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NIGERIA: LIABILITY TO THE ALUMNI AND THE ENTIRE NATION, CAUSES,
EFFECTS, AND REMEDIES**

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GRADUAL DECAY OF OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND BOARDINGHOUSE IN NIGERIA: LIABILITY TO THE ALUMNI AND THE ENTIRE NATION, CAUSES, EFFECTS, AND REMEDIES

LAYEMO OLUFEMI PHILIPS ADEOYE

Abstract

The gradual decay of old grammar school and boardinghouse in our educational system in Nigeria is a great liability to the entire alumni and the whole nation. The characteristic conceptualization and institutionalization of "secondary education" in Nigeria and attempt made in this paper is to bring into focus those causes, effects and remedies to the problems, through a systematic plan of procedure. The paper discusses the epoch and historical trajectory of secondary education in Nigeria; issues and challenges faced by the school administrators in carrying out their duties in the face of harsh and unfavorable management situations of the daily growing population of students and need to cater for wastage in education. The paper then concludes by emphasising the need for federal government, state and local governments, stakeholders, philanthropists and volunteers, individuals and interested persons to rise to the aid of the once successful pyramid of grammar school/boardinghouse in Nigeria.

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Introduction

History of Education in Nigeria p.15 described African education as it emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, spiritual and moral values. Eneasator (1996) posits "education as production of wealth, goods and services; human capital utilization, to take

care of the problems of unemployment, underemployment and productivity; economic growth and development; planning, financing and costing of plans to ensure effective and efficient use of resources Fafunwa (1974)." Nwadiani (2000) has defined education as "the study and practice of resources generation, allocation and utilization". Amadi.(2004) stated education as an instrument for effecting national development, and as production and reproduction of knowledge of the people's way of life. Oni (1978) stressed that "education is one of the basic means of realizing the productive power of a nation."

Concept of Secondary Education in Nigeria (A Historical Trajectory)

Secondary education takes its roots from a traditional method of education which grows through kindergarten, nursery, primary and secondary education. A higher education escalates away from the principles, methodology and pedagogy of secondary education. The preceding terminal examination to join the league of higher education is usually the senior school certificate in the global sense. There are about three denominations of the above mentioned in Nigeria. They are the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO) and National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB). The results of the above are accepted as pre-requisites to enrol for higher education in Nigeria. The working group on higher education of the association of African Universities (AAU) in their communique gave recommendation that higher education should include tertiary education institutions other than universities. In their communique, during the meeting of experts at the Second African Union (AU) meeting, higher education was contained and resolved as including all post-secondary education, including universities, polytechnics, technical colleges, teachers training institutions, institutes for medical training and agriculture (and other fields), research centers and institutes, distance education centers, with an overview to add other forms of post-secondary education.

FGN (2004), defines higher education as the post-secondary section of the national education system, such as correspondence colleges and its allied institutions, advanced teachers' training colleges, colleges of education, polytechnics and colleges of technology and universities. FGN (2004) The Nigerian national policy on education stated and highlighted a list of the nation's objectives: they are five (5), as enlisted in the federal government national development plan. They are: a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a bright land full of opportunities for all citizens.

From the above elucidation, the national policy on education derived its philosophy of Nigerian education; regarding secondary education as a major bridge and brick to cross into the mainstream of tertiary education in Nigeria and the globe.

Historical Development in Post Primary Education

Major educational expansion at the post-primary level took place between 1955 and 1965 (Fafunwa, 1974). This period coincided with the era of self-government and self-determination as Table 1.1 shows."

Table 1.1

Secondary Grammar School
1955 - 167
1960 - 315
1965 - 1,240.

Secondary Grammar Schools were the most popular and the most sought-after type. It is patterned on the English grammar school with its classical orientation. An extension of the primary system, its original aim was to train catechists for the Church and clerks for government and commercial houses. The aim of education during the colonial era was aptly summed up by Lord Macaulay in his Minutes on Education which formed the foundation of English education in India, and which

can, with justice be applied to other colonies. According to Macaulay the goal was to train "at least a class of persons Indian in blood but English in opinion, in morals and intellect." The early grammar schools taught Latin and Greek and little or no science. Nigerian secondary school pupils sat for the same school certificate examinations as English pupils. In 1956 however, the examination system was West Africanized and a West African Examinations Council replaced the Oxford and Cambridge examination syndicates. In 1956, in order to conform with the changes in the English system, the length of the grammar school course was reduced from six years to five. Today, the grammar school offers a wide range of arts and science courses, all geared to entry to higher education: English language and literature, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, religious knowledge, art, music and physical education. Some grammar schools have modified their curricular to include technical, commercial, and agricultural subjects, but the number is negligible. Students who complete secondary school and successfully pass the West African school certificate examination may proceed to a two-year sixth form course (based on the English system and introduced in 1956) for the higher school certificate which in turn is geared to university entry requirements. (Fafunwa, 1974).

Goals of Secondary Education in Nigeria

By and large, the goals of Nigerian secondary schools are like the goals of secondary education in colonial times. Indeed, except for a few minor modifications, the structure, content, and teaching methods of secondary schools in Nigeria followed closely those of Britain, despite the cultural, political, and economic differences which existed between the two countries. The first realistic appraisal to be conducted on the secondary school curriculum in Africa took place in Tananarive in 1962 under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.). The Tananarive Conference expressed the yearnings of many educators when it

stated: "The attainment of education in Africa now makes it necessary to re-examine a type of education which in many African countries was formerly designed to "assimilate" young Africans to the culture of metropolitan countries".

Curriculum reform is a corollary of political emancipation - cultural emancipation being how the "African personality" can be asserted. This calls for the rediscovery of African cultural heritage and the transmission of that culture to adolescents in secondary schools. The aim of secondary education in Nigeria should be to develop the following abilities in the Nigerian youth, and for that matter, in every African youth is to: think effectively, communicate thought clearly; make relevant judgements; play his part as a useful member of his home and family; understand basic facts about health and sanitation; to understand and appreciate his role as a citizen of a sovereign country; understand and appreciate his cultural heritage; develop economic efficiency both as a consumer and as a producer of goods; acquire some vocational skills; recognize the dignity of labour; develop ethical character; appreciate the value of leisure; understand the world outside his environment; develop a scientific attitude; live and act as a well-integrated individual. (Fafunwa 1974).

Conceptual Framework

As an educogenic terrain, the Yaba Higher College started a three-year course for teachers in 1932, the genesis of higher education in Nigeria. Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education Reports of 1943 called for the establishment of Universities in Nigeria. In 1948, the University College, Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established in 1960. In the western region, the University of Ife was founded in 1961 (now Obafemi Awolowo University). In the northern region, Ahmadu Bello University was established in Zaria in 1962. The University of Lagos was established in 1962. The University of

Benin was established in 1970. The above six(6) universities were referred to as first generation universities between the period of 1960 - 1970.

The second generation universities became federal institutions in addition to the above by virtue of Decree 46 of 1977, they are: University of Calabar 1975; University of Jos 1975; University of Ilorin 1976; University of Sokoto 1977; University of Maiduguri 1977; University of Port Harcourt 1977; Bayero University, Kano 1977. The following universities were founded between 1979 and 1983: Bendel State University, Ekpoma; Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu; Imo State University, Owerri; Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye; Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti; Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt; Cross River State University, Uyo; Lagos State University, Iyana-Iba Lagos.

Seven federal universities of Technology were established between 1981 and 1985. Many universities have been established by individuals, churches and non-governmental organizations in addition to newly established universities by the federal government of Nigeria. The above universities have their foundations and successes based on the availability of sound secondary education given to students in the secondary level of education as a bedrock, without which the universities can survive the production of successful graduates from their universities. As a result, it is the total dependency on the supply of large population of secondary school students that assures regular supply of intakes year-in, year-out, into numerous tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The secondary education is the solid rock upon which all universities and tertiary institutions depended to operate proper institutional administration and planning; one of most dependable, reliable, pensionable jobs and near - brim employers of labour in the globe.

It is such foundation that has been lackadaisically sidetracked and neglected towards gradual decay while teeming population of parents are daily producing children for further studies in the primary,

secondary and university. The nation slept deeply from a great slumber with ardent interest in ephemerals and cosmetic values. The progression at which students enter into secondary schools every year is at an escalating aggregate; without precedence of prior, proper fiscal planning that will cater for solid acquisition of knowledge with successful learning outcomes at the end of secondary education. Secondary education is the pillar upon which university education is rested. It is better to build a solid child than to build a concrete house; a highly educated child with all traits of knowledge is one of the sources of power of an independent nation. Presently, universities in Nigeria have grown from 147 to 264 apart from other categories of tertiary institutions in the country.

Causes

1. Lack of corrective and preventive maintenance of existing infrastructure; peculiar to Africans. The hostel and classrooms built for students' use were never taken care of. They were gradually watched to cave in as there was no provision for imprest or petty cash to carry out repairs on failing existing facilities and infrastructure in the school promptly. This resulted in gradual dilapidation of the entire school structure finally becoming unreachable for repairs by school administrators.
2. Inflationary effects and skyrocketing prices of goods, commodities and building materials. This has to do with unstable government policies thereby affecting the naira value. This makes cost of building materials unreachable, leading to total abandonment.
3. Lack of altruistic policy makers in Nigeria.
4. The emergence of a new horizon of schools. These schools employ the use and provision of all modern facilities and infrastructure thereby providing open field for stiff competition with previously existing boarding schools. Such latest facilities such as 24 hour supply of

electricity through use of modern solar panels to run all departments such as the library, physics, chemistry, biology, agricultural science laboratories; music department, computer center, administration, reception, typing pool, photocopy machines, provision of water through the borehole or motorized system, pumping of water into all overhead tanks in the strategic positions of the school and the hostel/ general kitchen; the principal's house, entire staff quarters and the school health and sports center. Use of multimedia in a departmentalized system; science, arts, commercial, and all social activities in the school. The modern schools are laid upon templates fashioned after modern-day universities with beautiful landscaping. They are a great attraction to parents interested in home away from home for their growing children of the millennium heavily guarded with visibly armed security.

5. High-handedness of the "seniority syndrome". This is caused by lack of proper check, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of "seniors" in the hostel. Hardly does the boardinghouse master involve him/herself in the oral tradition of hostel activities on a daily account. The students were just left to be on their own as if they were in the animal farm of George Orwell where some animals are more superior than the others. Of course, there is usually an end to masquerade anniversary or carnival. That was the thought of parents who had been products of the so-called seniors' brutality in the hostel. As they worked to achieve and climb the ladder of life with resounding success, they swore not to allow their children to pass through such hardship and torture in life; where there were no parents or principal or teacher to come to the rescue of the innocent, gentle, meek, unknowing juniors. At that time, the situation was like a tradition laid down, from one generation to the other; which later became an unwritten convention in most boardinghouse.

Nonetheless, the victims of that time are live witnesses today with facts and live occurrences of their experience of brutality and near annihilation in the hands of wicked and heartless seniors in the hostel.

Furtherly, today has a new song. This, the economic scavengers and speculators capitalized upon to draw the heart of modern parents to themselves by the provision of all modern facilities lacking in the former, than the latter, old type of hostel. Today, the parents work very hard to enrol their children in state-of-the-art schools so as not to allow their children to pass through the unpleasant boarding system of their own time. In the boardinghouse today, a graduate home master or house father is employed for the purpose of overseeing the activities of boys in the hostel while a home mistress employed to be with the girls all through their stay in the boardinghouse. This is to avoid the occurrence of "bullying" that characterized activities in the hostel of the archaic and medieval era. Hostelization today, is a home away from home in the midst of friendly peers, seniors and juniors living together as transparent non biological brothers and sisters under weather-friendly umbrella without one umbraging severally to the other.

Effects

1. Inequality in the value of education acquired by students in the economic bracket of the strata of our sociological exigencies. Be that as it may, some wealthy elites who wanted their wards to mix with other children of the middle class also sent their children to the boardinghouse of the time so as to allow their children have an idea of how life is, elsewhere. Today, among the far-flung effects is an outstanding inequality as those students who would have enjoyed permanent stay in the hostel for the period of secondary education

2. have been reduced to day student burdened with massive house chores and daily hawking activities on the express road, trunk a,b,c roads to sell to beckoning, prospective buyers, bystanders and tenterhooks. They will all sit for the same terminal examination questions.
3. Lack Of Structured Reading Time - Most students going to school from home have no choice than to trek each day to school and trek back home. They are prone to disturbance by grandparents, parents, siblings, friends et al. They have no structured plan or time to read. Out of tiredness, they may not be able to get up at night to flip through the pages of a book.

In the boarding house, the normal way of life has been spelt, organized, directed and dictated by a usual routine of rules and regulations; going to the library, and the hall for preparatory activities known as "prep". Students learn how to read and prepare for examinations in the hostel through available multidimensional learning systems. The researcher is a beneficiary of hostel life in the secondary school. These learning systems are known as modern pedagogies for effective learning. They are: Effective Learning: The learner must be able to manifest observable, measurable and enduring change in behavior (Owoyele & Sotonade, 2018)..

Cooperative Learning: Learners learn and work together in a cooperative manner. It is popularly described as "stronger together" (Shuetz, 2018). Cooperative learning is a methodology that teachers use to group students together and, thus, impact on learning in a positive way. It dwells on individual ingenuity and at the same time, encourages cooperation through knowledge-sharing, thinking together, and solving problems together.

Project-Based Learning: This method becomes popular with Technology integration in schools and the continuous adoption of new information and communication technologies in the teaching-learning process. It involves the use of technologies and adoption of the upgraded versions of the

existing pedagogies that are much more suitable to the digital generation (Tajudin, Zamzamir & Othman,2019).

Problem - Based Learning: This is a method in which learning takes place while the teacher and the learners attempt to solve specific problem. It is a cyclic learning process comprising many different stages. These are some of modern learning systems that are easily practiced in the hostel where students have opportunity to utilize their time to the fullest, everyday other than a day student whose time has been unstructurally disorganized and reduced to shambles in a shadow of itself (Arum & Roksa, 2011).

2. Poor Learning Outcomes.

3. Poor Terminal Examination Results.

4. Low Quality Products-A production of weak, academically unstable, unpolished, untutored, half-baked youths with no dint of confidence to compete with peers, classmates, colleagues, contemporaries, in an entire market mix. The above is a complete failure syndrome that leads to accepting whatever is available such as gangsterism, yahooism, get-rich-quick syndrome and unscientific, irrelevant fetish behaviors.

5. Creating a clear dichotomy

between the rich and the poor in terms of values, socio-economic quality of life and education

Remedies

To re-instate lost glory of old grammar schoo/ boardinghouse some of the following steps may be considered:

1.To search and advertise for honorary members - H.M. This is to open membership of the association to attain a large number of members as the powerful strength of members will help to amass and gather sufficient capital for the projects earmarked for the school. There are many people

out there having interest to belong to vibrant old school association as some are failing due to gross immaturity of members to participate sufficiently and effectively.

Lack of technical will; knowledge and know-how to move the group to greater terrain;lack of confidence and inferiority complex cause some old school association to fold up as members portray and exude observable circumstances with resultant perceptions and reactions.Some people do not have the old school association at all as a result of long distance and inability to gather themselves to form a quorum and or group thereby searching within themselves, where they can conveniently identify with successful peer group.Such people tend to contribute to the success of the group with greater interests,than the original members.

They could be given prefixes behind their names,as H.M.001/79,H.M.002/81,et al.Thereby,finding position with his/her classmates,of the year of completion of secondary school.Some honorary members are resilient in their quest to support the new association they newly heartily joined,of which they are an integral part. This idea of "honorary members" focuses on a grassroots attempt to work collaboratively with a group of administrators and people of diverse backgrounds to define, implement, and assess culturally relevant template as a developmental tool.

Findings on gradual decay of old grammar school/boardinghouse in Nigeria revealed deep structural interests related to members' cultural attachment to adequately implement theories into practice. It is a paradox that no human being that successfully climbed the ladder of Henry Fayol's model of motivation does not want to be identified with the old students' association in a compartmentalized or perceived personal characteristics; to include but not limited to ethnic background, or political affiliation, race, national origin, socio-economic, religious status, age, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, colour and gender identity.

2. Signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government - The legally registered old students' association with an assurance, devoid of ambivalence of legal backing, might need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the government overseeing the school to grant application to run a private school of their own - the old school body in the name of the association, vis - à - vis securing license to do so from the state government. The old students' body could begin with the level of Junior school (JSS 1 - 3) for some years. The only requirement to run a private JSS 1 - 3 within the confines of the same perimeters is a block of six (6) classrooms, representing JSS 1 - 3 a and b; an administrative block for principal, teachers and administrative staff. This is away from the need for extensive science and computer laboratories required for the SS 1 - 3. The above idea of JSS 1 - 3 is not without the provision of hostel, toilet facilities, sports field, water, electricity, library and adequate security. Thereby, the loss of old glory would have been reinstated while profits made will be ploughed back to assist the old school syndrome within the same capture area.

Moreover, the availability and presence of the old school association on the grounds of the school will help in ensuring proper, prompt and regular preventive and corrective maintenance of the structure and infrastructure that the entire association worked assiduously to revamp.

3. Another remedy is the establishment of hostel and its full facilities by the old students' association. This can be done by the group to draw students from far and near. Those in diaspora are willing to bring their children home for secondary education so that the children will identify and familiarize with their roots before onward transmission abroad for university education if needed; but under schools with excellent assurance of security for their wards. Automatically, this increases population of students with the aim of making profits and ploughed back to maintain existing facilities and infrastructure in the school. The hostel or any establishment of the

association will run and be manned by members of the association as there could be unemployed or out-of-job or retired members that are willing to be engaged, to work with the old school association. They will be paid and remunerated accordingly; as the business is a self-driven exercise, solely for profit making only if some of them willingly agree to serve as volunteers as determined by their socio-economic, aristocratic mien and prescriptions.

4. Establishment of old students' association farm as old grammar schools have expansive lands. They could plant crops such as cassava, maize, rice depending on the pondus de hydronium of the soil of the school area, that could bring back profits within definite periods; they could rear domesticated animals with inexpensive management systems such as sheep and goats; snailry or pure water factory, bakery and confectionery. A mature, full mother goat now sells for about N50,000:00 nowadays. 20 of that brings back N1million naira within a season. The mature ram sells for not less than N250,000:00 in it's season. There are about three seasons for the sale of rams in a year. If the old school association sells 20 of the rams, that is N5million naira made in a season; N15million naira made in three seasons of the year. However, there is a starting period of the above, which is about one year after which they could have sufficient products to sell each year. The waiting period of one year is the phobia of Africans as they are impatient to succeed in entrepreneurship. There could be interested members of the association willing to work on the above farm as full-time staffers. Students and parents will be agog to be part of such enterprise that turns the heart of their children towards entrepreneurship and gainful experience while at school. It also brings live activities to the previously inactive, dead domain of the school. What the students see visibly and physically go a long way in shaping the thoughts of their minds and future endeavors. A student that has never had contact with tools can never think of making

use of it as some parents do not want their children to have anything to do with technical education or practice; the saviour of a nation.

5. Establishment of a cooperative society with an office in the premises of the old students' association school. The cooperative society is basically for the old students' association. All members are automatic members, both in Nigeria and diaspora. They could be encouraged to contribute and save according to their capacities in the cooperative society. This could be established and strictly monitored and managed by reliable, dependable, members of the association to avoid or prevent fraud. Those willing to borrow from the association must have at least, two sureties having updated accounts and as bonafide members of the association as any defaulting member will make his or her surety to forfeit live savings in the account of the association.

6. In a calendar year, twelve resource persons could be picked among the members with reasonable topics to deliver lectures to members, students and the public. This enlightens members and also makes the school ground a busy commonplace for all members and the entire public to visit while all activities take place on the school ground; no dresser barbs without the presence of the owner. The above income-generating ideas and lectures will draw people nearer back to their roots, the genealogy and lineage of the school will be resuscitated and restored while those in diaspora will have confidence in sending their children home for education and be a part of a reactivated, blooming generation with ambience and ambidextrousness.

7. Distribution of letters of assistance/support to solicit from wealthy individuals, companies, corporate bodies, groups and associations, multinational corporations, NGOs, and embassies. Some popular telecommunication outfits have been responding to the demands of sundry groups seeking help from them as they also know the principles of economics stating companies have

responsibility to give out two per cent of their net earnings to help communities around them yearly. This idea is also an effective mechanism to raise funds for the school by the alumni to be able to carry out projects in the school especially in the face of near dilapidation averting total collapse. The above idea requires the activities of efficient, go-getter, well-backed and monetarily supported public relations committee as they need proper monitoring of letters deposited till help is doled or rendered.

8. Government Intervention - Allocation of sufficient funds to secondary education for efficiency in day-to-day operations is an imperative.

9. Others - To upgrade the status of the school to Technical College, College of Education, or University.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to establish that problems and issues with gradual decay of old grammar school/ boardinghouse has lasting solutions. It claims that the falling and bending standard of the grammar school/ boardinghouse in Nigeria can be straightened. The paper claims by citing various definitions of education by experts and solutions to impending situations using the secondary school as a case study. The paper then concludes that the spate of falling standard in old grammar school/boardinghouse in Nigeria calls for an immediate redress.

Recommendations

In order to eradicate gradual decay of old grammar school/ boardinghouse in Nigeria, proper funding is sine qua non. The paper recommends that the federal government, stakeholders, philanthropists, and volunteers, individuals and interested persons should rise to the aid of the previously successful grammar school/ boardinghouse in Nigeria. The alumni should also put up

the spirit of cooperation, coordination and integration to work like assiduous pukka to achieve desirable goals, aims and aspiration of the old students' association in turning situations around.

The old students' association must be a custodian of records in an archival information system, with a chronology of records for all the above by professional scribe so that the unborn generations will appreciate in future to come, efforts made, and techno-social solutions to solving problems, in the most personal and entrepreneurial way in community development where government intervention was not forthcoming.

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