

## **HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE ROADMAP FOR VISION 20:2020**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper examined Nigeria's effort towards the development of its human resources to realize the achievement of vision 20:2020. It was noted that Nigeria focused on use of education as a yardstick to the development of its citizenry. Hence, series of educational reforms were made to uplift the standard of education in order to produce skilful manpower that will fit into the labour market, to grow the economy of the nation. Efforts made seem to have been affected by numerous challenges that the educational system has not really realized its intended objectives in terms of developing its skilful manpower. In an attempt to develop the wealth of the nation, a giant stride was the introduction of vision 20:2020. Thus, vision 20:2020 for Nigeria is seen as a mark and effort to become a wealthy nation among the top 20 economies of the world in the year 2020. Perhaps, an effective sectoral manpower development and utilization planning cycle might be a panacea to human resource development strategies for effective development of the nation. This will reflect attempts to eradicate poverty and develop wealth creation where employment opportunities might be available for its educated manpower to grow its economy. Recommendations were made on how to improve efforts made for realizing vision 20:2020. One of the recommendations is that government should develop and improve the quality of education in order to produce skilful manpower that will fit into the labour market to raise the economy of the nation.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource, Development, Wealth creation, Poverty reduction and Vision 20:2020.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, the development of human capital has been the focus of concern towards the development of a nation. This is for the fact that the growth of tangible capital stock of a nation depends to a considerable degree on human capital development. Without adequate investment in developing the human capital which is the process of increasing knowledge, skills and the capacities of people in the country, the possibility of the growth of that nation might be minimal. Historical evidences proved that advanced countries depended on education for their rapid economic growth, such as those of United States, former Soviet Union, Denmark and Japan. There were significant relationships between their economic growth and the quantum and kinds of education provided to their work-forces (Miachi, 2006). Similarly, the increase in the Gross National Product (GNP) depends on the national expenditure

on education. For example, Harbison and Myers (1964) found a significant Statistical relationship between levels of human capital development and the levels of GNP. Human resources of a nation refer to the totality of population of a country, which determines the potential labour force of a nation. Investment in the human resource determines the type, quality, availability and productivity of the nation's manpower. It involves the socio-economic development strategies (European Commission, 2007). However, education has been an instrument toward the development of human resources in Nigeria. The education sector, through reform of policies has been attempts to meet up to the global world economics which is encapsulated in the vision 20:2020. The vision envisaged that Nigeria would attain a sustainable socio-economic development by the year 2020.

The optimism about Nigeria's potentials to become among the top 20 global economies by the year 2020 was confirmed by the economists at Goldman Sachs, a leading United States (US) investment Bank (Peters, 2009). Hence, to achieve this goal, government intended, to use education and technical education in particular as a tool towards developing the nation. Apparently, it is generally believed that the delivery of education in Nigeria has suffered from years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector. For example, findings from an ongoing educational sectoral analysis confirmed the poor state of education in Nigeria. The national literacy rate is currently about 57 percent, 49 of the teaching force is said to be unqualified, shortages of infrastructure and facilities at all levels, access to basic education is inhibited, the system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education (National Planning Commission, 2004)

Perhaps, the use of education to develop the human resources of Nigeria might be the roadmap to the attainment of vision 20:2020. This might require the process of investing education for occupational preparation that will qualify them to occupy the labour market for economic growth. This can be assured when quality technical education will be provided for the nation to enable its citizenry become self employed to develop the economy of the nation. However, it is evident that technical institutions and some strategies to achievement of goals are faced with factors that hindered its quality and popularity attraction to grow. For example, lack of qualified teachers, poor resources, inadequate funding and the society's perception on vocational and technical education. Other major militating factors could be lack of employment opportunities in the civil service due to lack of industries and manufacturing firms for the graduates of technical education as well as lack of capital to invest in order to be self reliant. There is the urgent need to put Nigeria into a rapid economic growth to achieve its vision 20:2020.

The purpose of this study is to examine the human resources development of Nigeria as the road map for vision 20:2020. This will involve the review of literature on the efforts made by government to develop its human resources in order to achieve the giant stride. In addition, to investigate the strategies, routes and methods the

nation used and intends to further use to educate its citizenry to in turn create wealth for the nation in other to achieve vision 20:2020. Perhaps, identified gaps will be filled in this study and might reveal some necessary and relevant recommendations that will be useful towards achievement of vision 20:2020.

### **Human Resource Development and Vision 20:2020**

The development of a nation relies on the development and capability of human (manpower) of the nation. Therefore, the effort to push Nigeria forward to attain the desired vision 20:2020 depends on the quantum and magnitude of its manpower skills and the level of economy of the nation. A vision is a description or a prediction of the future that stems from the present to reach the presumed forecast. Visioning process refers to an effort made for strategic planning that identifies goals and objectives and the means to achieve them. The year 2020 is a critical benchmark date against which Nigerians are set to achieve their strategic mission for a world class ethical democracy, competitive, and knowledge based economy, proactive and innovative foreign policy, cultural renaissance and or rebirth befitting our history and greater integration with the global world system. The Nigeria's vision statement that needed to be transposed into a national action-oriented roadmap is; " by the year 2020 Nigeria will be one of the 20 largest economics in the world" able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global economic and political arena(Federal Government of Nigeria, 2008). To achieve this over arching goal, Nigeria will need to enhance her socio-economic and political development performance to develop the manpower requirement as may be base on certain parameters as:

- i. A peaceful, harmonious and a stable democracy;
- ii. A sound, stable and globally competitive economic;
- iii. Adequate infrastructure service that support the full mobilization of all economic sectors;
- iv. Modern and vibrant education system which provides for every Nigerian the opportunity and facility to achieve his/her maximum potential and provides the country with adequate and competent manpower;
- v. A health sector that supports and sustains a life expectancy of not less than 70 years and reduces to the barest minimum the burden of infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases.
- vi. A modern technologically enabled agricultural sector that fully exploits the vast agricultural resources of the country;
- vii. Ensure national food security and contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings; and
- viii. Vibrant and globally competitive manufacturing sector that contributes significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with a manufacturing value added (Peters, 2009).

The processes of articulating over the goals are a holistic, coherent and integrated strategy which recognizes the interdependencies of the various facets of

the national life economic, political and cultural perspectives. These require the involvement of the broadest representation of stakeholder groups and to acknowledge the development index known to mankind for development strategies. Consequently, Nigeria had tried out some major reforms as development strategies in order to develop its human resources to create wealth, and to reduce poverty in the nation. Some of these reforms include; the establishment of community Banks, Peoples' Banks, the liberation of the commercial Banking sector and access to small-scale business funds.

In addition, General Yakubu Gowon introduced the five year national development plan, the Murtala/Obasanjo administration launched an all-out War Against Corruption followed by the Operation Feed the Nation, President Shehu Shagari's Green Revolution (GR), General Ibrahim Babangida's Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Directorate of Foods, Roads, and Rural infrastructure (DFRRI) and his wife's Better life programme for Rural Women (BLPRW) as well as the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) and Family Support Programme (FSP) of the General Sani Abacha. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was meant to anchor employment creation and self-reliance. These were all attempts by the aforementioned governments to develop the human resources and to reduce poverty in Nigeria.

However, some intervening factors undermined their continued existence, hence, did not achieve their purpose. The suspected causes of failures of the past programmes were:

- i. Lack of continuity;
- ii. Non-involvement of communities in projects conception;
- iii. Absence of inter agency as well as governmental collaboration;
- iv. Lack of sustainability plan;
- v. Lack of institutional support;
- vi. Lack of enabling infrastructure;
- vii. Feeble parameters for monitoring and impact assessment.

Further efforts were made by Obasanjo and YarAdu'a's regimes. The Obasanjo's reform of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) was based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) worlds declaration. An outline of agenda of action to help achieve the goal is summed up in the seven point Agenda such as to achieve high;

- i. Power and energy;
- ii. Food security and Agriculture;
- iii. Wealth creation and employment;
- iv. Mass transportation;
- v. Land reforms;
- vi. Security and Niger Delta; and
- vii. Qualitative and functional education.

This is a drive to energies Nigeria's development programme in a sustainable and responsible manner, meeting immediate needs and providing high standard of

living to its citizenry. The major challenges for the attainment of vision 20:2020 and the seven point agenda are inadequate data analysis, projection tools, inventory studies or scientific support before making key decisions or fateful choices. Perhaps, the attitudes towards providing functional education to the nation contributed to failures in most of the sectors as only educated individuals can raise the economy of a nation.

### **Some Major Education Reforms for Human Resource Development**

In an attempt to remedy the poor quality of education, Government embarked on reform of policies in the education sector. Reforms in education are changes made to improve the existing conditions of education that fail to satisfy the need of individual member of the society. The Christian missionaries were the first to build formal schools in Nigeria with grants from the colonial Government. The aim of education at that time was limited in scope and content for Nigeria as a country. This was tailored to serve the purpose of the missionaries who needed interpreters, clerks and preachers to propagate their faith. To improve the situation, the 1882 and 1887 education codes were enacted which aimed to provide qualitative education by the government. It was meant to produce the needed work-force for the colony.

From 1899 to the creation of three regions in Nigeria, about eight education policies were promulgated and tried out. They included the 1903, 1908, 1916, education codes, Phelps-Stokes 1925 parliamentary white paper or command 2374. Others are the 1926 education code, 1930 memorandum on education policy and the 1948 education ordinance. Nigeria was divided into three regions East, West and North in 1951. Education then became a regional responsibility. This marked the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the Western region in 1955 followed by the Eastern region in 1957. During this period the Northern region was yet to make an attempt to free education. Higher education was somehow neglected during the period 1954 to 1960. However, government set up a committee in 1959 (Ashby commission) to identify the need of the entire country in higher education. At that time, the only higher institution was the university college, Ibadan (which was a college of the Cambridge University, London).

In 1960 when Nigeria got her independence, the first education policy was based on the Ashby Commission report of 1960 which was titled "investment in education". To improve the quality of education, the federal government assembled a group of experts from various religious bodies, groups, individuals and government representatives for a National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos in 1969 which led to the famous National Policy on Education (NPE) which was established in 1977, revised 1981, 1998 and 2004. This policy brought about the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria.

Another major reform was the launching of the UPE Scheme in 1976 by the then military government. The aim was to make Nigeria education free in 1976 and compulsory in 1979. This attempt didn't fully realize its objectives as a result of so many militating factors (Azikiwe, 2007). Furthermore, the Universal Basic Education programme was launched on the 30th September, 1999 at Sokoto by the then President

of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo. This was meant to provide basic education to children aged between 3 and 14 years for 3 years Early Children Care Development and Education (ECCDE), 6 years primary and 3 years junior secondary Education. It also covers special interventions directed at nomadic and migrant children, mass literacy as well as the almajirais' and other vulnerable and excluded groups. The reform was meant to realize the two global development programmes of the United Nations (UN) namely; Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For Nigeria to achieve these goals, it launched the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2003.

The critical pillars of NEEDS are:

- i. Value Reorientation;
- ii. Poverty Eradication;
- iii. Job creation;
- iv. Wealth Generation; and
- v. Using Education to empower the people (Obioma, 2007).

NEEDS recognizes that the government must work not only to improve incomes but to tackle the many other social and political factors that contribute to poverty and social exclusion. It also encourages the private sector as being an engine of growth (National Planning Commission, 2004). The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) of recent in April 2009 introduced a new document known as Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector. The main goal of this reform is to address the identified problems in the educational sector. It focuses on four priority strategies. These include:

- i. Access and Equality
- ii. Standards and Quality Assurance
- iii. Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- iv. Funding, Resource Mobilization and Utilization.

This reform intends to involve stakeholders such as; government, organized private sectors and international funding partners to transform all Nigerian schools into producing high achieving, functional and self reliant students, from all three subsectors of education namely; basic education, post basic education and tertiary education. The worrisome issue that prompted the effort to salvaging the present state of Nigerian schools is the general poor quality of the products of the sector which might constraint to the actualization of vision 20:2020.

### **The Roadmap to Vision 20:2020**

Nigeria will require a realistic consistency of plans toward accomplishment of goals. The realization of vision 20:2020 will demand some planning processes where the goals to be achieved are established, and the means and methods towards achievement are identified with a conscious follow up strategies.

Considering the fact that Nigeria adopts education as an instrument for the growth of its citizenry, it infused technical and vocational education and training into the Basic Education Sector. In the Post Basic Education Sector, the aim is to provide skilled manpower in applied science, engineering, technology and commerce to

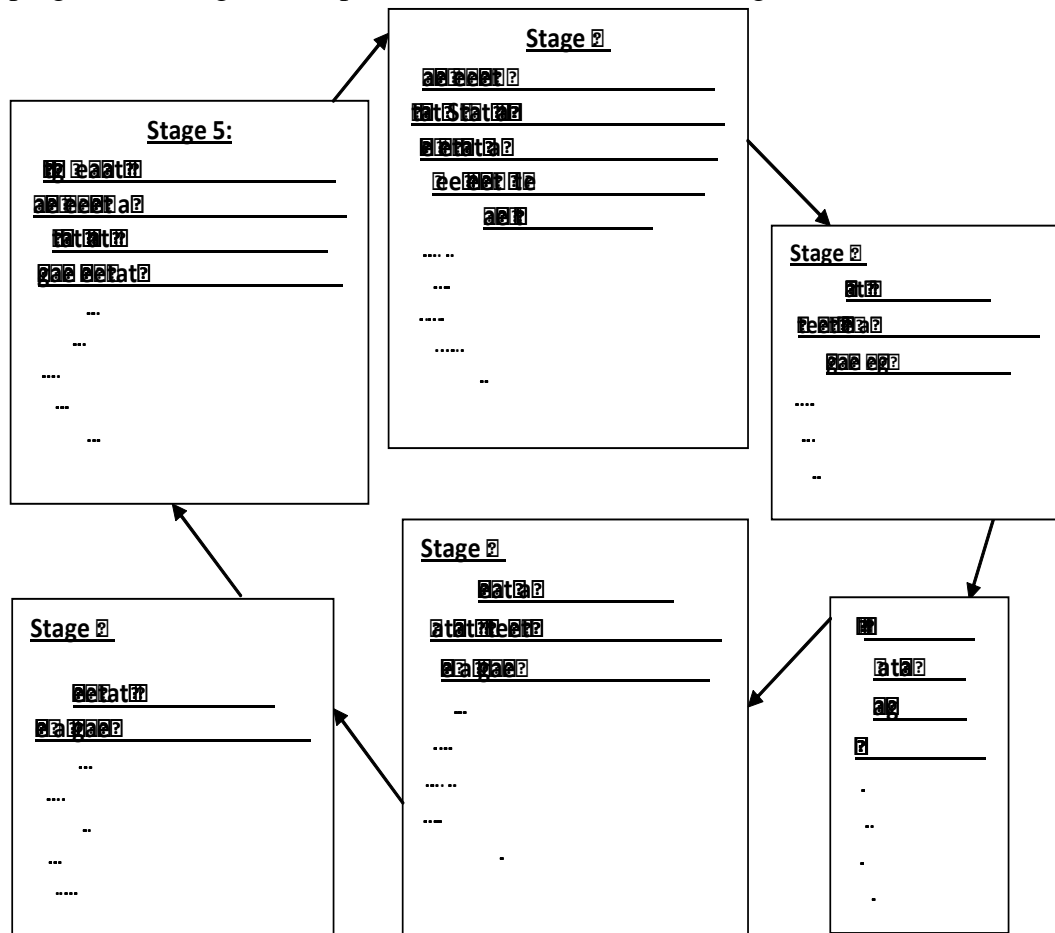
operate, maintain and sustain the nation's economic activities and rapid socio-economic development. At the tertiary level technical and vocational enterprise training is offered in the polytechnics, Monotechnics that is the Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIS) and the Colleges of Education (Technical). All aimed at producing skilful manpower of the nation. Unfortunately, it appears as if the aim has not been realized due to militating factors. Some of these problems as outlined by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2008) are:

- i. Problem of access to schools which is composed of physical access, quality access and economic access.
- ii. Problem of standards and Quality Assurance. It embraces issues on infrastructure, curriculum content and relevance, teacher development, motivation and retention, learner support services, and information and communications technologies (ICT).
- iii. Problem of technical and vocational education and training in all the subsectors' of education with inadequate manpower and unemployment of the products.
- iv. Problem of funding, resource mobilization and utilization. This is accompanied with lack of accurate data and mismanagement of funds and resources. The inability of the government to adhere to the UNESCO'S prescription for funding education (26% of the annual budget) compounded more problems in financing education.

However, the skills acquired by the manpower that are expected to occupy the labour market are usually not put to practice either due to lack of knowledge or lack of capital for investment. Another problem is the marketing procedures, in the sense that people can create and produce things that are worthwhile for sale. But to sell the goods becomes a problem. To worse it all, it appears Nigerians prefer to patronize items from foreign countries rather than indigenous products. Perhaps, these problems weaken the interest of many individuals to go to technical colleges. For Nigeria to use education as a yardstick to reaching the goal of vision 20:2020 requires some further reforms with zeal to the accomplishment of stated policies that can enhance the socio-economic and political development of the nation.

Apparently, the key to effective manpower development (education and training) and utilization (employment) is planning. Manpower planning is the process by which a nation ensures that it has the right kind of people at the right place and at the right time, and who are doing things for which they are economically most useful. It requires taking stock of the present manpower resources in terms of potential performance considering the working population, and determining the future demand for manpower. It includes the future demand for specific skills, ideally at country (macro), sectoral (meso) and enterprise (micro) levels. Manpower planning is undertaken to enable a nation discover per time, the critical skills in the labour force where shortages are most likely to develop or where there is inefficient use of labour (Miachi, 2006). Manpower availability is a precondition and a prime test of feasibility of an economic plan and because the goal of economic planning is to improve the lot

of the man himself. Manpower development of a nation requires the improvement of the economy through the use of educational programmes, the in-service training of workers and the provision of incentives to get people into critical or productive economic sectors and occupations that will make Nigeria realize the achievement of vision 20:2020. Manpower development and utilization planning, policy formulation/ programme design and implementation are illustrated in Fig. 1.



*Fig. 1:* Sectoral Manpower Development and Utilisation Planning Cycle Source: Miachi (2006)

Sectoral manpower plan relies on the accurate data to be able to determine the skilful manpower requirement needs of the nation. It involves identifying problems and needs assessment using data generated from primary, secondary and administrative agencies such as Nigeria Institute of Social Economic Research (NISER), National Population Commission (NPC), Educational Statistics from National Education Council (NCE), National Universities commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for colleges of Education (NCCE), from public and Private sectors of employment etc. Assessment of the labour force and the market situations will also help to determine the strategic plans necessary for the development of human resources to develop the nation.



Recommended policies and programmes relevant to manpower development should be monitored during implementation, evaluated and to make a follow up strategic plans to effect defects realized. Consequently, certain questions are raised to be answered in the process of preplanning, planning and post planning stages. They include;

- i. Where are we going to be?
- ii. How can we reach there?
- iii. Where have we reached?
- iv. What went wrong?
- v. Who did we involve along the way or what and who did we inadvertently or deliberately leave out?
- vi. How are the various sectors performing in terms of Government's actualisation and the realization of the manpower development goals?

Attempts made to correctly answer the listed questions might provide the most effective and efficient planning and implementation strategies of policies and programmes intended for the production of skilful manpower of the nation.

The clear and realistic paths to develop human resources for vision 20:2020 requires that immediate and useful action be taken to improve the quality of the educational system in order to obtain qualify manpower for the nation's economy growth. Therefore, it is worth noting that any vision without accurate action is merely a dream set, and action without a vision just passes the time. Hence, vision with action can change the world. Hence, Nigeria is required to prioritize a range of goals towards the attainment of higher standards of education to achieve high technological skills that can raise the economy of the nation to meet the goal of vision 20:2020.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The giant strides of Nigeria's vision 20:2020 are attempts to improve the standard of living of its citizenry by effective generation of wealth and reduction of poverty. Efforts to achieve the goal were subjected to education by reform of policies which are conscious efforts, and direct means of developing the full potentials and capacities of the human resources to move along with the tide of change across the world. However, the Nigerian education is unable to produce the required manpower requirement needs of the various sectors of the economy. The imbalance between the products of education and the labour market needs becomes a mirage in the nation. Consequently, unemployment has become a social problem affecting the nation. This might have arisen from educational plans which are often made without accurate data coupled with the low economy of Nigeria to adequately train the huge human resources of the nation. This attest to the fact that the higher the economy of the nation, the higher the quality of human resources to be trained, and the higher skilful manpower produced will in turn produce wealth from the labour market and can raise the economy of the nation. Therefore, financing education effectively becomes a determinant factor for human capital investment towards economic development

of the nation to achieve vision 20:2020. The following recommendations are made to help Nigeria realize vision 20:2020 with the use of human resource development:

- i. Government should develop and improve the quality of education in order to produce skilful manpower that will fit into the labour market to raise the economy of the nation.
- ii. There is need for government to strengthen partnerships/collaboration among the various quality assurance management agencies and relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors.
- iii. To match training of human resources to labour market needs by reviewing essential educational curricula to ensure relevance.
- iv. To increase the carrying capacities in existing tertiary institutions.
- v. Government should strengthen due process in policy implementation and link utilization of resources to strategic plans.
- vi. Government should embark on sensitization and mobilization campaign on vision 20:2020 for the general public awareness.
- vii. Poverty reduction will depend upon government efforts to raise the standard of living of its citizenry. Hence, the need to regenerate efforts made in wealth creation and to ensure the healthy living of citizens;
- viii. Drastic efforts should be made to reduce the menace of unemployment in Nigeria.

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