This is a major contributory factor in Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Srilanka and Bangladesh. Generally, the poor and the vulnerable exhibit poor participation rate. Among the poorest of the poor, many parents are simply unable to fund their children's education. Others depend on their children of school age to supplement the household income. Others engage in catering for their younger siblings and other domestic chores, while the parents engage in their survival activities. The weaning confidence in the public educational system to guarantee employment makes families to consider children's education a worthless investment.

In the predominantly Muslim Northern Nigeria, It is common place to find young girls withdraw from school for marriage as it is also culturally right to marry out the girls early in life. These factors have exacerbated the out-of-school phenomenon. Hence enrolment ratio for girls is poorer than boys and higher drop-out rate as in northern Nigeria and rural India. But in Bangladesh and South-East Nigeria, boys are more excluded in education than girls. Particularly in South-East Nigeria, boys take to apprenticeship, seen as a safety value against unemployment after expensive several years of schooling. Among the E-9 countries generally (countries with very high population and very high illiteracy rates), out-of-school children are similarly many. This in most of them is compounded by the socio-cultural and religious practices that encourage koranic education at the expense of western education as among Northern Nigeria Muslim group, the scheduled castes Muslims in India and Chittagomy of

Bangladesh. Alms begging and the Almajiri phenomenon are common place among their communities. It is heightened by Islamic practices that tolerate and support. Thus, their higher patronage of Islamic education instead of western education.

- b) An estimated 90 percent of children with disabilities are unable to enrol and complete a basic education circle-in the developing world. In Nigeria, 10 percent of the estimated 180 million populations have varying degrees of these challenges. And over 50 percent of these numbers are children.

Numerically, this underserved group is huge. The more peculiar thing about this group in words of Bulus (1994) is that their disadvantage emanates from outright denial or failure to recognise and appropriately respond to their peculiar circumstances that accounts for their low or no participation in education. This sub-group constitutes of the **exceptional person**; different from the normal physically, mentally, emotional and behaviourally. The group's exceptionality restricts their participation in education, more so, such condition requires **Special Education**; such that needs to be specially provided by special people for special people's education, specially formulated, planned and implemented as articulated in the national policy on education (FRN, 2013).

- c) Internally Displaced Persons due to disasters, emergencies, violence and strife and post- conflict situations cannot permit smooth schooling and education. In 2004, there were 230 armed conflicts, including 3 wars and 33 severe internal crises. These have led to an upsurge in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) phenomenon and the ensuing mitigation strategies through establishment of camps for them. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 3.3million IDPs in Nigeria were ranked 3rd highest number of IDPs in the world (IDC, 2014). The UN office for coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA), 11 IDP camps were set up for over 100,000 people displaced in 8 LGAs of Benue State. UNOCHA shows 300,000 people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe fled their homes since 2013. Out of this number, 70percent are women and children. IDMC (2016) estimated 2,152,000 IDPs in Nigeria as at 31st December, 2015.

The International Organisation for migration and Displacement Tracking Matrix, in 13 northern states spread around 207 LGAs, showed the following number of displaced people: Abuja (13,481), Adamawa (136,010), Bauchi (70,078), Benue (85,393), Borno

(1,434,149), Gombe (25,332), Kaduna (36,976), Kano (9,331), Nasarawa (37,553), Plateau (77,317), Taraba (50,227), Yobe (131,203), and Zamfara (44,929). Of these figures, 12.6 percent were displaced due to communal clashes, 2.4 percent by natural disasters and 85 percent was as a result of religious intolerance.

Unquestionably, the spates of violence, terrorism, natural calamities have heightened the number of IDPs, the at-high-risk and orphans and vulnerable groups including women and children. The number, nationally and worldwide is too large a marginalised group not urgently implement **Alternative Education** that can make up for burnt schools, abduction of attendees (where are the chibok girls? And to curtail the phobia generated by this trauma. The world is presently witnessing an unprecedented religious intolerance and insurgency as terribly pronounced in Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Syria, Yemen, Sudan and North-East Nigeria. In Nigeria, further waves of terrorism are exemplified in the Fulani Herdsmen attack in most parts of the country and the particular target of schools and school children in the North-East and the recent attack and abduction of school girls in Lagos. The on-going waves of migration to the European Union Countries, is not only disruptive to the school system, it has greater negative impacts on the enrolment ratios of the relevant age cohorts with bizarre consequence in the near future.

The three other indentified underserved groups that fit our discussion here include the Nomads, Women and the Girl-child.

- i. The peculiar socio-economic orientation of the nomads (cattle nomadism e.g. Fulani herdsmen, farming nomadism, e.g. migrant cocoa farmers and fishing nomadism, e.g. the migrant fishermen) according to UNESCO (2005) cause them to regularly or seasonally be on the move. Thus, they require special educational services. Numbering over 9.3 million and about 3.1million being children of school age but out-of-school, the nomads are severely disadvantaged educationally. Yet, they account for over 90 percent of animal protein that Nigeria gets. Beyond enhancing their productivity therefore, nomadic education effectively promises to be both an end and a means to an end.
- ii. Women constitute about 55 percent of Nigerian population (NPC, 1991), but over 70 percent of them are illiterates and extremely poor (UNDP, HDI, 2014). With this massive disadvantage and under representation in education, over all development of Nigeria is impeded. A number of factors, such as cultural discrimination,

economic wastefulness, religious biases and gender stereo-typing, largely explain this state of affairs. Women education has risen to be policy significance because it has become popularly axiomatic that women education is synonymous with education of the nation. Undoubtedly therefore, women constitute an underserved group that necessitate our educational concern.

- iii. A closely disadvantaged group to the women folk is the Girl-child. Whatever we lose in the restricted women access to education is doubly tragic in relation to the girl-child in a largely patriarchal Nigeria. Inadequate girl-child participation in education has adverse effect on their reproductive health and consequent ripple effect on family health and societal well being as future wives and mothers. Moreover, without the necessary empowerment through education, tangible contributions to the nation's socio-economic development remain sub-optimal. Thus, the Girl-child education programme is important and all conscious efforts be made to improve girl's access to equitable and qualitative educational opportunities.

Educational Policies and Programmes Response to the Underserved Group

Responding to the fact that in the United Nation Human Rights Declaration (1948), making education a human right and having covenanted to the ensuing conventions and protocols, Nigeria formulated educational policies and programmes to address the challenges of the underserved groups as highlighted in the preceding section. This is in due recognition of education as both an end and a means to an end , whose benefits to the individual and the larger society, now and even to unborn generations are immeasurable. What are those policy and programmes responses, their effects and challenges (particularly the influence of politics), constitute the focus of this section.

Nigerians socio-economic status is worsened by the weak holding power of the educational system. This exemplified in high attrition rate, poor completion rate, and disproportionate regional and gender balances. Little wonder therefore, that Education for all, Millennium Development and Sustainable Development Goals are untenable in Nigeria. The natural consequence is the soaring number of out-of-school children. These as pointed out earlier, are the school-going age children but without access or have withdrawn or dropped out of school. Varied reasons have been adduced as

root causes, significantly, socio-economic, religious and cultural factors, sheer disability, natural disasters as well as internal and cross-border crises and displacements have been stressed as key contributory factors to the phenomenon.

These non-attendees, including non-completers number about 10.5 million in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2013). Rather than being in school, they are hawking on the streets and/or in worship centres begging for alms. Some are also in homes, rendering menial domestic services as well as in motor parks, markets and other public places, engaging in human portrage. Yet, there are others in workshops and shops in apprenticeship training. According to Tahir (2011), 65 percent of the out-of-school children are the itinerary koranic teacher's pupils that move from place to place but using the pupils to beg for alms and food for their sustenance.

To watch the number of out-of-school soar by the day amounts to sitting on a keg of gun powder. The growing number constitutes a huge threat to both security and socio-economic development of the nation. Already, out-of-school children in Nigeria have proved ready pawns and cheap recruits in the hands of unscrupulous politicians and other mischief makers. They are visibly seen multiplying strange so-called religious doctrines, radicalisation and extreme terrorism and insurgency. The children are largely the foot soldiers and suicide bombers. The security and corporate existence of Nigeria and any nation for that matter, and the foundation of their development remain under severe threat. This threat now or sooner than later is real as the devastation of the phenomenon is overwhelming.

Admittedly, efforts at stemming the tide, constitutionally and through collaboration and policy pronouncements abound (FRN, 1999; 2013). Among others, Nigeria's educational policy responses to the out-of-school children phenomenon will be limited to four, namely;

- i. Almajiri Education Programme
- ii. Boy-child Education Programme
- iii. Girl-child Education Programme
- iv. Alternative Education Programme

What are these policy programme responses? What are the levels of their success in mitigating the out-of-school phenomenon? In other words, of what effect have they been? What are their challenges with particular reference to politicisation? And what turn around strategies are desirable?

I. The Almajiri Education Programme

The Almajirai (Itinerant Quaranic School Pupils) constitute the largest group of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Numbering about 10 million (UBEC, 2009), this segment poses tremendous challenges to attaining Education For All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as other notable international conventions and protocols scarcity of the country's constitution (FRN,1999) its national policy on Education (2014) as well as the Universal Basic Education Act (2004). In addition, the number threatens the country's peace, social and political harmony as well as economic growth and development.

In absence of a decisive action, their fundamental right as in the 1948 UN declaration will not only be denied, but also keep their innate potentials untapped (UBEC,2009). Consequently, as a follow-up and commitment to the E-9 countries resolve to adopt modern madrasah, Nigeria evolved her model as Almajiri Education. This was essentially to integrate Quaranic Education into Basic Education following a Ministerial Committee for implementing it, empanels in 2010. In collaboration with the yearning of the Northern Governors forum's series of consecration, drawing heavily from the Northern Education Research Project (NERP) of Arena House as well as UBEC'S implementation strategies through its consultants, centre for Regional Integration and Development (CRID) in 2008, developed a policy framework and implementation strategies of Almajiri Education in Nigeria.

In effect, beginning with a 15- state pilot of the 2006/2007, Almajiri Education began and spent N150 million naira (CRID, 2008). This preceded establishment of their own model school (One in each Senatorial District of the Fifteen States in 2010/2011).

With both UBEC and Northern States spending on UBE, the Almajiri phenomenon has continued. The schools appear not to be functional as in spite of the elegant structures, there are no attendees. Evidently, the schools have not been built and tied to the fabrics of the communities, Neither have they been equipped sufficiently to deliver the anticipated educational goals above all, the curriculum and its method of delivery do not appeal to both the learners and teachers. This is more so as the later lacked the capacity to deliver their new mandate. In absence of re-orientation, the experienced social and economic conflicts between their traditional practices and the modern Almajiri Education demand were inevitable.

II. Boy-child Education Programme

This is an educational policy response to the challenge of under enrolment, withdrawals and outright disdain for education by boys, especially in the

south-east region of Nigeria. In this part of the country, the question of Why Education? Or Education for what? Has been popularly acclaimed. Instead, merchantilism enjoys a pride of place as they erk out of school to money making ventures through skill acquisition and apprenticeship in shop tendering and other trades.

The concern for the Boy-child education arose in the conviction that education is fundamental to individual and societal growth and development. Both education and skill acquisition or apprenticeship are desirable in our competitive world. We need both to respond opportunity to our individual and societal needs.

Consequently in 2010, UBEC formally inaugurated the Boy-child Education programme. Unfortunately, the ills of the educational system as exemplified in unemployment, less attractive returns from white collar jobs, prolonged periods of schooling before any returns at all as opposed to get-rich-quick syndrome remain the boys discouraging factors. As such, the Boy-child educational programme is yet to make any significant impact. Virtually all the stakeholders-learners, Parents and even Government at all levels, have not given the programme the necessary impetus.

III. The Girl-child Education Programme.

Due to female gender bias, a closely disadvantaged group to the women folk is the Girl-child. For whatever we lose in the restricted women access to education is doubly tragic in relation to the Girl-child in the largely patriarchal society or the men's world. The restricted access to education, impede the family health and societal wellbeing a future wives and mothers as well as tangible contributors to the nations socio-economic development. This is because they are not empowered to their optimal levels. To circumvent this, the National policy on Women (FRN, DFID & UNICEF, 2010), the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the key national policy documents and legislative provide for 'Compulsory enrolment and retention of all girls in schools, together with the expansion of second chance education for all through non-formal education provision' (FRN, DFID, UNICEF, P.V). Unfortunately, the 2010, Nigeria Education Data survey reported the primary school net attendance ratio for girls in the northern school was still well below 40 percent. Given the fact that the Girl-child education is extremely beneficial (ODI, World Bank, 1995), UBEC (2006) evolved policies, strategies and activities on the Girl-child Education. The lofty ideas are however, frustrated by a plethora of problems.

A number of demand-side and supply-side constraints impede girl's access to quality basic education.

<u>Demand - Side Constraints</u>	<u>Supply- Side Constraints</u>			
Lack of parental support	Absence of neighbourhood schools			
Parental ignorance	Unconclusive learning environment			
Poverty	Absence of separate conveniences for girls or none at all			
Lack of uniforms	Lack of drinking water			
Transportation difficulties	Insecurity			
Inadequate feeding	Violence in school, e.g. Corporal punishment, bullying			
Cultural norms	Hunger			
Religious beliefs	Insensitive curriculum			
Lack of female rolemodels	Lack of female teachers			
Fear of child pregnancy	Absence of school counsellors			
Early marriage	Low teacher expectation of girls			

IV. Alternative Education Programme

Often referred to as Displaced Persons Education is a form of providing alternative access programmes and alternative curriculum alternative methods of delivery for children and learners who cannot attend school arising from the emergencies (Baxter and Bethke, 2009). Alternative Education in the circumstance, takes three major forms; Schools without walls, learning centres and Continuation schools. Schools without walls offer programmes of community-based learning experiences and incorporate community resource-based people as instructors and facilitators. Learning centres provide special resources and programmes concentrated in one location, usually the IDP camps. Often, learning centres offer high interest enrichment programmes that attract and sustain their interest in learning. Continuation schools on the other hand, provide opportunity for drop-outs, pregnant women and teenage parents to continue their education. It is less competitive and involves individualised learning, personal responsibility for attendance and progress.

Regardless of the form, Alternative Education has eight key attributes.

- i. A clear focus on academic learning because learners have personalised learning plans and set learning goals that are relevant and applicable to real life challenge they want to address.
- ii. Instructional staff who choose to be part of the programme and have the role of governing, designing the programme and curriculum of the school.

- iii. Provision for on-going professional development activities for teachers that help them to be focussed, enhance their teaching strategies and develop alternative instructional methods.
- iv. Small class size with a low teacher-student ratio that fosters caring relationships.
- v. Clean and well maintained facilities that are attractive and foster emotional well-being, a sense of pride and dignity.
- vi. Partnerships with business community and other community organisations for internship, opportunities, company tours, guest speaker and inputs into their curricular and project development.
- vii. A strong, engaged, continuous and competent leadership in administering the programme.
- viii. Student supports which enable students to participate in school matters as well as programme that are both well structured and flexible.

Both now and later, effectiveness of Alternative Education is hinged on funding, facilities, quality teacher training, certification, staff and student motivation, sustainability, misconceptions and general apathy as well as other implementation challenges and general apathy as well as other implementation challenges like inadequate guidelines, inadequate monitoring and evaluation and absence of resource verification and accreditation.

Politicisation of Educational Policies and Programmes of the Marginalised Groups

Politics and education unarguably are inseparable. Thus, the educational policies and programmes of the disadvantaged group appear caught up in the web of politics. In other words, In spite of their desirability, they appear more responsive to use of power to influence decisions that affect them. While each marginalised group has been duly considered and appropriate educational policy responses formulated with constitutional and legal frameworks for unfettered access to education, they appeared torpedoed by politics for example, the UBE Act (2004) legislates compulsory enrolment of all children of school age so as to mitigate the spiral number of out-of-school children, lack of political will has affected implementation. The other identified groups: internally displaced persons children, the Boy child, the Girl-child and the Almajiri, the political economy of the policies appeared to undermine their real objectives. Who benefits what as individuals, State or Regions in terms of equitable access to the resources outweighed genuine considerations for the participants. Other disadvantaged groups that are not

directly covered here, e.g. Women education, Adult education, Nomadic education, Special Needs People Education, have had similar experiences of woeful implementation lapses. There is little wonder therefore, that EFA and MDGs were unattainable in Nigeria neither are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recently covenanted can make significant headway (Akpa & Gyang, 2018).

To watch the number of out-of-school children soar by the day amounts to sitting on a keg of gun powder. Already, they have proved ready pawns and recruits in hands of unscrupulous politicians and other mischief makers. They are visibly seen multiplying strange religious doctrines as extremist religious radicals and terrorists. They are the foot soldiers and suicide bombers of insurgency. This must be checked because the security and corporate existence of Nigeria and the foundation of its development is under severe threat. Given the reality of this threat and the need to go beyond lip service to effect the enabling policies and programmes above every other consideration, the necessary political will. The politics should be made much more responsive to be solutions rather than problems.

The law should take its full course against parents/guardians who fault the compulsory enrolment of their children/wards or choose to withdraw them for whatever reason (marriage, supplementary household income, domestic chores, including care for younger siblings. Defaulters according to the UBE Act (2004) should face the full wrath of the law.

Politics also have a dominant role to play in ensuring the functionality of the curriculum, provision of the implementation tools and strategies as well as creating a school friendly environment.

Indeed, “money answereth all things (Ecclesiastes, 10:19c) often, the place of understanding in educational policies and programmes is exaggerated. We contend that political economy is the real issue. In other words, there is often intense politicking in the economic planning process and the socio-political organisation and their interplay on education. This explains the gaps in budgeting provisions actual release and their actual uses in policies and programme implementation.

If our policy implementations and educational managers cultivate appropriate financial management policy plans in prudence and judicious application, cost saving devices, the funding challenge may be reduced. Nonetheless, considering the fact that education is a costly social service, 2 percent allocation from the federation account needs to be increased to 5percent.

Like in India, Srilanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan, we should pursue a more aggressive role and compulsory Basic Education through a legal

guarantee, non- payment of usher changes. In addition, government and the private sector intervene through grant and Education vouchers.

Women and children's Right Act should be domesticated in all States of the Federation and in tandem with international best practices, such as in Bangladesh, India, Srilanka and Pakistan that pays students stipends (Schumann, 2009).

Conclusion

While commending the initiatives of the policy responses to the educational needs of the underserved groups, Undue politicisation has adversely influenced and affected these policies and programme. For example:

- 1) Every state wants a fair share of every programme directed at any particular group to be democratised and shared as a national cake, baked with our common wealth.
- 2) Every programme must be universalised or democratised, thereby undermining the peculiarities and specific needs to be addressed in the policy formulation.
- 3) Funding is politically determined and has hampered necessary men, money and materials required for implementing the educational policies and programmes by the marginalised groups.
- 4) Management pays greater allegiance to political dictates and considerations, thereby overriding expertise and necessary experience in appointments and leadership of the special educational provisions for the marginalised groups
- 5) Politicians have a louder say and a more respected voice than experts in the policy formulation and implementation. While they canvas issues that are socially expedient, those may not serve the educational needs of the marginalised groups.
- 6) There is higher political consideration in the monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes. In monitoring and evaluating the policies and programmes, the activities are jaundiced by politically expedient considerations.
- 7) The process of policy formulation, lends itself more to political dictates. Politicians plan to win next elections that may be less of educational relevance to the marginalised groups.
- 8) There is inadequate political will to see to fruition the policies and programmes. We have not been sufficiently consistent in Nigeria to pursue with vigour and see to maturation of programmes and policies before they are abandoned for new ones, particularly when there is a

change of government. The frequent changes in government has also accounted for the numerous policy summersaults, lack of continuity and failure to see the function of policies and programmes.

- 9) Only government is the actor and the rest are on-lookers or passive spectators.
- 10) There is the dearth of personnel-planning and policy experts and academic staff to see these policies and programmes through.

Recommendations

- a. While there are attractive legal frameworks through the constitution, exquisite policies and programme documents, undue politicisation is the key hindrance to their functionality.
- b. The necessary political will through all levels of government (Federal, State and Local Government) and acting in concert with the private sector is necessary for effective policy and programme formulation and implementation. This also brings to the fore the necessity for public-private partnership to meet the educational needs of the marginalised groups.
- c. Revised and integrated curricula in the various groups will make education worthwhile and attractive to the clients; who will also demonstrate greater commitment and desire to participate in that way. The curriculum must appeal to the learner for its functional relevance, using immediate environment resources that also facilitate the use of his head, heart and hands.
- d. Beyond rhetoric's, the UBE law should take its full course against offenders, jail recalcitrant parents and guardians and all that obstruct access and equity to education.
- e. Admittedly, the Holy Book (The Bible) says, "money answereth all things" Ecclesiastes 10:19b Therefore, the political economy, i.e. the economic process are the socio-political organisation and their interplay on education, explain the budget, actual releases and their use. Indeed, this explains most educational policies and programmes implementation gaps. For greater funding success, a 5 percent Federation Account allocation to education of the underserved groups, centrally coordinated by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is recommended. With appropriate financial management policy anchored on prudent and judicious application, the gaps may be minimised.
- f. There are lessons for input to curb the Nigerian challenges from the Asiatic world and a number of E-9 countries, i.e. the countries with

high population and high illiteracy rates (China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt and Nigeria). Nigeria shares common challenges with these countries but with strategic responses they have overcome! Nigeria must maintain its membership of the group to fully benefit from its regular constructive conversations and engagements.

- g. Nigeria must reform its policies and programmes in line with global best practices, especially those policies and programmes that uniquely address the peculiar circumstances or particular marginalised groups.
- h. Education of the marginalised must be seen as a responsibility of all, government at all levels, organised private sector, individuals, parents and guardians and learners. As we all do our part now, the marginalised will be opportune to benefit from the education system. Otherwise, we will dearly pay for their illiteracy.
- i. These are our ideas for export. Should we make these policies and programmes sustainable in Nigeria, Sub-Saharan Africa, the developing world and the world at large will be better.

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