

Pestilence in Nigeria Education: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Today, education plays a significant role in training and preparing the future generation for a greener society. A quality education system will produce national development, solve humanity's problems, and generate quality human resources that can compete in the global space. Education is the main foundation in the formation of human resources. However, the quality of higher education in Nigeria is still far from expectations compared to more developing countries. This article also focuses on the various challenges faced by Nigerian public universities, which range from a lack of sound strategic plans, impoverished leadership, ineffectual teaching and learning, worthless infrastructural development, inadequate funding, academic corruption, and fraud. No country can embrace national development without giving university education a priority. Educated leaders attract absolute democracy and good governance. Uneducated leaders attract hardships, absolutism, and despotism, affecting national growth and development. A country that neglects university education hardly achieves success and national development. This article presents problems (pestilence) faced in higher education in Nigeria and also proffers solutions for improving the education system in Nigeria. Education is a product of civilization, innovation, creativity, discoveries, and mental development that brighten every country. The effectiveness of national peace, ethics, and development, the rule of law, equity, equality, and justice emerge when a country is civilized via well-grounded education.

Keywords: higher education; pestilence in Nigeria Education

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the Nigerian 4th Republic, there have been disruptions and interferences in the educational system and academic activities in Nigeria by militants, terrorists, and kidnappers. Till now, the Nigerian university's traditional pedagogical approach has been dented as a result of inadequate funding, frequent strikes actions, a decline in the quality of research, lack of ICT integration in the university system, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, and cultism, and political interferences among public universities (Dominic et al., 2021).

The outcome in the paragraph above resulted in total neglect among Nigerian teachers. Teachers in Nigeria have suffered at the hands of the individual, governments, and society, financial crisis, poor infrastructure, brain-drain, erosion of university autonomy, and graduate unemployment (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). This will never change the fact that no teacher, no nation! no education, no development (Solomon, Jacob, & Jegede, 2020).

However, university research helps in supporting a national building, solving humanity's problems need, creating outstanding economic growth, contributing to national development via high-level relevant technical know-how, inculcation of proper societal values, developing an individual intellectual capacity to appreciate and understanding the national environment, the acquisition of intellectual mental, and physical skills for self-reliance, forgeability and promotion of national unity, and the refinement of human character (Dominic et al., 2022).

The goals of higher education, according to Jacob et al. (2021), are as follows:

- a) Contribute to national development through high-level relevant workforce training.
- b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- d) Acquire physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant members of society.
- e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- f) Forge and cement national unity.
- g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.
- h) Research and development and Community services
- i) Guide and promote refined (use of words) way of expression and communication skill in the society.
- j) Build financial literacy and Security in the society.
- k) Develop critical thinking and establish problem-solving in the society.
- l) Education guarantees Innovative society and society development.
- m) Quality education promotes Sustainable Ecosystem and better human existence.
- n) Education promotes the growth of the suppressed classes in the society.
- o) Education inarguably ensures positive mental health and sound minds.
- p) Right education encourages a healthy lifestyle and ensures a positive view of human existence (epistemological view).

In a working society, education is a lifetime investment with which the less privileged and the underprivileged get out of poverty. The reverse is the case when unemployment prevails among the educated population. Consequently, when these prerequisites are undermined or eroded, national development and well-being are questionable. In a country like Nigeria, the environment discourages education, especially among the youth. In a country where the larger population of youngsters is uneducated, activism, degeneracy, rebellion, protest, turpitude and terrorism dominate. Political tugs are on the increase in Nigeria as a result of this factor. Education cleans societal decay and makes it worth living.

PESTILENCE IN NIGERIA EDUCATION

Nigeria's education at the higher level grapples with the implementation of an unfailing ICT system for learning, uninterrupted power supply, and deliberate neglect of lecturers by the government. These and many more account the reasons foreign students don't consider NPUs as choices (Ogunode & Musa, 2020).

The murrain in Nigerian higher education remains the unfavorable activities and interferences of the Nigerian government. This pestilence (Nigerian government interferences/politics) affecting Nigerian higher education has reduced the standard of education in Nigeria and resulted in a lack of a sound strategic plan, poor leadership, ineffective teaching and learning, poor research activities, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor funding, unfavorable internal and international outlook or reputation (staff, students, and research), academic corruption and fraud, low international ranking and lack of modern laboratories (Ogunode, 2020).

The concept of western education and modern science is what the Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria tried to condemn and destroy, with the erroneous ideology that western education is

unacceptable. This academic pestilence further damaged the Nigerian higher education system. Consequently, every progressive society depends on transmission of its heritage to the younger generation. This is what education entails, and when this is defeated, the future of society suffers (Klein, 2020; Jamiu, 2022).

Education as both a process and a system in Nigeria has also been affected by the pestilence of terrorist attacks, kidnapping, political unrest, ritualism, and unprofessionalism. Globally, education is an instrument for national development, enhancing a progressive and united Nation. Indeed, education increases people's knowledge and understanding of their world. Education accounts for more than 79% of global unity and belongingness. Education is one of the basic activities in all human societies (Maira et al., 2022; Wongeh, Adeniran, & Welgba, 2022).

The benefits of higher education in every society cannot be underestimated. A quality education manifests good communication and pleasant conversation, prepares people for careers, education helps to maintain social order, it helps to foster unity and remedy humanity's problems, education helps the awakening of the enormous potential that lies within individuals, it is a tool for generational knowledge transfer, It has a positive influence on the lives of the individuals and the nations, and education contributes to national, economic, political, and numerical growth (Dominic et al., 2022).

THE PESTILENCE OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCES IN EDUCATION

The Concept of Political Interference in education is the attempt to gain a partisan or regional advantage. This can be achieved via appointments, contracts, and nominations. This is one of the worse education pestilences in Nigeria. When politicians decide the fate of educational systems and procedures, it jeopardizes the organic functionality of the pedagogical architecture, and their relevance towards societal development.

Globally, higher learning has the potential role in any socio-economic development by availing a high-level labor-force, besides defining and guiding cultural, social, economic, and political dynamics. It, therefore, deserves to be treated very carefully as it delineates the generational developmental imperative of societies. When both learning and working environments are not conducive, the quality of education and work-friendliness diminishes. To date, Nigerian doctors, lecturers, engineers, and other valuable professionals prefer working abroad because of the unfriendly nature of the Nigerian environment, poor salaries, negligence, and political interruptions.

According to Amutabi (2003), he argued that "political decisions have marginalized the role and contribution of professionals and thus impacted negatively on policy formulation and implementation" (Amutabi, 2003). I, therefore, blame politicians for the crises in the education sector in Nigeria today. Consequently, the more political negligence towards pedagogy as a result of political interferences, the more developmental decay in that country; Thus, Education falls and fails within the larger domain of political control. The authors, therefore, initiated an easy relationship between the political establishments and the education experts, technocrats, policy-makers, and bureaucrats in Nigeria. This will further enhance national development.

To counter this issue, a study conducted in America by Taylor et al. (2017) 'strongly supports actions to prevent political interference' by supporting academic freedom principles and policies in institutions of higher education (Taylor et al., 2017). This accounts for the educational breakthrough recorded in the United States, reflecting in their national development.

Most importantly, political interference in Nigerian education has questioned the integrity, ethics, and moral principles in the education sector. When a professor can no longer hold a

credible election because of political involvement, one will begin to question the credibility, trustworthiness, and ethical standard of Nigeria Education.

For political reasons in Nigeria, teachers are no longer appointed based on qualification and competence but on who they know. Undoubtedly, this has reduced the quality of education in Nigeria. This pestilence also happened in the Philippine and should be challenged to pave the way for national education meritocracy (Hodder, 2009).

Pathak (2021) posited that "Political interference needs to be removed" from the higher education institution. Higher Education in Nigeria demands top priority and remains independent of political interference thus, attracting excellent goals for national development across the country.

PESTILENCE OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA EDUCATION

The root of the word terrorism is taken from a Latin term that means "to frighten". The term "terrorism" comes from French *terrorisme*, from Latin: *terror*, "great fear", and "dread", related to the Latin verb *terrere*, "to frighten". The critical point of reference to the definition of terrorism is 'violent activities' intended to create an atmosphere of fear to further interest. It could be religiously motivated, politically intended, or interest group-based. Whichever way it comes, it is a threat to the smooth education system in any country. There are five crucial components of terrorism, an involvement of an act of violence, an audience, the creation of a mood of fear, innocent victims, and political goals or motives (Nnam et al., 2020).

In every country, terrorism comprises domestic or international coercion. Domestic terrorism is based on and executed within the country by its citizens without foreign direction. While international terrorism involves foreign governments or groups and transcends one's nation's boundaries. In Nigeria, domestic terrorism such as cultism, Boko Haram terrorism, kidnapping, and injustices are seriously affecting the quality of education (Onapajo, 2020). Unemployment and poverty may have less impact as causes of terrorism in Nigeria, but religious, cultural, ideological, and extremist beliefs (Boko Haram) - are the traditional enemies of Western Education (Joshua, 2020).

That is not to say that unemployment and poverty rates in Nigeria are never pestilences to Education in Nigeria. Most Nigerians detest the concept of education because of the level of poverty. One frequently asked question in Nigeria "After education and the degrees, what next? For the past years, the answer to this question has been one of the problems (why should one acquire a degree without getting a job?) affecting the interest in education among Nigerians. However, some professionals like Nigerian doctors, lawyers, engineers, and others resolved to leave the country for greener pastures. The impact of professionals leaving the country always retards national development. Insecurity is a factor that contributed to Nigerian professionals evacuating the country. That has both painted the country's-esteem as 'tragic/lamentable' and same time, a threat to Nigeria's Education Reputation. Regrettably, the structure and organization of Nigerian society have enabled terrorist activities to thrive. Political feuds, ethnic vendetta, and religious divisions in a nation allow terrorist activities. When terrorism in a country is politically motivated, it is always near impossible to combat it (Onapajo & Ozden, 2023). Worthy of note, the social lifestyle of most education officials and teachers has changed due to security challenges in the country. When a teacher is not free and safe, pedagogical architecture declines.

PESTILENCE OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Corruption is the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains. In Nigerian higher institutions, corruption rages from lecturers' sexually harass, extortions of students in cash-for-marks, plagiarism, commercialization of admission, examination malpractices, unethical sale

of handouts, wrongful marks alteration, deliberate failure of students, bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, financial misappropriation, falsification of academic records, non-remittance of money collected, contract inflation and ghost worker syndrome (Jacob, Josiah, & Solomon, 2021). The cost of corruption to the Nigerian educational system represents about 15.5% (Jacob et al., 2021). This pestilence has deeply affected the encephalon of Nigeria's education.

Another pestilence in Nigerian education is the poor budgeting system. Nigerian educational budget for ten years in each year was below the UNESCO 26% recommendation for education (Olamoyegun et al., 2022). Thus, this has hampered the favorable outcome of Nigeria's education structure and made possible several strike actions in the system. It is saddening that in Nigeria, Drs are profs are underpaid compared to most politicians who are less educated. When one looks at the working condition of lecturers in Nigeria, coupled with their social status, it becomes discouraging to venture into education.

The level of poverty and hunger in Nigeria among the common populace is a problem affecting Nigeria's education. The lecturers' salary is inadequate to meet the family/social needs. Students find it strenuous to pay the tuition fee as a result of poverty and naira devaluation. It is high time Nigeria got it right in the education sector and intensifies national and human development.

IMPROVING EDUCATION SYSTEM IN DEVELOPING (NIGERIA) COUNTRIES

According to Zhang et al. (2022), communication technology may improve the environment in 48 developing countries by 0.0982%. Education of higher learning needs to embrace modern technology to enhance its quality service delivery and solve humanity's problems.

The system of vocational education should be encouraged in Nigeria. Again, political interference in Higher Education needs to stop for academic results toward nation-building (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). The government of Nigeria needs to understand that the higher the rate of illiteracy in the country, the more the level of crime and criminality in the land. Not forgetting that education is the means of preparing human resources for development.

Nigerian Lecturers need academic recurrency (training) to cope with the trend of teaching in the 21st century and meet the challenges that might arise. Academic lecturers' recurrency enables academic lecturers to meet international standards. The salaries of lecturers ought to be revisited and paid promptly. No teacher is happy to furnish students with quality academic guidance on an empty stomach. A teacher anywhere in the world is a role model, a game changer, a societal transformer, a bridge builder, a transmitter of societal values, a custodian of tradition and culture, an agent of change, and a nation builder.

Furthermore, a study conducted in Indonesia further advanced the factors that can improve 'the education of higher learning' in developing countries. According to Pramana et al. (2021), 'Several factors that affect the level of education quality include curriculum, educational policies, educational facilities, application of information and communication technology in education, affordable education costs, education management, and human resources (Pramana et al., 2021).

There is a need for a well-tailored university curriculum to be initiated in Nigerian public universities that can meet the current needs of society. Government should give university organizations free-hand to regulate education management and educational policies. The idea of government interference in university affairs should be halted.

A good learning environment, competent teachers, and a smooth Pedagogical (art, science, or profession of teaching) system, which includes teaching styles, feedback, and assessment, foster the quality of the education system. It should be well known that no education of higher levels, national development. The issues of the financial crisis at all levels, and education

health policies, should be given a top Concerned towards developing a good higher education structure.

The standardization of all public universities, the development of university administrative capacity across the nation, the Prohibition of religious instruction, and frequent monitoring of time management among teachers also improve the educational system (Shaturaev, 2021). Nigeria school administrators should introduce a system in all the public universities that will allow students to assess lecturers every semester.

In conclusion, higher education is a prerequisite to national development. Thus, the neglect of public universities by relevant authorities in Nigeria needs revisitation to enhance scientific and economic development. The major pestilences eating deep into the higher education system in Nigeria include inadequate funding, inadequate lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, unstable academic calendar, academic corruption, insecurity, brain drain, weak leadership, poor research, and poor staff development (Ogunode & Musa, 2020).

However, to address these pestilences, the relevant authorities (Government) should provide adequate security, motivate lecturers, adequate funding for higher institutions, employment of more lecturers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, ensure a stable academic calendar, fight academic corruption, and provide an enabling environment for learning.

Despite the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973, to leverage the talent and skills of graduates born in Nigeria and those born abroad to Nigerian parents in the diaspora which emphasizes the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of all Nigerians irrespective of cultural, religious, and social background. Insecurity, political vendetta, and decisions will not allow it to strive. Education fosters unity in diversities. The effectiveness of national peace, ethics, and development, the rule of law, equity, equality, and justice emerge when a country is civilized via well-grounded education.

According to Dominic et al. (2022), for any nation to be relevant, higher education plays a significant role. No invention of new ideas, technological advancement, and creativity, no higher education. Higher education inculcates proper values for the survival of the individual and society.

This article provides insights to help university practitioners, government agencies, and policy-makers develop specific effective academic responses among higher education in other to boost national confidence in scientific development/creativity and maintain a good education reputation across the nation. There is no doubt that the emergence of Covid-19 has exposed the weakness of Nigerian education in every sense (Dominic et al., 2021). This article is a call on the Nigerian government to sustain a positive reputation in terms of education and provide affordable education to all citizens, thus, building a better society.

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