



**Managing Education
For Sustainable
Development**

in Developing Countries

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© NAEAP 2008

ISBN - 978-978-908-022-9

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Published by:
Nigerian Association for
Educational Administration and Planning
(NAEAP)
www.naeap.net



HIS LINEAGE PUBLISHING HOUSE
26, Okunmade Street, Mokola Ibadan,
Oyo State, Nigeria.
08033596818
e-mail: awemakin@yahoo.com

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Attaining Sustainable Development through Poverty Alleviation, Higher Education Management and Business Environment Strategies in Nigeria

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Abstract

Sustainable development is an all inclusive concept which is a function of several factors. Factors that assist sustainable development is higher productivity that increases economic growth rapidly. Where sustainable development is on going, the standard of living in such countries is very high hence most countries desire it. Certain factors aid sustainable development, these include education which provides the necessary skills to increase productivity, poverty alleviation as a factor will empower the people towards increasing the national capital stock, and a good business environment will determine the level of investment in such an economy. This study investigated the concepts of poverty alleviation, higher education management and business environment. It gave the conceptual definitions of the three variables and highlighted indices of under development that showed high population, low productivity, mono export economy and economies dependent on primary production. The tripartite issues in higher education of funding, autonomy and access to education were also discussed. Policy options and solutions were provided at the end of the study.

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development is a much desired goal among all nations of the world. The notion on sustainable development became popular with the report of the Brundtland commission in 1987 thereafter the United nations conference on sustainable development (UNCED) launched a document guiding sustainable development in 1992. The UNCED Conference of 1992 set out 27 principles for attaining sustainable development that will improve the quality of life in nations where sustainable development had not been achieved. In Agenda 21 of the document, the following items were highlighted: intergenerational equity, gender equity, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation, natural resource conservation and education among others. Wikipedia (2007) explains that the document in reference highlighted four areas of action for education namely; improvement in the quality of basic education, reorientation of existing education programmes, developing public awareness and undertaking to provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.

From the foregoing, it cannot be denied that education holds a central position in the attainment of sustainable development. Goals of nations include the attainment of macro-economic equilibrium which is increasing economic growth and development through the attainment of full employment and increased standard of living. To attain these, there must be investment in education (Schultz, 1971; & Akangbou 1985): The role of education is very well complemented by the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declaration through the Jomtein declaration that countries should allocate 26% of their annual budgetary allocations to education to ensure educational development through a steady growth pattern. Indicators which reveal an unsustainable development include; low export base, low GDP and GNP, low per capital income, poor standard of living, poor access to educational facilities, absence of entrepreneurial ability and general disempowerment of the people, high and increasing population without adequate resources (Dauda, 1993; WDI, 2007).

These broad concepts of sustainable development are global in nature but an overview of the concepts will attempt to relate their possibilities to Nigeria. This study intends to investigate Higher education management, poverty alleviation and business environments with sustainable development in Nigeria. The case of higher education management in Nigeria has been a subject of concern and controversy in Nigeria pre and post independent Nigeria. The urge for higher education led to the establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1937 and later the University College Ibadan in 1948 (Fafunwa, 1974). With an every increasing population, higher educational access projections over the years have failed to meet with national aspirations especially the projections report of the Ashby Commission (FRN 1960). Several reviews and reforms on the subject have been introduced to higher education in Nigeria. For example moving education to the concurrent legislative list in the Nigerian constitution, but these problems persist as access to higher education is regulated by a centralized body, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). It is clear that access to higher education has become subject to several variables which may not lead to the attainment of sustainable development due to the fact that high level manpower is a major requisition to power sustainable development (Akangbou, 1985). Furthermore, funding issues for higher education pose challenges to government in Nigeria often leading to higher education teachers or students strikes.

The World Bank (2000) explain that a strong positive relationship exist between economic growth and poverty. Citing the case of the East Asian economies (Asian tigers). According to the document, East Asia, reduced the share of her population living in poverty from 23% in 1987 to less than 14% in 1993 but in Sub-Saharan Africa where negative growth of GNP per capita predominated during that period, the incidence of poverty hardly changed. Several factors have been identified to contribute to poverty in Nigeria these include; low skill acquisition, poor access to education, rural neglect and in equitable income distribution and poor democratic ideals (Torimiro & Kolawole, 2005). It is one of the objectives of this study to find out possibilities of poverty eradication in Nigeria so as to pave way for sustainable development. It is the opinion of this paper that education can alleviate poverty. Furthermore, development cannot be sustained except through a peaceful business environment. Certain questions arise from this study that will serve as its research questions:

1. What is sustainable development and what are the indices of sustainable development?
2. Can the effective management of Higher education influence sustainable development in Nigeria?
3. How can poverty alleviation and business environment influence sustainable development?
4. What are the steps capable of initiating sustainable development in Nigeria?

The purpose of this study is not far fetched as Nigeria is categorized by (WDI, 2007) as one of the poor nations of the world with 70% of its population living on less than \$1:00/day poverty index. This assertion is corroborated by (FRN, 2004). It is the intention of this study to draw attention to these problems of poverty, higher education management and business environments. The study is qualitative, drawing significantly from existing literature and relating such principals to already existing data. The study is of relevance to government and policy makers since it addresses problems which are in the front burner in the national economy. An adoption of the suggested strategies will lead to the attainment of sustainable development which is the goal of government.

Research Question 1

What is sustainable development and what are the indices of sustainable development?

Sustainable development is simply described as present developmental efforts which do not compromise the future. It is also seen as the development of all aspects of life affecting sustenance (UNESCO, 2001; Hasna, 2007; Hansen & Ray, 1999). It is described as an integrated approach to development. Sustainable development involves an all round continuous development in which no part of the system suffers deficiency and where such exist, may not lead to system collapse. Several indices show level of sustainable development as it varies from one country to another. Indicators identified by (WDI, 2008) include; low level of GDP and GNP, the relationship between GDP and population is a determinant of standard of living, health status including life expectancy at birth, infant mortality ratios, school enrolment ratios and rates, availability of sources of good drinking water, rural/urban population and access to energy use, time required to commence business, democracy and democratic ideals, access and relationship with globalization and general education/technological attainments. The level of sustainable development ascribed to any country is a function of global rating by world acclaimed rating agencies using prescribed indicators. It can safely be assumed that an economy experiencing sustainable development has a graph as figure 1 while the economy with an unsustainable development policy in similar to figure 2.

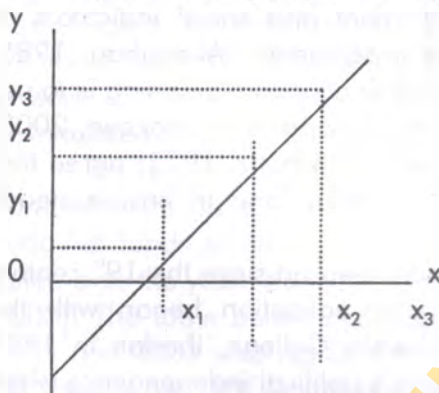


Figure 1 (Sustained Economy)

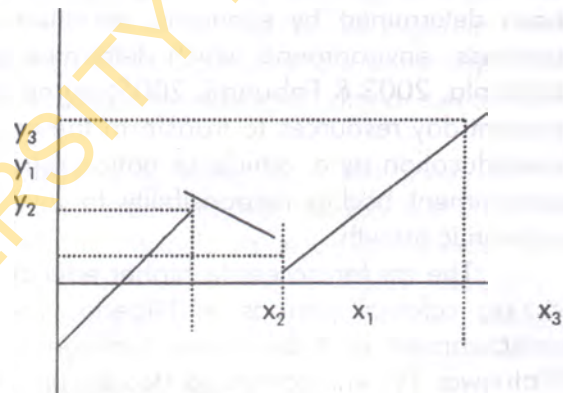


Figure 2 (Unsustained Economy)

In figure 1, $Oy_1 X_1 < Oy_2 X_2 < Oy_3 X_3 \dots \dots \dots Oy_n X_n$ indication a progress growth pattern which over time will lead to sustainable development but in figure 2, $Oy_1 X_1 > Oy_2 X_2$ and $Oy_1 X_1 < Oy_3 X_3 \dots \dots \dots n$, this shows inconsistency. The case of Nigeria is similar to figure 2 which invariably affects and influences the pattern on growth of education as economy and education are directly related (Babalola, 2000). Developmental indicators that show that Nigeria is yet to be developed according to (FRN, 2004) include low school enrolments, poor gender parity, low infant mortality, high population density and a fast growing population, an economy wholly and fully dependent on primary production. The main sustenance of Nigerian economy crude oil is a primary product whose price is internationally determined hence a shock in that sector affects education and other aspects of the economy adversely. Table one also shows the rapid population changes which have taken place in Africa without a corresponding increase in the means of survival in the last 25 years.

Table 1:

Continent	No of countries surveyed	Total land area in Sq Km	Total Population in 1977	Total Density in 1977	Population in 2002	Density in 2002	% growth in 25 years
Africa	54	30,354,892	388,108,00	13	840,095,754	28	116%
America	41	40,081,005	550,480,000	14	844,917,430	21	53.5%
Asia	48	31,663,596	2,173.826,000	69	3,931,520,798	124	81%
Europe	41	22,901,422	723,182,000	32	725,323,630	32	0.3%
Oceanic	10	8,487,393	19,906,000	2	30,416,237	4	53%

Source: *The Daily Telegraph World Atlas (1977 population figures) Info please, Com (2002 population figures and land areas) Other population statistics derived from the 1977 and 2002 figures.*

Research Question 2:

Can the effective management of Higher education influence sustainable development in Nigeria?

Education serves as a key that opens doors. (NPE, 2004:15) describes education as "par excellence". Issues in the management of higher education in Nigeria have often revolved around three issues namely; access, autonomy and funding (Babalola, 2000). These tripartite issues vary along with the trend in the Nigerian economy and have often been determined by economic variations, type of government and social indicators as business environments which determine levels of foreign investments. (Akangbou, 1985; Babalola, 2003 & Fabunmi, 2005) agree that the essence of educational planning is to use present day resources to transform the economy for future development. (Osokoya, 2003) see education as a vehicle of national transformation to which (Schultz, 1971) agree that government had a responsibility to invest in education to attain and in ensure steady economic growth.

The cry for access to higher education in Nigeria has been on since the 19th century during colonial periods in Nigeria. The growth of higher education began with the establishment of Yaba higher College in 1937 and University College, Ibadan in 1948 (Fafunwa, 1974) it continued steadily until the eve of Nigeria's political independence when the Ashby Commission was set up in 1959. The report of the commission led to the establishment of 4 other universities and another one in 1970 bringing the number then to 6 universities. Those universities form Nigeria's first generation universities. Between 1974 and 1978 another 7 universities commonly referred to as second generation universities were created making 13 then in 1978, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was established to regulate admission and access to higher education. In the year 2008, the issue of access to higher education still occupies a front burner in educational issues as less than 12% of applicant for places in available universities have chances of admission (JAMB, 2008), for instance in 2008/2009 admission exercise, one million and seventy eight thousand candidates sat for the university matriculation examination but only 12% of this figure will ultimately be admitted despite the investment in private universities. Therefore, what are other factors that must be put in place to increase access to higher education? (Ehiametalor, 2005) gave the following break down as in table 2 below;

Table 2: Showing Access to University Education in selected countries of the world

Country	Population	No of Universities
Nigeria	141.1m	105
India	1b	8,407
USA	290m	5,758
Argentina	38.7m	1,705
Spain	40.2m	145
Mexico	10.9m	1,341
Bangladesh	138m	1,268
Indonesia	238m	1,236
Japan	127m	1,223
France	60.1m	1,062
China	1.2b	1,054
South Africa	43.6m	26

Source: Adapted from NUC (2004) and (Fagbamiye 2005) and the Guardian August 19, 2004.

The ratio of universities to persons shows that the USA has a ratio of 1:50,365 persons, while Nigeria has a ratio of 1:1.23m. The table further shows a country like Argentina with a ratio of 1:38,000 persons and France with less than 50,000 persons to a university. The present scenario indicates that Nigeria needs more universities to attain sustainable development.

The second issue in university management is funding to which most school administrators have complained over the years. It is observed that though the financial outlay of funds to universities appear to increased, the intrinsic value of such funds have fallen over the years due to several national fiscal economic variables in Nigeria (Babalola, 2003). The table below shows government percentages allocation to education between 1991 and 2002 with higher allocation in 1997 being 17.6% of the National budget which fall short of the 1990 Jomtein convention recommendation of UNESCO.

Table 3: showing Federal Government of Nigeria Percentage Allocation to Education between 1991 and

Table 3:

Year	Allocation of Funds in %
1991	4.1
1992	6.3
1993	7.3
1994	14.9
1995	13.0
1996	12.32
1997	17.59
1998	10.27
1999	11.12
2000	8.3
2001	7.0

Sources: Extracted from National Bureau of Statistics from 2001-2002.

CBN Publications of various years and FME publications

To attain sustainable development a minimum of 26% of annual budgetary allocations must be devoted to education for a considerable number of years than education will be given a firm foundation capable of sustaining itself. The third factor in university

governance is autonomy. The often intervention in the course of university governance has rendered education unsustainable. In developing countries especially Nigeria, the principles of autonomy are not allowed to run freely. Government through its policies regulates entry, processing and at times output due to its perceived needs in the economy. The forces of educational demand and supply are not allowed to interact as government is interested in welfare. The catchment are policy interferes with the autonomy of universities and the establishment of JAMB in 1978. All these erode the university freedom in determining who to benefit from university education. Furthermore, government intervention in university appointment negate the principle of university autonomy. It is clear that a country that gives adequate access to high level manpower development and preparation has prepared the foundation for sustainable development (Schultz, 1971; Akangbou, 1985; Babalola, 2003 & Fabunmi, 2005).

Research Question 3:

How can Poverty and Business Environment influence sustainable development?

There is a strong positive relationship between poverty, economic growth and development (IBRD, 2000). The (IBRD, 2000) document links poverty to low savings, investment and poor consumption culminating in the low development of human capital, physical and social capital which in turn reduces GNP, GDP and affects education especially investment in education. Poverty as a concept involves has no universally agreed definition (Torimiro and Kolawole, 2005). (Okoh, 1997) explains poverty in both economic and cultural perspectives. While the cultural perspective deals with peoples attitudes and behaviour, patterns, the economic perspective, it is seen as a severe constriction or restriction of the choice sets measured by the generalized household commands over real goods and services. On the other hand, the world bank (1999) see poverty as lack of essentials to life such as access to education, safe drinking water, access to health, infrastructure, shelter, a situation of joblessness, high maternal and infant mortalities, poor literary and lack of freedom of representation and a host of others. Poverty can be seen as a portmanteau term with distinct meaning to different people (Manhoney, 1999 citing Baulch, 1996). It could also be seen as a situation of ill-being, powerlessness and vulnerability. Olatunji (2006) post that before 1996, 43.3% of Nigerians lived below the \$1.00/day poverty line. The (IBRD 2000) explains that poverty and development cannot go together. The presence of poverty in Nigeria can not be reasonably denied as contained in the (FRN, 2004) document thus;

"... about two thirds of the Nigeria people are poor, despite living in a country with vast potential wealth. Although revenues from crude oil have been rising, the nation seems to be sinking deeper into poverty by 1999, about 70% of the population had income of less than \$1.00 per day and the figure has risen since then".

The foregoing show that education is greatly affected as poor parents will not be able to afford basic education materials for their children. They may not be able to allow the children go to school because of the economic value of child labour which (Torinmiro and Kolawole, 2005) put as hawking, touching, involvement in casual labour, blood selling touting, prostitution and other vices. This affects schools enrolment, literacy rates, health status and consequently sustainable development. An analysis on Table 1 will clearly show that while any excess resource in Africa will be channeled to consumption, Europe and America with moderately growing population will channel her resources to investments.

The business environment in an economy also plays a dominant role in sustainable development. A business environment simply exists to accommodate any object or matter that deals with business activities. The profitability, progress and development of any

endeavor is a function of that environment which could be described either as peaceful, turbulent, micro and macro (Web encyclopedia, 2007).

Investors in any economy who serve as engine of economic growth are desirous of the safety of their investments hence the desire to ascertain the nature of the environment. A peaceful business environment is characterized by a calm, social, political and economic society where the forces of demand and supply operate freely without interference. The turbulent business environment is the opposite. Most African economies inclusive of Nigeria are turbulent. They are characterized with poor national leadership, corruption, inter-ethnic clashes, militant and sectional struggles, lop sided fiscal Federalism, and constant social disorders e.g. university lecturers strikes, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) strikes and political agitations in unperceivable dimensions putting investments and investors at grave risks. The aforementioned factors are symptoms of poor or unsustainable national developments. For a business environment to be seen as conducive and capable of fostering sustainable development, it must be far from interruptions of either politics or undue government interventions, and national policies must be consistent and in line with internationally recognized conventions. Business laws must be well laid out and understood by actors and proponents. Technology must not only be available with infrastructure but will be in consonance with the global increase in knowledge and digital revolutions. There will be a chain functional consonance in economy, education, research and development. The aforementioned factors move in a bi-relational direction manner. Poverty and business environment have strong influences on sustainable development.

Research Question 4:

What are the steps capable of initiating sustainable development in Nigeria?

This paper is of the opinion that certain steps, policy options and initiatives are need to ensure sustainable development. These will pave the way for accelerated economic growth that leaves enough for investment in education to foster a sustained nation.

1. Addressing Nigeria's Fiscal Federalism:

Nigeria needs decentralization. The current centralized system with several marginalization may bring negative consequences. A decentralized Nigeria will pave the way for a peaceful business environment that will usher in investment, open foreign doors to Nigerians bringing in Foreign Direct Investments that will fast track economic growth and leave enough resources for the education, health and other sectors.

2. Initiating Human Development Policies and ensuring Continuity:

This paper observes that the poor nationalist zeal in Nigerian's have eroded the national values which the nation would have attained over the years. In Nigeria, succession administrations introduce policies which are usually poles apart from previous administration with the intention of creating a name. The last civilian administration was known for the NEEDS (2004) document expected to terminate in 2009 but the new administration in 2007 began with "7 Points Agenda" what has happened to NEEDS? These inconsistency affect educational development and sustenance.

3. Creating an Enabling Business Environment:

There is need to create an enabling environment for conducive business in Nigeria. (FRN 2004) reports that Nigeria business environment needs urgent improvement especially in the areas of creating a legal framework to reduce the difficulty involved in registering a business entity, reduction of bureaucratic red tapes to get a document through. Furthermore, market forces must be allowed to dictate and show direction of economic

investments. Private Sector participation in production must be encouraged (Erwat, Isah & Fabunmi, 2008).

4. Eradicating Poverty through Job Creation and Training of Corruption:

There have been attempts in the past to create jobs and empower Nigerians such as "betterlife program for Rural Women" organized by the Gen. Ibrahim Babangida regime, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) of the Obasanjo administration, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of the late 70's and presently the seven point agenda of the present administration which all purport to empower the people. The opinion of this paper is that such programmes failed as the desired effects are not visible. (Torimiro and Kolawole, 2005) identified unemployment as a major cause of unemployment. Another factor is corruption among the elite. Funds meant to empower the people are often stolen and slashed away in foreign accounts by greedy leaders (Ribadu 2006). This paper therefore suggests that there must be of necessity in job creation, skills acquisition and empowerment of the people to create a conducive business environment. Militancy, inte-ethnic clashes, religious violence must be contained to present a peaceful business environment that will attract foreign investors to grow the economic. Furthermore, attention must be given to higher education teachers and students to avoid strikes which could destroy all investments in that direct.

5. Pursuit of Welfare Policy Options:

Though elements of economic theory expect the strict observance of market forces in the area of demand and supply in product which is expected to apply to economies (Babalola, 2003), government must understand that it has to weigh the option of low literacy rates against economic growth and sustainable development. Where the elements of economic analysis are allowed a full day, then there 70% of the population below extreme poverty then school enrolments and literacy rates will drop. This will become a consumer nation. It is the opinion of this paper that welfare and interventionist policy options be embarked upon by government as investment to develop the economy.

6. Capacity building and Human Capital development for sustained development:

It is the opinion of this paper that government embarks on capacity development programmes for key staff. It is designed to expose employees of home governments to operations of developed economies with a view transforming such developments back home. This can be achieved through collaborative international exchange programmes, scholarships to citizens to school in world class universities outside Nigeria. Furthermore, government could embark on the provision of education as a social good through the social demand approach. The returns on educational investments far outweigh the cost.

7. Facilitating higher education reforms:

To attain sustainable development in Nigeria, government is to set goals, envision the people and put action plans and targets in motion. The tenets of sustainable development in all spheres will be advocated and legislated. While this paper observes that legislation may not actually be the problems of Nigeria but the will and capacity to execute legislation, it still behaves that legislations be put in place. There must be reforms in higher education to build the society towards sustainable development. Government must embark on advocacy to sensitize and envision the people.

Summary/Conclusive and Policy Options:

This paper has examined the possibility of attaining sustainable development in Nigeria by eradicating poverty, management of higher education and business environment strategies.

Several contextual issues as causes of poverty, problems in management of higher education and the challenges of business environment to development were received. However, the following policy options are recommended:

There should be a flow of policy options among the three (3) tiers of government. While the federal government of Nigeria has a dogged fight with corruption by establishing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the states and local governments have nothing like that. There is no compliment of efforts. With such diversity in the name of separation of powers, sustainable development may not be attained too soon.

It is the opinion of this paper that certain policy options be established, increase and revitalize the Nigerian National Youth Service (NYC) Scheme. Its founding objectives are no longer relevant they should be reviewed. Increase the duration of the programme and turn it to a training, practice period and preparation for entrepreneurship after empowerment.

Nigeria needs records keeping and maintenance culture. Without adequate records, progress and failures cannot be ascertained hence information studies and numeracy should be pursued vigorously. Nigeria has a well articulated information technology policy but lags for behind its targets date in exemption. It should be revised, revitalized and made functional to attain sustainable development. Sustainable development is attainable in Nigeria if higher education is properly managed, articulated with good business environment, it will lead to the eradication of poverty.

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