

***EDUCATION OF THE NIGERIAN YOUTHS FOR A PROGRESSIVE FUTURE:  
PROSPECTS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS.***

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***ABSTRACT.***

*Education is the knowledge in basic skills, academics, technical, discipline and citizenship. It also includes the processing of knowledge, using inspiration, visionary ambition, creativity, ability to bounce back from failure, and motivation.*

*The problem with some educational institutions is that they don't consider these skills. These skills are associated with understanding the value of knowledge. There is a disconnected gap which had led to some of the problems challenging the Nigerian youths education today.*

*Achievers in life use inspiration and motivation to overcome barriers. Teaching to the test does not inspire or motivate anyone, memorizing does not inspire a love to learn, in fact, it does just the opposite, it turns off the desire to learn.*

*Education should be a lifetime experience, not limited to the youth years. Educators these days are switching to test because there is a crisis in education of their own making and society wants measurable results. This pressure is passed on to political leaders who base political decisions on what is measurable, which is academic test and test are based on acceptance of the status quo.*

*Natural talent and knowledge processing skills does not count. Students receiving the failure label are growing in numbers and percentage, all because the system measures selected knowledge on a one day standardized paper test.*

*The challenges to the Nigerian youths education are thus, drug abuse, cultism, alcoholism, examination malpractices, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, thuggery and armed robbery.*

*The key solutions that the government will embrace are technical and vocational education in its totality, integration of peace education in the school curricula, and hitherto pursue a vigorous policy on sex education.*

**KEY WORDS:-**

*Education, knowledge, inspiration, creativity, motivation.*

**INTRODUCTION:-**

Education is the knowledge in basic skills, academics, technical, discipline and citizenship. Our society lays emphasis on academic basics as important and that is based collecting knowledge without understanding its value. But the definition of education is all encompassing including the processing of knowledge, using inspiration, visionary ambition, creativity, ability to bounce back from failure, and motivation.

The problem with some educational institutions is that they don't consider these skills. These skills are associated with understanding the value of knowledge. There is a disconnected gap which had led to some of the problems challenging the youths education today.

Knowledge only has value when used with a process and process in an artificial environment is not predictable or measureable. Achievers in life use inspiration and motivation to overcome barriers. Teaching to the test does not inspire or motivate anyone, memorizing does not inspire a love to learn, in fact, it does just the opposite, it turns off the desire to learn.

Education's goal should be to develop a love to learn that stays with students throughout their lifetime. Education should be a lifetime experience, not limited to the youth years. Educators these days are switching to test because there is a crisis in education of their own making and society wants measurable results. This pressure is passed on to political leaders who base political decisions on what is measurable, which is academic test and test are based on acceptance of the status quo.

Natural talent and knowledge processing skills does not count. Students receiving the failure label are growing in numbers and percent, all because the system measures selected knowledge on a one day standardized paper test.

All young children have a natural talent for creative process of information. It's during the teen years that natural creative processing is replaced with the status quo. The status quo memorizes knowledge and forgets how to process it. In the classroom, memorizing is what counts. Standardized test reinforces the status quo. It kills creative processing ability. Status quo attitudes will follow them into adult life.

Today, teenage dreams of great ambitions are gone. Self – made millionaires are not “A” students in the classroom. The way they process knowledge is in conflict with classroom priorities. The self – made millionaire has a vision, then he or she researches specific knowledge,

applies intuitive knowledge and process all the elements, searching for a workable solution. Finding alternative ways to do common tasks makes millionaires. The secret is vision, research and processing, not pre – stored knowledge.

### **THE QUESTION NOW IS, WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED AS QUALITY EDUCATION?**

A quality education is custom design that addresses the unique abilities of each student and has a positive emotional experience. Custom education evaluates natural talent and how the student learns. This is why children who are taught by their parents at home out perform classroom students.

Parents learn what works and does not work, then focus on what works. With this method, students develop a love to learn and learning becomes a lifelong process.

### **CHALLENGES TO NIGERIAN YOUTHS EDUCATION:-**

Going back to history, one can see that the Nigerian education system has been very much influenced by its former British Colonial Rule. Before the coming of the colonial “masters” traditional education prevailed. According to Fafunwa (1975), the cardinal goals of traditional education were to;

- (a) Develop the latent physical skills.
- (b) Inculcate respect for elders and those in a position of authority.
- (c) Develop intellectual skills.
- (d) Develop character.
- (e) Acquire specific vocational training and develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour, and
- (f) Understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

To a large measure, traditional education represented a time when the family took care of its own members. The functions of the family included;-

- (a) Reproduction.
- (b) Child care.
- (c) Socialization.
- (d) Economic support.
- (e) Collective responsibility
- (f) Cultural continuity.

With traditional education, the extended family system flourished, allowing body, mind and soul to be developed, the “haves” to take care of the “have – nots,” and those who are fortunate to be responsible for the less – fortunate.

By comparison, British colonial education did not encourage a sense of community or “whole person” productivity as did traditional education, as the British colonial rulers gave little consideration to the cultures of the Nigerian people in educational planning and development.

After gaining independence, Nigeria continued to recruit foreign personnel to teach its citizens. The educational system remained the way the colonial administration left it – ie six years of primary school, five years of secondary education and four years of university education.

These early periods of independence did not focus on building an adequate philosophical foundation of education that could positively stimulate the heterogenous cultures in Nigeria.

The stimulation was negative – rather than capitalizing on national pride and patriotism, the focus was on a misquoted capitalism and greed that created conditions for regionalism, sectionalism, tribalism, bribery and corruption to flourish. As a result in the late 1960’s, Nigeria was plunged into a devastating three – year civil war that significantly retarded its general progress.

The end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 saw a demonstrable change in the educational system. Nigeria decided it was time for a new constructive phase in education. During this period, Nigeria was enjoying an “oil boom.” Scholarship and busary awards were given to students to study in and outside the country. The creation of more states led to the institution of more universities, colleges, high schools and primary schools. In September 1976, The Federal Government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE), with the hope of eradicating illiteracy, superstition, ignorance and disease. The main thrust of the programme was to re – emphasize the five objectives that were projected in the 1970 – 1974 Second National Development Plan. Eke (1972) noted that the implementation of these objectives would make Nigeria into:-

- (a). A united, strong and self – reliant nation.
- (b). A great and dynamic economy
- (c). A just and egalitarian society.
- (d). A land of full opportunities for all citizens and;
- (e). A free and democratic society.

But now the following questions must be posed; What happened to those good ideas of universal free primary, secondary, post – secondary and university education? What happened to those educational goals geared towards making Nigeria an egalitarian society, a great and dynamic economy, a free and democratic society and a land full of opportunities for all its citizens? What

happened to Nigeria with all of its natural resources? These problems gave rise to the problems that we have in the educational systems today namely:

- (a) Drug abuse
  - (b) Cultism
  - (c) Alcoholism
  - (d) Examination malpractices
  - (e) Prostitution
  - (f) Armed robbery
  - (g) Thuggery
  - (h) HIV/AIDS.
- (a) DRUG ABUSE;**