Improving Nigeria's Education in Primary Education for Global Competitiveness.

By

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Abstract

Nigeria's primary education system faces numerous challenges, hindering its ability to produce globally competitive students. This paper examines the current state of primary education in Nigeria, identifies key challenges, and proposes strategies for improvement. The challenges discussed include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and outdated curricula. To address these challenges, this paper recommends increasing investment in education infrastructure, implementing teacher training programs, and revising curricula to emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Additionally, this paper highlights the importance of adopting technology-enhanced learning tools and promoting community involvement in education. By implementing these strategies, Nigeria can improve the quality of its primary education, enhance student outcomes, and increase its global competitiveness.

Keywords: Primary Education, Nigeria, Global, Competitiveness, Education reform.

Introduction

Education is a conscious and intentional effort to create an atmosphere of learning so that it enables learners develop necessary potentials in them to manifest self-

control, personality, intelligence, noble character and skills needed for themselves and societal development.

Nigeria's education sector, like many others, is in a comatose state, and it is only the conscious application of workable reforms to reverse this trend that will guarantee the future generation of educated Nigerian's a place in global competitiveness.

In Nigeria, there is a growing decline in learning at all levels of education and this demand concerted efforts of leadership at all levels. (Akpotu, 2019) Nigeria's education curricula has not changed significantly to keep abreast with changes at the global level, especially with disruptions wrought by science and technology, but still largely revolve around the same demands for clerical and administrative officers that manned colonial posts for the interests of the empire. This accounts for the precipitous fall in standards when measured against global growth, because our education policies did not change when the environment that relies on the products of education for survival changed, as experienced in many parts of the world. (Adeyemi, 2018).

Nigeria's primary education system is the foundation upon which the country's future is built. However, the system faces numerous challenges that hinder it ability to produce globally competitive pupils.

This article examines the current state of primary education in Nigeria, identifies key challenges and proposes strategies for improvement. Abdu-Raheem (2019).

Primary Education and its Goals

Primary education is the foundation of Nigeria's education system. It provides the initial building blocks for future learning and development, therefore, in Nigeria and elsewhere, education is the bed rock for a nation's national development. It is a dynamic instrument for change and equips the pupils with skill that enhances their ability and capability for existence in life. Although, many primary education systems in the world are facing significant challenges that hinders the provision of

quality education to the citizenry, Nigeria's case is worst. The country's primary education is entrenched with challenges leading to a range of negative consequences including poor learning outcomes, teacher retirement, high rate of school dropouts, inadequate resource allocation, loss of core values, moral and character moulding amongst others.

In order for the children to maximize these skills, they need instructional materials, space, qualified teachers, school structure, laboratories, libraries, qualified guidance, counsellors, functional curriculum amongst others, so that teaching and learning can be effective. This skill possessed by learners in primary education builds up their ability and capability holistically, helps them to become creative and critical in thinking, moulds their character and enhance moral behaviour in them so that they can become independent and be able to carry out activities and make good and effective decision thereby being prepared for the next level of education, function and contribute to the development of the society. (Adeniyi, 2020).

Primary education in Nigeria is the first stage of formal education covering six years of schooling (primary 1-6) and focuses on basic skills acquisition and development, character moulding and preparation of the learner for secondary education. The national policy on education (2019) defined primary education as the education given to children between ages of 6 to 11 years, in a formal school setting, aimed at providing basic knowledge, skills and values that are essential for the learner's physical, emotional, mental, psychomotor, social and effective development as well as preparation for further education.To attain these goals, primary education has the following as it's objectives:

- The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
- The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
- Citizenship education as the basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- Developing in the Child the ability to adapt to his Changing environment;

- Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative Skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity;
- Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation preparation for trades and craft of the locality;

Some of the goals of Primary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2013) are as follows:

- Provide a solid foundation for life-long learning,
- Develop the child's cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities,
- Prepare the Child for further education and the worldof life,
- Inculcate moral and social values,
- Foster national Unity and patriotism.

These goals and objectives aims at ensuring that primary education provide a comprehensive and holistic education that prepares pupils for Success in the next level of education and beyond. It is however, mindboggling that with these expectations of the role of primary education, the implementation is a mere hell hole.

Although, government promised to undertake actions to ensure implementation of the policy on primary education, such asestablishment of Libraries, employment of Specialistteachers for science, Physics and health education, creative and artistic arts, use of mother of tongue during teaching, provision of instructional materials/equipment etc. It is observed that these are mere Lip Service approach to make the Citizenry believe that the sector will be improved. (Ijaduola, 2019).

Curriculum Implementation for Global Competitiveness

- Now is the time to reinvest the education system through revolutionary reforms from the foundation, scale it up to the top through a systemic overhaul of the entire structure and make Nigerian education a tool for the provision of timeless solutions. The everchanging education landscape at the global level, with all the applications that render inventions and

> technological feats obsolete in a matter of months, makes it more imperative that Nigeria's education planners move at a pace as fast as possible, if not faster than the developed world, to cause reformsthat will liberate our school graduates from impending catastrophes occasioned by a lack of dynamism in the Sector (Oyebade, 2019).
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> The first conscious step Nigeria's education planner should take is to develop a new curriculum out of necessity to solve Current everyday problems so that students at every level of Education will become solution providers especially in the areas of science and technology. This needs to be done immediately to improve Nigeria's global competitiveness (Oyebada, 2019).

Emphasis should be placed on the layered development of hands-on skills from the primary to the tertiary level to create a synergy between research, invention and maintenance. Particular attention should be paid to skills that providesolutions to everydayproblems, skills in the agro-allied sector must be taught in Schools as part of our curriculum so, that Nigeria Can achieve Selfsufficiency in food production and position itself for export.

The growing demand for automobilesskills in the industry makes it imperative that it became a part of our curriculum as the development of electric vehicles and its complexities have become unstoppable (Agbaje, 2018).

The Current teaching and learning of ICT, telephony, greenenergy, Satellite security technology, web development, data analytics and ancillary studies that remain exclusive to the tertiary level and private tutors Should be incorporated to our regular curriculum and domesticated to the secondary and primary levels as subject areas that must be mastered by pupils.

Other skills like content and copywriting, beauty and make-up, digital marketing, shoe making, tilling, plumbing, roofing food and confectionary-skills that Support the massive growth of independent sector that not only grows the economy but

also reduce the growingpopulation of the unemployed must be incorporate into the curriculum and made available to pupils for global Competiveness. (Idris, 2019).

We must borrow a leaf from counties like India, Singapore, and china that used technical education to grow their industrial bases by offering education that emphasized practicality against theories, the father of modern Singapore built an education system that pickedtalents at the primary school level, distributed those talentsinto areas of need, and ensured that no one was left out of the system.

Today, Singapore boasts one of the best education system in Southeast Asia and compares favourably with Europe and America. It is not surprising that today, India rules the world of ICT, offering manpower at the highest level on the global stage. It was not ingenuity of Indians that made feat possible, but the conscious planning of the Indian education system that picked ICT andprioritized it for the future that was created at the planning stage. The story of china is as inspiring as those of India and Singapore, and they Continue to make tremendous progress in other areas of life, many thanks to their education, Nigerian government should emulate from them and make education number one priority for global competitiveness (Ogunleye, 2020).

Primary Education for GlobalCompetiveness

Globalization is an accelerated compression of the Contemporary world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a single entity. Oladipo, (2019) asserts that in globalization what bind nations and societies is not simple the ties of economic exchange and political agreement, but also the share consciousness of being part of a global system.

Primary education is one of the greate**st** instrumenting the process of globalization. Therefore, it is through primary education that consciousness of the world as a single entity or being part of the global system could be actualized.

Primary education for global competitiveness require educating the citizen to become globally competent. This is because, to be globally competitive, one must be globally competent (Oladipo, 2019)

Primary Education is fundamental to everyhuman development and a critical factor in determining the individual and the nation potentials, beit economic, political, social and human resources Therefore, primary education for global competitiveness should be a type of education that would impact in the citizenry the required knowledge, skills and work experience that are globally desirable to solve socio- economic and political challenges.

EducationalInfrastructureforGlobeCompetitiveness

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in promoting global competitiveness by providing the foundation for economic growth, innovation, and trade. Some essential infrastructures that primary schools caninvest in to promote global Competitiveness are:

- **Modern classrooms**: Well-ventilated, spacious and technology-enabled Classrooms
- **State-of-the-Art Laboratories**: Science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) Laboratories with modern equipment.
- **Libraries and Resource centers**: Well-stocked libraries with digital resources and comfortable reading space.
- **Sports and Recreation Facilities**: Safe and Well-maintained playgrounds, sport fields. and equipment.
- **Health and Hygiene Facilities**: clean and well maintained toilets, washrooms and health clinics for the pupils.By investing in these infrastructures, primary schools can create a supportive, inclusive, and innovative Learning environment that prepares pupils for success in an increasingly complex and interconnected world (Fafunwa, 2018).

Current State of Primary Education in Nigeria

Nigeria's primary education System is characterized by inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training and outdated curricula. According to UNESCO,

Nigeria has one of the highest rates out-of-school Children in the world.The country's primary education system is also plagued by issues such as overcrowding, Lack of basic amenities, and poor teacher-pupil ratios (Akpotu, 2019).

Challenges facing Primary Education in Nigeria

Several challenges face primary Education in Nigeria Including:

- Inadequate infrastructure: Many primary schools in Nigeria lack basic amenities such as classrooms desks chairs and toilets.
- Insufficient Teacher Training: Teachers in Nigerianprimary Schools often lack the necessary training and support to deliver quality education.
- Outdated Curricula: The Curricula used in Nigerian primary school are often outdated and do not reflect the needs of 21st century.
- Poor funding. Primary education in Nigeria is often underfunded, leading to a lack of resources and infrastructure (Adeyemi, 2018).

Conclusion

Improving primary education Nigeria is critical to enhancing global competitiveness. By addressing the challenges facing primary education, investing in education infrastructure, providing teacher training and support, revising Curricula, and leveraging technology, Nigeria can develop a world-class primary education system. The suggestion outlined in this article provide a roadmap for improving primary education in Nigeria and enhancing global competitiveness.

Suggestions

To improve primary education in Nigeria and enhance global Competitiveness the following Suggestions can be adopted:

1. Invest in Education infrastructure: The Nigeria government should invest in building and renovating primary school infrastructure, including classroom, desks, chairs and toilets.
2. Provide teacher Training and Support: Teachers in Nigerian primary school should receive regular training and support to enhance their teaching skills and subject knowledge.

3. Revise Curricula: The curricula used in Nigerian primary Schools should be revised to reflect the needs of the 21st Century, including critical thinking, Problem and solving, an digital Literacy.
4. Increase Funding: Primary education in Nigeria should receive increased funding to provide the necessary resources and infrastructure.
5. Leverage Technology,: Technology can be leveraged to improve primary education in Nigeria, including online Learning platforms, educational software, and digital resources.
6. Develop a National Education Policy: A national education policy should be developed to provide a framework for primary educations in Nigeria.
7. Establish a primary Education Commission: A Primary education commission should be established to oversee the implementation of primary education policies and programs.
8. Provide Regular funding: Regular funding should be provided to support primary education initiatives and programs.

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