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THE ROLE OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

BELLO ASUKU MOSHOOD, Ph.D

AND

SHEHU SULE
Department of History,
School of Arts and Social Sciences, FCT College of Education, Zuba Abuja

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is about peoples' welfare whereby there will be great reduction of poverty, diseases like malaria, polio and HIV/AIDS, and great improvement in the provision of infrastructural facilities such as good roads, power supply, water, education and health care delivery. Apart from these indices of development, there are also issues of food securitY, securitY of life and properties which the government need to guarantee as part of its responsibilities. If these make for sustainable development, what then, is the_ role of History and International Studies Education towards achieving this? This paper therefore, assesses how History and International Studies Education can contribute to sustainable development by reviewing efforts made by various governments in Nigeria towards the realization of sustainable development goals. This work examines both humanandpoIicY error, and how History and International Studies Educationcanassist in achieving sustainable development. It suggests ways forward andsome possible recommendations for those saddled with the responsibilitY ofmakingthe plans work.

KEYWORDS: History, International studies, Education, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The history of today is all about development in addition to revealing the past for possible change, Nigeria is one of the countries that are undergoing developmental challenges in all ramifications. Since all developmental initiatives have been targeted by the Nigerian government towards eradication of poverty, unemployment, diseases, illiteracy, ethnicity, religious fanaticism and economic dependency, good road, power supply, health and good governance, sustainable development are all expected to be achieved with the materialization of developmental initiatives. Efforts should therefore be made to correct the mistakes

of past policies. As such, a comparative study of what obtains internationally is of utmost rmportance.

TIle colonialists amalgamated Nigeria irrespective of its cleavages. This eventually became part of the nation's socio-political structure and has refhsed to give way to positive thinking and development as each culture is neck-deep in jealousy, holding on to its own values and interests with some elements of contempt for others. As a result ofthis, national val tics are threatened and are gradually being eroded.

The hope for Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as citizens was that few years after independence, strong national values and norms that will guarantee the much needed standards, goals, ethos and commitments will evolve; contrarily, this is not happening; instead the different groups think of self first before the nation as a whole.

Umaru (1999) avers that the machinery of government is almost on the verge of collapse and the citizens are in poverty, misery, hunger, unemployment, confusion and helplessness. These, he attributes to bad leadership and indiscipline.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

History is the branch of knowledge that records and analyses past events. It is the chronological account of past events of a period, life, or development of a people, institution or a place. Usman (1979) sees history as holistic, dealing with the totality of human existence over time. But history cannot be studied in isolation as it involves narration and analysis of happenings in a determined social system. To make the knowledge of history appealing, comparative analysis is needed. That is why history today is mostly a discourse with international studies.

History is also the story of past events with lessons to be used as a guide for the present as well as the future. This is perhaps the reason why it is regarded as futuristic. According to Taiwo cited by Akande (2017), history is the systematic account of past events that relate to the present and enable the predication of the future for the purpose of shaping it for the better.

The concept of development to some scholars is a generic term meaning no definite description can qualify it as it depends on individual perspectives and yardsticks to define it. However, development can be seen as change which could bring about positive impact on the socio-political well being of individuals in particular, and the society at large(Ikerionwu, 2017).It is a situation where a society or country becomes more economically mature or advanced in terms of growth and achievement of industrialization

Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Dada, 2010). Sustainable development is also seen as a lasting or permanent development in areas like electricity, water supply, food, health, education, roads, economic value, among others (Dada, 2010).Education is a term that has been variously defined from different angles such as philosophy, psychology and sociology. Education as a concept is that process of developing the individual socially, physically, intellectually, spiritually, mentally and morally for his own welfare and that of the society. It is also considered as a means through which the individual acquires the civilization of the past that will enable him to participate in the civilization process of the present contributing to the development of the society. In essence, education has grown beyond transmission of cultural heritage, to being a means of developing the entire person to enable him live effectively and efficiently in the society so that he may advance it. Perhaps, this is why most scholars are of the view that education is a continuous process of growth having as its objective at every stage, an added capacity of growth. Education has also been seen by various scholars as a deliberate attempt to acquire and transmit accumulated skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding from one generation to another.

Generally speaking, the process of education occurs whenever there is a change in the physical and mental behaviour of an individual. Education therefore offers two things – acquisition and transmission of knowledge. Its dynamic nature also plays a creative function that assists in shaping the individual, society and the world at large. Education, from the foregoing, is the primary and most effective instrument for socio-economic reconstruction and human capital development(Junaidu, 201 8).

REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS

Every successive administration had its unique vision with beautiful objectives but these objectives were never realized. Between 1960 and 1970, Nigeria's economy was not only unconventional but remained underdeveloped; an economy that was 80% dependent on agriculture in terms of output and employment.

The main source of Nigeria's economic dynamism in the 1970s was oil with a rise in price that began from 1971 , yet agriculture still accounted for the sustenance of about 70% of the population residing in the rural areas. It is obvious that most parts of Nigeria at independence lacked key forms of physical infrastructural facilities as some of these were destroyed during the Nigerian civil war. Attempts at economic diversification did little for the rural sector.

The 1976 land use decree which vested all lands in the state as well as the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of the Obasanjo regime did little or nothing to ensure rural

development. The Shehu Shagari Green Revolution launched with much fanfare in the early 1980s with taxation through the pricing policies by the state marketing boards also had limited effects on the agricultural sector and on the people (Umoren, 2001)

By 1981, Nigeria's economy was more dependent on borrowing which eventually exposed the weakness in Nigeria's economic structure. In 1983 the Buhad/Idiagbon regime put in place measures to correct the situation by adopting policies like import control and public sector rationalization.

Th9 General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's regime in 1985 introduced the Structural Adjustment Program with National Economic Emergency (NEE) Decree to support the austerity measure of his predecessor (Umoren, 2001). Babangida equally packaged a program aimed at boosting agricultural production known as the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Its function was to in part, work with the state governments to construct and rehabilitate rural feeder roads. This was with the objective of mobilizing rural peasants for sustainable agricultural transformation (CBN, 1986). However, there was no hope for any national goal or vision then; the situation was left loose and the program became a conduit pipe for corruption. This regime recreated the Office of First Lady with all paraphernalia of security operatives. Madam Babangida, the first lady, felt there was the need to empower the rural woman through the “Better Life for Rural Women” program that ended with that regime.

Abacha's period had in it a vision tagged Vision 2010 generally regarded as the magic wand to rekindle the solution to socio-political and economic problems (Umaru, 1999). Although vision 2010 was conceived amidst political impasse, it marked the beginning of a Nigerian government realizing the current realities of national economic woes.

Madam Abacha, the first lady at the time, equally believed that Better Life for Rural Women was not packed with a vision, hence the launching of her Family Support Programme (FSP) which eventually looked like old wine in a new wineskin not in any way different from her predecessor's. This programme too did not continue due to the death of General Sani Abacha. General Abdulsalami's wife could not initiate any program before the civilian regime of Obasanjo in 1999. Between 1999 and 2007, late Mrs. Stella Obasanjo's pet project, coined “Child Care Trust” was aimed at giving succor to less privileged and handicapped children. After her death in 2006, that institution stopped functioning. Turai Yar'adua on her part, conceptualized another project aimed at improving the lot ofwomen and youths tagged “Women and

Youth Empowerment Foundation" (WOYEF). All these programmes initiated by the governments in power and their first ladies ended with their initiators.

Umaru (1999) believes that the major problem hindering progress in almost all areas of human endeavour in Nigeria is leadership failure or bad governance. A rotten system is symbolized by a sick head that fails to allow other parts to function. The Nigerian body polity lacks moral conduct, sincerity of purpose, accountability, integrity and principle. Most of the political office holders only come to acquire and display ill-gotten wealth at the expense of the majority of the Nigerian populace who are living in abject poverty. This attitude of Nigerian leaders was what gave the followers the encouragement to corruptly enrich themselves anytime the opportunity came calling.

THE ROLE OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As an all-encompassing subject, history and international studies education deals with the totality of human existence over time and is therefore capable of assisting in the realization of sustainable development. This is correcting the present for a better future

History and international studies education can achieve the following:

Build and cement integrative relationships, and ensure horizontal, vertical integration and unification through mutual co-existence, tolerance, recognition, cultural relation, inter-marriages, etc, among citizens (Turu, 2005)

Help reveal unique African values, norms, culture and assist to develop the right moral and social values in Nigerian societies.

e Suggest pragmatic, functional and problem solving means as it revisits the past for reference purposes.

Sustainable development can be achieved through national re-orientation and mobilization through the teaching of history and international studies at all levels of educational development. This will help students acquire hlowledge and awareness about government programmes, past and present, national and international. Since history as a subject has been made one ofthe core subjects in schools, the primary/secondary school learner will be imparted with the ideals, values and norms of the society which will provide the knowledge ofthe past on which to base future plans.

History is a problem analyst that penetrates and affects the hierarchy of social interest and with its structure, history knowledge will be value loaded because it has in its content the grasp of the African nature and its current reality

- Since knowledge is part of human activity which is designed to meet the transformation and modification of any part of nature, history and international studies education, having in it the above ingredients will help to achieve the sustainable development goals.
- It is not a wonder that history and international studies education has been relegated to the background because its findings in any research is not always considered especially when it reveals the shortcomings of political leaders, policy makers and above all where it tries to suggest alternative policies that might challenge the existing structure.
- History and international studies education will sieve the foreign culture and ideologies that have failed woefully to solve the problem of underdevelopment and poverty, and come up with pure African alternatives that will take us back to our original ideologies. This will redirect the national ship that has bimlessly drifted into the sea ofuncertainty.
- History and international studies education is essential for human survival and progress in this increasingly interdependent world, dominated by science and technology.
- To promote societal and international harmony and well-being, history and international studies education reveals how men, societies and nations act in a given circumstance, then tells what condition to encourage or discourage.
- It also reveals that democracy and dictatorship can both be constructive and destructive and poverty and overpopulation problems cannot be solved by generalized prescription.
- It also assists in reconciling many world problems to achieving sustainable development that will guarantee world peace.

CONCLUSION

The current political dispensation under President Muhammadu Buhari seems to be hopeful and its bid to change the fate of Nigerians through sustainable development is a welcome idea. The 3-point agenda of Mr. President, which are fighting corruption, terrorism and improving the economy, if sincerely pursued, will clear the tide. If the government can tackle insecurity, corruption and diversify the economy, the road to sustainable development will be clear. This will guarantee trust, unity of purpose, understanding and above all, political stability. The international community will have the confidence to invest in Nigeria thus enhancing economic growth, given the natural resources and potentials that abound in Nigeria. It is when these are achieved that sustainable development can be realized and national progress will be recorded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria has become a state where corruption and indiscipline hold sway. The leaders rule as they like, the followers act according to their wishes, therefore, lawlessness and indiscipline have become the order of the day. The judiciary is not fair in its judgment; rule of law is not respected by the government and public alike. This scenario breeds corruption which is now perceived as the ideal thing in the public service. Political godfatherism determines who occupies political offices, leading to imposition of unpopular and minority candidates on the majority which often triggers off crises resulting in the death of many innocent and law abiding citizens.

Apart from the above, unemployment, poverty, disease, insecurity of life and property have enveloped the Nigerian state. As a way out of these, the following are recommended:

- Leaders at all levels should listen to the populace concerning their plight, desires and wishes so as to view the realities on ground from divergent perspectives. This will make the leaders to not only know the issues and challenges, but address them effectively.
- The electoral process must be standardized to avoid the usual crisis associated with it. Due process in selecting and electing candidates should be clearly defined to give the electorates the confidence desired to make democracy work. This will put on leadership the responsibility of delivering the dividends of good governance to bring about sustainable development.
- The government should carry along every citizen in the scheme of things through orientation and reorientation. In this regard, educational institutions should be properly reorganized through the formulation of an ideal curriculum that clearly defines the values, norms and national aspirations that will culminate into sustainable development.
- Effort must be made to improve infrastructural facilities like roads, power supply, health care delivery, security and good foreign policy to guarantee international relations. This will attract foreign investors to accelerate industrialization in the country.
- Effort should be made by the government to reduce to the barest minimum the corruption that has grown wings in Nigeria. This can be done through a well-packaged salary structure for civil servants as well as necessary conducive environment for optimal performance as no sustainable development is realizable under a corrupt system.
- Educational institutions' staff should be well paid and conducive learning environment should be created for both teachers and learners. In this regard, research should be given the necessary priority to further launch the nation into the world of sustainable development. In addition, government should subsidize education massively so that the majority of the masses can afford it

for their children. If sustainable development is to be attained, education must not be forjust a selected few.

- Food security needs to be given the necessary priority. This the government can do through more budgetary allocation and proper coordination of agricultural sector. This will sure results, self-sufficiency as well as export of surplus.

- Political offices across all the tiers of government should be made less attractive by reducing the emolument of office holders. Through this, only morally qualified individuals will occupy positions. This will kill corruption and enhance sustainable development.
- Since the major problem of Nigeria is not lack of adequate planning, articulate and sound policies with abundant human and natural resources, but insincerity, dishonesty, lack of dedication, corruption, selfishness, greed, avarice, mistrust, etc, the government should always try to accept constructive criticisms and make corrections otherwise, any effort geared towards sustainable development will be fruitless.
- The government should as a matter of urgency implement the decision to teach history at all levels of education since the subject will orientate the citizenry on the essence of respect for each other's culture, religion, values and tradition so as to achieve peace, trust, unity and harmonious coexistence. It is only through this way that the road map to sustainable development will become a reality.

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