

EDUCATION: THE PATH TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

This paper outlines the background which culminated to the morass of economic recession. The phenomenon of recession are discussed briefly with the various attempts which governments have made to address the frightening situation of economic recession. Then the role of education as an institution in the process of economic recovery are highlighted, drawing heavily from educational and economic developmental theories.

Long before the advent of the present administration and all through the Muhammadu Buhari's eight years disaster from which we need an economic recovery blueprint, the signs were ominous that the Nigerian economy was not in any healthy state. Not with all the humongous loans and the indebtedness of the federal government to the Paris Club, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other major foreign financial institutions with the decline in foreign reserves. The embarrassing disclosures by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) of the individual financial and choice property holdings corruptly acquired by government officials are mind boggling. And so, in the last quarter of 2016, when it was announced that the Nigerian economy had inevitably slid into recession, with all the developmental implications, it was not any surprise to any discerning observer who had been following the profligacy and the very primitive accumulation of wealth by a band of uneducated and corrupt Nigerian political elite. However, to our greatest relief, by the first week of September, 2017, the National Bureau of Statistics announced that Nigeria had exited the economic recession with a recorded economic growth rate of 0.55 percent. Even as this development had been pooh-poohed by pessimists as mere statistics and insignificant, it was nevertheless an obvious sign that the economy was picking up and is now on the right path with visible diversification of the productive developmental efforts.

However, the entire episode was like a flash in the pan, because the proclaimed economic recovery was yet to show its face in the "common market"

of the ordinary Nigerian where the biting effects of the recession had taken their very heavy toll. Nevertheless, the rear position of Nigeria in the global economy has never been in doubt. This is in spite of the fact that Nigeria has always been very wonderfully endowed in all spheres of human, material and even economic potentialities. Indeed, Nigeria was rightly set on the path of very rapid economic development in her early years of nationhood. For example, at independence in 1960, the Nigerian economic development indices stood very firmly on the very buoyant economic tripod of coca, groundnuts and oil palm. At the same time, Nigeria paraded very strong economic development fundamental indices which made it a very attractive destination for private sector investments, with a vast expanse of natural resources, and expansive ready market in the Lagos area, Kano, Kaduna and other coastal cities. She also had a very young and vibrant population which could provide very cheap labour for any investor.

The Background to the On-set of Economic Recession

Unfortunately, this buoyant agriculture based post-independence economy was not to last long because large deposits of petroleum resources had been struck at the swampy recess of the Niger Delta, specifically at Oloibiri. This discovery gave very promising prospects for development and so exploration started immediately. This exploration of oil resulted in the abandonment of the agricultural sector. The consequence was a very drastic fall in the overall contributions of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 60% in 1960 to 31% in the early 1980s. That was the genesis of the recession and since then Nigeria has remained a net importer of even food and all other consumable goods. However, when the oil prices in the international world market began to show signs of distress, just twenty years after independence and towards the second quarter of the year 2008 up to 2014, the handwriting on the wall was ominous. The general welfare of Nigerians was drastically affected with the per-capita income and private consumption nose diving. The World Bank and several other international agencies got involved and so in the Global Economic Prospect of 2015, the picture was clear that the number of poor Nigerians living below the poverty benchmark had continued to increase from 27% in 1980 to 47% in 1985, 67% in 1996 and about 70% in 2000 (World Bank, 2004).

Economic growth had been slowed down by the very fragile and flat global economy since the onset of the global financial and economic crisis with oil prices plummeting from USD 114 per barrel to as low as USD 28/barrel between 2014 and 2016. The cumulative effects of these economic challenges included the general inability of the economy to sustain the expected growth forecasts, inability to create jobs for the teeming population of youths, inability to reduce the poverty level appreciably, unconscionable high dependence on a single commodity, raw material import dependence, intermediate sub-standard goods dependence and

above all, a very gullible consumption skewed economy, a very primitive accumulation of wealth by a band of extremely corrupt fortune seeking politicians and an embarrassing high cost of governance.

Between 2005 and 2015, Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an average of 6.3 per cent. But with the onset of the economic recession in 2016, the GDP contracted to about 0.36 per cent in the first quarter. It rose to about 2.1 per cent in the second quarter and by the third quarter, it stood at 2.2 percent. However, following the rapid depreciation in the international value of the naira, higher energy prices and the very high costs of essential development inputs, inflation soared from 9.5 percent in December 2015 to 18.5 percent in November 2016 (World Bank, 2017). The fluctuations in the price of crude oil from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) gave rise to very sharp fall in oil revenues with the resultant widening of the federal government deficits from ₦1.2 trillion in 2013 to ₦1.4 trillion in 2015 and an estimated ₦2.2 trillion in 2016.

Cumulatively therefore, foreign exchange reserves declined from USD 32 billion in January 2015 to USD 25 billion in November 2016. This was from a high USD 53 billion in 2008. The naira depreciated very sharply, losing nearly 5-0 percent of its value against the American Dollar. On the social radar, general poverty and social exclusion rates became astronomical with about 61 percent of the Nigerian populace living on less than USD 1 per day. In addition, the Human Development Index (HDI) became very hopeless especially in the areas of health and educational services. In all states of the federation, hospital and health centres became mere consulting clinics. Educational institutions went on forced vacation because workers were owed several months of unpaid salaries and allowances. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also reported that Nigeria ranks 4th among the nations with high mortality rates – with nearly 55 percent resulting from acute malnutrition. Similarly, in the education sector, the recession had taken its toll, with primary school enrolment rate standing at 54 percent and 10 million children of school-going-age out of school in spite of the efforts in the implementation of the Education For All (EFA) Initiative of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most distressful was the staggering figure of youth unemployment which stood at a high of 17.6 million. Before the recession, it was expected that the youths, who account for 22 percent of the entire national labour force would increase to about 45 percent in about 15 years. But this was not to be because of the governance challenges which include widespread insecurity both in the Niger Delta and the menace of Boko Haram in the North East. There are also the perennial issues of maritime piracy accompanied by dare-devil oil thefts, vandalism of petroleum pipelines with the accompanying illegal oil bunkering by oil merchants in the Nigeria Delta. All these combined to put the Nigerian economy in a very parlous state culminating in the economic recess.

Critical Indices of Economic Recession

One of the most critical indices of poverty and economic recession in Nigeria is the unbridled rise in the cost of living for the average Nigerian. This is evident in the increased cost of household goods, including food items like rice, beans, garri, meat, fish, tomatoes, pepper, onions, etc. On a larger scale, youth unemployment in Nigeria stood at 42 percent in 2016. This high unemployment rate has created a state of hopelessness among the youths and school leavers. Poverty and despair have driven away youths into all manner of unconventional behaviours and crime. For instance, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, cybercrime (exemplified in yahoo boys) are commonplace experiences in all parts of Nigeria. The same records indicate that many of the over 10 million Nigerian children of school going age who are not in school are seen in major streets in the cities and towns hawking one item or the other. They all lack any form of knowledge or skill. In fact, it is estimated that over 80 million Nigerians live below the poverty benchmark. And because of this economic depression, many citizens are unable to acquire basic goods and services for comfortable living. The standard of health is therefore very low because of little or no access to the very basics of clean water and sanitation and a general feeling of insecurity. The Global Economic Prospect (2015) has since reported that the situation in the entire sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria indicates that most of the countries have failed very woefully to alleviate poverty to any appreciable level in spite of the assistance from international donor agencies.

The Recovery Plan

The present administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu recognized quite early in 2023 as soon as it was sworn in, that, with the steep downfall in the price of crude oil, the economy was surely in the course of a steady decline. This was why several concerted efforts were quickly mounted to tackle the challenges. Several actions were quickly taken to salvage the situation even though in our usual “fire-brigade” approach. Foremost among the actions was the removal of the notorious fuel subsidy and the prioritization of government’s three policy goals. Among them were” tackling corruption headlong – which was in itself an uphill task because of its deep seated endemic nature, improving security both in the Niger Delta and in the North East and rebuilding the economy by way of diversification from the reliance on a single export product. This gave raise to Buhari’s three-pronged Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for the 2016 “Budget of Change” which was developed to intervene on a short-term basis. There was also the collaborative effort of the Ministry of Budget and National Planning during the defunct Buhari administration which designed a Medium Term Plan for 2017-2020 called the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) which had been developed essentially for the purpose of restoring economic growth. This mid-term plan was

leveraging on the ingenuity and resilience of all Nigerians, having regard for the parlous state the machinery of governance and the endemic corruption in the last one and a half decades. This recovery plan also very appropriately recognized the very important need to leverage Science, Technology and Innovation for building a knowledge-driven economy whose engine room is education.

One of the broad objectives of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) was the deliberate improvement on human capital. Under this plan to improve human capital, the Federal Government of Nigeria has planned to invest very heavily in health and education as a way of filling the skills gap in the economy. It was also to meet the international targets of the United Nation's Strategic Development Goals which were brought about by the widespread mismatch between the strategic sectors of the economy and the available skills being paraded by the unemployed job seekers. The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) was equally designed to improve the accessibility, affordability, and the quality of the healthcare delivery system both at the primary and tertiary levels. The ultimate goal was to roll out a comprehensive National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) which was to cater for all categories of the Nigerian labour force both in the public and private sectors.

The Education Component

The education component of the plan which is our main focus of this paper, is also expected to guarantee access to basic education for all as in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) whose 2015 target, Nigeria could not meet. The plan was equally to improve the overall quality of both secondary and tertiary education. At the level of curriculum option, the plan was to deliberately encourage students to show interest in and enroll in Science and Technology courses. Because of its comprehensive nature, the plan also outlined stable and coherent macroeconomic policies which were expected to restore Nigeria to the deserved path of growth. It also identified the sectors that the Federal Government of Nigeria will prioritize because of their potential to drive socio-economic growth and make very substantial contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There was also emphasis on the ability of the sectors to respond forcefully to stimuli, and the flexibility of their production methods and their capacity to innovate and generate large scale employment to obviate the current embarrassing youth unemployment situation.

This ambitious recovery plan will obviously require first class infrastructural facilities to be properly put in place to make workers respond favourably. The same is true for sufficient power, as well as a good network of motorable roads and rail, including specially prepared destinations in terms of air and seaports. To be mounted simultaneously, just as the Tinubu administration is doing currently, are effective poverty reduction strategies which will enable all

areas of the society to benefit from all available economic opportunities. To actualize all these, it will require a very healthy, vibrant and well educated citizenry who are so sufficiently endowed as to be able to establish businesses which can create the **Dangotean** kind of jobs, a hardworking and productive workforce and clear-cut government policies which would help to alleviate **poverty, hunger** and widespread **inequalities**. Also on the federal government's agenda for the economic recovery are clear cut and apparently honest efforts to combat corruption, promote governance in all tiers to government, ensure security and reforms in the public service. Since any meaningful development anywhere in the world is knowledge-driven, it becomes imperative therefore to briefly examine the role of the harbinger of knowledge, that, is, education. What role can be assigned to the institution of the education in this gigantic economic recovery agenda? In doing this, the starting point is first, to examine education in all its ramifications and identify which areas can be implicated in this very ambitious recovery agenda.

Education

Education is essentially a process by which an individual acquires several of the physical, intellectual and social capabilities, which the various sectors of any nation's economy require for development purposes (Jelivov, et al, 2016). It is a key component of human capital formation which is vital in increasing human productive competencies. It is a cognitive process which brings out the best in the human being with the sole purpose of producing well balanced personalities, culturally refined, emotionally stable, morally and ethically upright, mentally alert, globally and vocationally well equipped to be self-sufficient (self-reliant) and in fact, internationally liberal in outlook. Overall, the process of education, like a machine, is a total overhauling of the human being, with a view to instilling in him the appropriate attitudes and values and bringing out the best in him. An appropriate education brings about the development of these innate abilities and potentialities which will enable him make substantial contribution to human life and ultimately the entire society.

Education and Economic Recovery Process

It has long been recognized that education is an important component of human capital formation and very vital for increasing the productive capacity of the citizenry. At the tertiary level in particular, education contributes directly to the economic growth by equipping individual recipients of education with appropriate skills which make them more productive and ultimately leading to the creation of very valuable knowledge, ideas and technological innovation. It is common knowledge that even the very smallest investment in education is tremendously beneficial to the society both at the macro and micro levels of economic development and it affects the system both directly and indirectly. Education is basic

to the process of economic recovery and development. It is generally regarded as a catalyst for the comprehensive transformation of the society. This is because a well-planned and appropriate education, if well implemented, equips the human resources with the essentials of the required knowledge, the marketable skills required in the respective sectors of the nation's economy and the variegated competencies which would make the individuals very functional and contribute to the all-round development of the nation.

In fact, education does not only help in the production, and adequate supply of the essential human capital which are necessary conditions for economic recovery and sustainable growth, it is also an essential key to poverty reduction. In addition, education is a major vehicle for promoting equity, fairness and social justice (Todaro, 2007). An abundant supply of human resources in terms of well-educated citizenry, is generally associated with a high level of productivity which is a plus for any economy. Fidel Castro's Cuba survived the United States of America's nearly forty years of economic isolation because of her very vibrant and aggressively progressive educational policy. The same educational success story is true of Switzerland and many South Asian Tigers. Our nearby neighbour Angola is in a similar developmental trajectory. An abundant supply of well-educated citizenry equally implies a larger number of more skilled workers and a greater ability to contribute meaningfully to economic development. Vigorous funding and appropriate reforms are inevitable for any serious economic recovery process.

Economists the world over, have long embraced the role of education and have accepted that any investment in education or human capital is an important element in the process of economic growth. It is common knowledge that the problem of poor educational funding in Nigeria cuts across all levels of our educational strata. According, Ajayi (2015), between 1999 and 2006, the average budgetary allocation to education by the Federal Government of Nigeria was less than 10 percent, a far cry from the 26 percent UNESCO benchmark recommendation for education. Figures from the World Bank in (Okobukola, 2008) revealed that among the 15 developed countries, whose rank Nigeria had planned and eventually failed to join by its project 20-2020, Nigeria's percentage of the Cross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to education was a miserable 3 percent, while several other countries allocated an average of 6 percent. Even among the nations of the world, both developed and developing, Nigeria ranks least among a group of twenty nations according to the World Bank 2012 Report (Ajayi, 2015) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education by Some Selected Countries of the World

S/N	Nation	Percentage Budgetary	Position
1	Ghana	31.0	1
2	Coted'Ivoire	30.0	2
3	Uganda	27.0	3
4	Morocco	26.4	4
5	South Africa	25.8	5
6	Swaziland	24.6	6
7	Mexico	24.3	7
8	Kenya	23.0	8
9	United Arab Emirate	22.5	9
10	Botswana	19.0	10
11	Iran	17.7	11
12	United States of America	17.4	12
13	Tunisia	17.0	13
14	Lesotho	17.0	14
15	Burkina Faso	16.8	15
16	Norway	16.2	16
17	Columbia	15.6	17
18	Nicaragua	15.0	18
19	India	12.7	19
20	Nigeria	8.4	20

Source: World Bank, 2012

In spite of the poor funding shown in Table 1, the Nigerian educational scene had been characterized by all kinds of ill-conceived, hastily planned and haphazardly executed and abandoned reforms in the last few decades (Nwagwu, 2014). Anwukah (2010) had cautioned against reforms which create more problems than they solve, or which are counter-productive, arguing that all reforms and changes must aim at improving the education system and not satisfying some minority covert, selfish, political, ethnic, religious and economic interests. How, for example, would you explain Ezekwesili's aborted attempts to deregulate the time-tested prestigious Unity Schools, or Adamu's recent policy somersault and recapitulation in the cancellation of the Post-Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (P-UTME), or even the recent reduction of the university admission cut-off mark to a ridiculous 120 by Prof Is-shak Oloyede's Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB)?

The benefits of an appropriately well-articulated educational process are unquantifiable. Education enriches a people's understanding of themselves and the

world around them. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to several other broad social benefits both to the individual and the larger society. Education's special capacity to raise a people's productivity and creativity, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and technological innovation is what recommends it as a very potent and reliable panacea for economic recovery. This has been aptly demonstrated among the Asian Tigers, in Bolivia and in Brazil (World Bank, 1999).

Why the Resort to Education for Economic Recovery?

Educational and development economists have consistently found very significant correlation between economic backwardness and poor/low levels of education, poor training and culturally uniformed populations of the world (Nwadiani, 1997). The resultant effects have always been – persistent low productivity levels; low labour mobility; low structural changes; very slow pace of innovation adoption and diffusion (Roger & Shoemaker, 19765); unsustainable economic growth and national development. In order to achieve sustainable growth and national development, there is the urgent need to improve the quality of the education which the citizens are receiving (Abubakar, 2014). The Psacharopoloulos (1994) studies in Africa, Asia and Latin America have also demonstrated how average returns of additional years of schooling (education) both from primary, secondary to post-secondary are a sine-qua-non for economic growth and development. He reported average return rates of 29 percent for primary, 18 percent secondary and 20 percent post-secondary development figures respectively. In a similar vein, Bakare (2006), Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) found that Nigeria is confronted with most of the problems that could limit the capacity for educational expansion capable of stimulating economic growth and development, such as underemployment, low absorptive capacity, shortage of professionals, regional imbalances and widespread brain drain.

Similarly, Barro (1991) examined the relationship between investments in education and economic growth and found a very positively significant relationship between the level of school enrolment and the growth rate of real per capita output (Ehigiamusoe, 2013). Traditionally, the theoretical linkage between education and economic growth lies on the fact that growth is generally accounted for by the accumulation of human and physical capital on the one hand, and increased productivity arising from technological innovation (Lucas, 1988). But human capital and technological innovation are usually the products of education. In essence therefore, growth, in whatever form, is a product of education. According to endogenous growth theorists (Romer, 1994), the effects of education on economic growth are a result of huge investments in human capital, innovation and knowledge (education) which are significant contributors to economic growth, especially in a knowledge-driven economy. This is why financial investments in education can never be too much, so long as they are judiciously utilized. On the

link between education and poverty, Ijaiya (1998) declared that one of the strategies for poverty reduction is to ensure huge investments in education. This is because education is indispensable for economic development through increase in income, increase in entrepreneurship, better understanding and utilization of existing health facilities. He even recommended the involvement of the poor in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes directed at poverty alleviation. Ahmed & Imam (2013) on a longitudinal perspective, equally examined the causality between poverty and education in Nigeria for the 40 years period - 1970-2009. They found a one-way relationship running from education to poverty and recommended an improvement in the standard of education provided in Nigeria so that education can play its role effectively in welfare improvement and poverty reduction.

It has long been confirmed by educational economists and scholars of human capital development that education facilitates economic and social mobilization and human resource development. This is because even the United Nations had declares education as a basic human right. It has been recognized that if education is properly planned and professionally implemented, it will facilitate human capital formation and socio-economic mobilization with a direct effect on productivity and social, cum human capital. As the level of education rises (especially higher education), the fertility rates of people generally drop, leading to smaller family sizes. At the same times, the rates of technology utilization increase, accompanied with growth in productivity among workers. This results in the appreciable elevated standard of living. When education is deliberately tailored towards local and national needs, national growth and development are taken care of adequately. Lee Kwan Yeu's Singaporean example of extensive educational expansion at all levels is very instructive. He redirected all the expansion programmes towards the production of industrial, clerical and professional manpower in terms of semi-skilled labourers, technicians and several other categories of professionals. The same is true of several other South East Asian Island countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, etc.

At independence, the nationalists rightly considered education as very crucial in the quantitative procurement as well as in the qualitative improvement of Nigeria's human resources. The education curriculum was therefore deliberately tailored towards the empowerment of the citizens with the very basic skills in the quantitative, communicative and character building, life and work experiences and attitudes and skills manpower, not only to fill the jobs which were vacated by departing colonialists, but for the new jobs that will be created as a result of economic growth and economic self-determination. Accordingly, national education was required to play a key role in the provision of educated professionals and skilled manpower for the transition from a colonial economy to a rapidly expanding independent economy.

Consequently, from the 1st decade of 1960 into the 1970s, in response to the social and economic demands for education, primary school enrolment increased five-fold, secondary enrolment multiplied by over twenty-two times. Higher education responded by increasing over eight times (World Bank, 1996). All these were a demonstration of government's determination to meet immediate manpower shortages. Therefore, in the Pre-structural Adjustment Programme, Nigeria decidedly used education and training to match the skills which were in demand for very aggressive economic development. Very unfortunately, government's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) brought about very drastic budget cuts as a result of government's budgetary allocation prioritization. With the budget cuts in the mid-80s, education was the first victim, characterized by the military administration's inexplicable criminal aversion to the institution of education. Education was therefore thrown into a crisis mode with public sector spending on education falling from 6.4 percent of the Cross National Production (GNP) in 1981 to below 1 percent while school enrolment was disproportionately on the increase. Annual average real per capita education spending stood at 8.1 percent between 1975 and 1984. This figure fell to 2.1 percent during the period 1984-1989. The inability of Nigerian education system to meet locally relevant manpower expectations emanated from the fact that its structure and curricular were dictated by the forces of globalization and generic foreign models as a dictated by the conditionalities of the foreign financiers of the Structural Adjustment Programme. For example, the language of instruction, as in all government business is essentially foreign, especially with a majority of its very senior academic staff having been trained abroad. This was why Professor Fufunwa's effort at Ile-Ife to domesticate the Yoruba language for instruction became moribund in spite of the prescriptions in the National Language Policy. Unlike its western counterparts, the Nigerian education system has not been designed to respond to the dynamics of social and economic environment. Largely oriented towards the west, the values, subject matter, and even examination criteria at all levels assume that the products of the system are destined for government service and other industrial sectors of the economy. In this respect therefore, the Nigerian education system with its basic orientation seems grossly mismatched with the future needs of the students and with the developmental needs of the Nigerian society. Massive brain drain by critical professionals did not help matters either, for example, the massive brain drain in the medical and paramedical sectors resulting from the contemporary iapa phenomenon.

According to Dabalen and his associates (2000), since the commencement of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) in 1986, there have been growing gaps between the education programmes of the Nigerian system and actual human resource/labour requirements. This has resulted quite paradoxically to both acute shortages of skilled manpower requirements in some sectors and some surpluses in

some other manpower needs categories. Beyond these facts are trends which visibly indicate that the education system was not in any way designed to pursue the constitutional provisions of localization and quality improvement at all levels and types of education. In essence, a thorough understanding of the unique features and profile of Nigeria's education situations is a precondition to designing appropriate policies to ameliorate the economic development crises and the obvious deficiencies of human resource development. This is an important reference point for devising an educational strategy in Nigeria and for engaging stakeholders in a constructive and informal dialogue on how best to fashion such a localized and down-to earth relevant educational strategy for a meaningful economic recovery and development.

Specifically, the urgent challenge is for government and its partners to focus on the following problems in order to further boost the recovery agenda:

- funding deficits in spite of the unregulated expansion in enrolments which has resulted to a general poor quality of products.
- structures and services which were originally designed for smaller populations now being over stretched to serve larger populations.
- withdrawal of education subsidies and the introduction of user-fees-making students and parents to now pay more for services of questionable quality (vide the quality of instructors in the private educational institution).
- relegation of technical and vocational entrepreneurial education to the background.
- retention of the conservative characteristics of the foreign oriented education system with externally determined academic standards – thereby encouraging intellectual mediocrity and dependency-leading to a general devaluation of the entire spectrum of the academic enterprise. The result of these challenges was evident in the World Bank Report on the states of education in Nigeria which indicated that “skills of graduates had steadily deteriorated over the years, making them unfit for today labour market and for the larger society” World Bank (1999). The overall consequence is the unequivocal declaration by the youths that “schooling is a scam”.

Conclusion

The path to economic recovery for Nigeria therefore is to use the instrumentality of a restructured education to prepare the next generation of human resources for a very aggressive developmental reengineering with a deliberate cessation of “western racism”, the reconditioning of the mind of the average Nigerian citizen and the alignment of policies and priorities towards practical or progressive education. This process of reengineering calls for very drastic reforms in all aspects of education. In most cases, what has been labelled “educational reform” has not always been concerned with changing education. Rather, the

practice in Nigeria, as in many other developing nations, has been problematic especially with the traditional technical advice from International (Donor) Agencies. The involvement of industrialized nations and the “Paris Club” in education reforms (even when they are not underwriting the bills) have never been any serious effort to improve the system’s effectiveness in capacity building, expanding capabilities and increasing the relevance of the natives to the local environment. In almost all cases, some of the reforms may have been effective only because the international (donor) agencies have built-in subtle impediments (as in SAPs) to educational reforms, especially in the management assumption and practices. How, for example, do you explain the Millennium Development and (EFA) Goals for the Basic Education which terminate at the 9th year of the process at the Junior Secondary level? What happens to the children after basic education? At that level can they fit adequately and usefully into any sector of the Nigerian economy?

The organization, content and processes of educational reforms as currently practised, are all impregnated with a strong bias towards the needs of globalized urban economies. Genuine educational reforms which are capable of reviving an ailing economy should ensure that all citizens are educated and numerate and that many of the recipients possess a wide range of problem solving skills beyond the basic level. Most importantly, the fact that some citizens will acquire world-class professional skills will call for drastic reforms in new curricular, improved teacher education programmes, and ICT-driven academic pedagogic strategies which encourage the acquisition of higher order entrepreneurial and cognitive skills. Above all, there is the urgent need to de-politicise all aspects of our educational policies and programmes.

Finally, an aggressive economic recovery programme will take into cognizance some issues of current national concern. On the front burner of Nigerians is that of restructuring the Nigerian project. There is also the issue of Constitutional Review. Then the continued high cost of governance. At the inception of the Tinubu Administration, many Nigerian expected a smaller number of minsters rather than 40 especially after the much talked about removal of the notorious “fuel subsidy”. It was also expected that members of the National Assembly, being very Honourably patriotic and distinguished Nigerians, would in view of the National economic downturn, have considered some drastic Sacrificial reduction in their emoluments and allowances as a way of reducing the overall cost of governance. To do this, one expected that they would have amended the constitution to provide for **Part-Time Legislation** such that legislators would now be entitled to only **Sitting Allowances** instead of their current “**Jumbo Salaries**” with their crippling effects on the economy. Then on the vexed issue of Restructuring about which there has been so much confusion, one would, think that the Spirit and Letter of restructuring for Nigeria is a courageous RETURN TO THE

1963 TRUE FEDERAL geopolitical and administrative structure with less powers/responsibilities for the Federal Government.

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