SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Discussion of secondary Education in Nigeria cannot be devoid of such Nigeria historical antecedents as the issue of regionalism, cultural background of the people and the religion prevalent in the area the frames of reference are used in the discussion below.

Secondary Schools in Southern Nigeria

With specific reference to Secondary Schools in Southern Nigeria, the ever - growing proportion of children of school age that stormed available primary schools created an impression and great eagerness in the missionaries and the colonial government that there were suitable pupils for secondary education. The primary schools, therefore, developed upper standard is often with over ambitious programmes. In Lagos, the first Grammar schools was opened by the CMS in 1859. The United Prebyseterian Church at Calabar built in 1895 what today would be described as a multi-lateral institution, including a catechists seminary, teacher training college, grammar school and technical college "all-in-one" which later became Hope Waddell Institute. In 1896, On River Protectorate gave it an annual grant In 1900, the new Protectorate of Southern Nigeria continued this assistance. Attempts were made in 1SS3 by the colonial government to take over from the missions all their secondary education establishments, leaving them only with primary education This attempt was resisted and in the end rejected, making the development of secondary education, a tripartite effort by colonial government and private organizations or individuals in the southern part.

Northern Nigeria

In northern Nigeria, the region was divided on the basis of religion: the predominantly Muslim area and the non-Muslim area. In the predominately Muslim area, the Muslims the Muslims felt, and very strongly too, that western education was the key to white's man's power or else they had become Christians and accepted the school as an activity of the Church. With this belief, western education was vigorously resisted. Secondary education development here was essentially by the colonial government and the emirs' support was vigorously sought by the colonial government. Hanns Vischer's Nassarawa School was therefore, for the various sons of the emirs and mallams. The provincial schools for Kano, Sokoto and Kastina alike were later established and by the end of 1915 there were provincial schools in all the twelve northern provinces with an average attendance of 733 pupils. With this measure, restricted expansion of school under careful supervision was pursued.

In the Christian dominated area, Missionaries participated actively in the establishment and administration of secondary and primary schools. In 1916 there were 58 mission schools with an average of 933 pupils in attendance. The Colonial Policy of Secondary Education

If secondary education is properly planned, executed and encouraged, it could be used to develop innate genius in the youth and enhance their capacity to stand by themselves. Thus secondary education could be used as investment that could yield rich productive dividends in a very near, future which could have far reaching effects on national development. Paradoxically, access to secondary schools in Nigeria over any other kinds of education created a pool from which the firms recruited staff largely and paid them better than other groups. To push pen behind an office desk became the dream of an "educated" Nigerian on completion of secondary school and anything else became - derogatory and below "human" dignity. No serious attempt was made by the colonial masters to train Nigerian in higher skills. The attitude on a wider base was an educational policy that kept the nation under-
developed. The whole truth is that secondary school education from the onset till today, appeals colonial dependent.

One wonders, therefore, why secondary educational policy was not used by the colonial masters to develop the youths according to the individuals' endowed capacity to guarantee a useful life that is enjoyable to the recipients. Such recipients would then attain a high standard of conduct and honour that is trusted by their fellows, that youths when they become elders would be able and willing to take their rightful position in the affairs of the nation. Secondary education would have prepared an individual with courage and sound mind not too easily deflected by emotion of the moment. Closely related to this issue therefore, is the socialization influence of secondary education in the Nigerian context.

Secondary Education and Socialization Process

One piece of information that is never controversial in educational discourse is the pattern of initial recruitment into schools in Nigeria. Several studies: Wise (1956); Ikejiani, Hansen, Okeke & Anowi (196'), Fafunwa (1979) and Taiwo (1981), for instance, show that in southern Nigerian, often the first pupils in the secondary schools were drawn from groups who were to some extent marginal or subordinate within the traditional status hierarchies. In Northern Nigeria, however there were numerous cases according to Hisket (1975) and Ibrahim (1979) for instance, show that in southern Nigerian, often the first pupils in the secondary schools were drawn from groups who were to some extent marginal or subordinate within the traditional status hierarchies. In Northern Nigeria, however there were numerous cases according to Hisket (1975) and Ibrahim (1979) where member of the traditional elite's were the first to be recruited. The initial schools in northern Nigeria for instance were "Native administration" in the sense that they were supported from local kinds and were very much the concern of the 'Native Authority' "Indeed in northern Nigeria the emirs being the heads of the Native Authority built these schools" (Wise 1956, p. 43) Similarly, Ibrahim (1979) asserts that in Kano State, the fragmentary data that exist suggest that the students in governments schools at the initial period of western education in 1903 were disproportionately drawn from high socio-political elite's of Kano citizens.

Even within the immerse growth in educational opportunities that has occurred, it can be observed that the low socio-economic status people in northern Nigeria are still largely under represented within the upper reaches of northern educational system and attempts to increase proportional representation of lower status grouping conceived in terms of traditional criteria of status have been only moderately successful. In gross terms, it is possible to point to variant patterns of response to the introduction of secondary education in the country. Unlike in southern Nigeria, where the most usual result of the introduction of secondary education is a process of status reserved, in northern Nigeria, the process of status reinforcement is assumed to ensure a guaranteed degree of continuity in the recruitment of dominant groups. Of course, concepts derived in terms of this may do injustice to empirical realities since in practice the emergent pattern of social differentiation in the less developed world represents a complex inter-weaving between traditional and emergent concepts of status. This theory may seven further be argued to be largely an academic exercise as the emergence of a modern type of urban centre has largely eroded the traditional criteria of status and authority in Africa.

Influence of Commissions and Educational Laws on Secondary Education

The early, schools functioned with scarcely any involvement by the colonial government and as such there were no reasonable attempts to co-ordinate education system organized by the various missions. In this regard, there was no novelty as such in educational practice, all missions owned common allegiance to Christianity and they operated curriculum centered on English, Religion, and Arithmetic commonly called 3Rs. This system however changed in early 1880s particularly by the Education Ordinance of 1882 when colonial government assumed a measure of control of mission education. Significant improvement was
made when the Ordinance No. 3 of 1887 was enacted to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the promotion of education in the colony of Lagos.

Concerning secondary education, in 1879 there were three secondary schools namely the CMS Grammar school, built in 1859. Wesleyan Boys High School built in 1976 and St. Gregory's School 1879. The trend of the secondary school from 1897 to 1992 was a gradual increase in enrolment from 172 to 206. With the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates. Lord Lugard proposed three types of secondary education with the aim of adapting the needs of education of the children in both protectorates to the man-power needs. The schools are the provincial schools, the rural and the non-government schools. The provinces, and located three to four kilometers away from the residential areas under a British Headmaster. The Resident and the paramount chiefs in the areas where these schools were located were to assist in the supervision of the schools. The entrants were between 12-14 years of age.

The rural school were meant for rural children who ultimately would remain in rural environments. The rural school policy was not accepted particularly by people in the Southern provinces and a grammar school policy was not accepted particularly by people in the Southern provinces and a grammar school policy was favored initially in the main urban areas and later it spread to the hinterland.

**Secondary Education after the Phelps-Stokes Commission report**

Between 1919 and 1940 there was substantial growth in secondary education which was most influenced by the Phelps-Stokes Commission Report on Education in Africa. The commission was set up on the initiative of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society between, 1920-1926 to make a study of the needs and resources of West, South and Equatorial Africa with special reference to the quality of education provided. Of importance to note is that between 1919-1940, the economic slump and depression of the late 1930s and early 1940s had considerable effects on educational development generally because there was no funds for teacher's salary, supply of equipment and maintenance of infrastructures in schools, and were hard hit. Little development was therefore, recorded in secondary education during the period between the 1920s and early 1940s.

**Secondary Education under Macpherson's Constitution of 1951**

Before 1951 Richards 1948 Constitution had divided Nigeria into three regions [i.e Northern, Eastern, and Western regions] The macpherson's of 1951 further provided that each region should have a legislative arm with veto power to enact legislation effective within the boundaries of the region on range of subjects of which education was one. This provision brought about a division of the Education Department into three parallel departments, one in each region under Regional Director. In Southern Nigeria (i.e Western and Eastern regions) secondary education was of five years duration and secondary school certification examination was taken in class V. In Northern Nigeria, there was six-year secondary education (Forms I-VI) and the secondary curriculum was guided by the requirement for the school certificate examination (Cambridge or Oxford Local). Technical education was still at this time at its infancy stage.

Since education became a regional subject, a region could initiate, plan and execute her educational programme. As such each region was to determine her education pace. In the Western region during the period of the Hon. S. O Awokoya as the Regional Minister of education, Universal primary education programme was proclaimed and this influenced the expansion of secondary education. By 1959 there were 420 modern schools, 138 grammar schools and 97 teacher training colleges in the region.

The same educational expansion programme was announced in the Eastern region, but the scheme was vehemently opposed by the Roman Catholic Mission that had about 60 percent of the schools on ground in the area. However, before the programme was finally
abandoned, it had influenced to some extent, the rate of growth in secondary education in the region.

In the Northern region, the pace of western education was very slow due to cultural and religious factors. Its expansion was therefore, tied to the availability of qualified teachers and the extent of the need for western certificate personnel. Education was free in most government and native authority schools. Even in voluntary agency schools scholarships were given by native authority to those unable to pay their fees. By 1958 there were 31 secondary schools and 36 teachers' colleges, spread across the length and breadth of the Northern region.

Lagos particularly the island Ebute Meta and Yaba were excised from Western region in 1954 and educational development in the in area became the responsibility of both the Federal Ministry of Education and Lagos City Council. Free universal primary education was introduced and it was successful. Secondary schools enrolment increased from 3,904 in 1956 in 4,804 in 1959.

Post-Independence Development: 1960 - 1970

The decade 1960-19/0 witnessed a rapid expansion in secondary education in Nigeria due to the influence of the Ashby Commission Report in 1960 called "Investment in education". During this period, 70 out of every 1,000 primary school pupils proceeded to secondary school in the South while 25 out of 1,000 proceeded to secondary school in Northern Nigeria. Emphasis was laid on the quality of the teacher at the secondary level.

As well as quality of intake from the primary level. Whatever progress was achieved this period, the military takeover of government in January 1966 which eventually culminated into civil war had untold negative impact on the development of education in the nation. After the war and the military having disenfranchised the middle class elite by terminating the democratic government in Nigeria, education became a tropical issue in the national discourse and this lead to the national policy on education. Meanwhile, the regions had been divided into states in 1966 and like in the era, of regionalism, secondary education was on the residual list. The implication of this is that each state enacted her educational laws according to her secondary educational demands.

However, as a means of fostering national unity, the federal Government of Nigeria established unity secondary schools called Federal Government Colleges, one in each state in which youths all over the nation vigorously competed for admission through a nationally administered common entrance examination.

National policy on education: Secondary Education Section

In an attempt to use education for the benefit of all citizens in Nigeria, in terms of its relevance to the needs of the individual and the desired society, the federal Government in 1973 summoned a seminar of distinguished educational experts under the chairmanship of Chief S. O. Adebo to deliberate on all aspects of a national policy on education. The recommendations of this seminar formed the twelve sections of the national policy on education first published in 1977 and revised in 1981. The broad aims of secondary education within the overall national objective, as contained in section 4 subsection 18 of the policy (1981, p. 16) are:

a) Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with no opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex or social, religious, and ethnic background;

b) Diversify its curriculum to cater for difference in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course;

c) Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology;

d) Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage;
e) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims, and live as good citizens:

f) Faster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common lies that unite use in our diversity;

g) Inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in late life.

Government, therefore, planned secondary education of six-year duration in two stages; junior secondary school and senior secondary school sages, each being of three year duration. Students who leave school at the end of the junior high school stage may then go on to an apprenticeship system or some other scheme for out-of-school vocational training. The senior secondary school will be for those able and willing (emphasis mine) to have a complete six-year secondary education.

Since the national policy on education came into operation, it has become universally accepted as the reference point for the development of secondary education in Nigeria. Acceptable, though the expression "able and willing" used in relation to those who are expected to enter senior secondary schools needs modification, in order that the policy implementation would bring a greater degree of social justice and equal educational opportunity to ensure the identification and development of talent vital to the requirements of a highly complex technological society. Questions need be asked whether equality of educational opportunity and selective senior secondary school can go together. Secondly, the expression "able and willing" for those going to senior secondary school appears equally questionable in a policy which aims to minimize, if not completely remove drop outs.

It may now be claimed and rightly too, that the end products of the Nigeria 3-3 secondary education system may not be different for the 5-years education system of the recent past. The only difference is one year added and a provision to legally eject a 16-years old pupil after the senior school certificate examination. A mere change in the institutional structure and the addition of few other subjects in the curriculum cannot lead to desired ends in terms of "equality of educational opportunity, egalitarian society, social justice and technological development". There may be a submerged pool of talents within the lower strata of the social structure brought about by social inequality. It is worthwhile to examine carefully the secondary educational policy within our social context because the level of education attained "lei's have a significant effect upon an individual's life chance.

The structure of secondary school in Nigerian historical perspective

Education has been universally accepted as a major indication of a community’s social well-being standard of living and social justice. In an attempt to define and measure levels of living on an international scale, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development recognize eight variable in addition to education as social indication. The African education conference held at King’s College, Cambridge in 1952 under the chairmanship of Sir Philip Moris, Vice Chancellor of the University of Bristol, emphasized that economic, social and moral progress of any people depend largely the vision and vigor of their education. Secondary education with an efficient structure could no doubt equip its recipients with moral integrity, intellectual honesty respect for persons .compassion and courage and above all capacity, to live a righteous life. It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine the structure of secondary education with specific reference to secondary schools in the Nigerian historical perspective.

(a) Secondary Grammar Schools

The first secondary grammar school was built in Lagos in 1959 and it was in principle an extension of primary education meant to train catechists for the Church and clerks for government and commercial houses. Primarily, it aimed at producing a class of Nigeria in blood but in all respects English intellect, moral and opinion a sort of civilizing the native". The
curriculum included Latin Greek, and a little Science. The duration was six years and upon completion the recipients sat for the same certificate examination as English pupils, (i.e set by Oxford Cambridge's Syndicates).

(b) Government Secondary Schools
These were the best of the grammar school type in terms of quality. The schools were well supplied with graduate teachers and the curriculum covered both literary and scientific subjects.

Physical education, including games and athletics was encouraged while workshops for metal work and wood work were also highly encouraged except in urban areas, schools farm and Poultry farms were practiced. All these were to widen the students' employment opportunities in term of self sustenance where the recipients could not be employed in government establishment. As of now most of the government secondary schools are state controlled and they constitute the largest percentage of secondary schools in the country.

(c) The Grant-Aided Secondary Schools
In the early years of educational development, grant-aided secondary schools were mainly community owned schools and they were next in quality to government secondary schools considering the output report. Nowadays, there are no grant-aided schools but there are Local Government Area secondary schools which operate on the same level as state owned government secondary schools especially in the northern states of the country. There are for instance, in Okene Local Government Area secondary schools spread across the length and breadth of the Local Government Area.

(d) Private Secondary Schools
In the past, private secondary schools were poorly funded being of very poor standard and in some cases of six-year instead of five-year duration. The name "private" secondary school today applies to all secondary schools owned by corporate bodies, religious organizations, individuals or establishments like University, National Electric Power Authority, River Basin Development Authority, that are wholly financed and controlled by these corporate bodies. Contrary to their previous poor standard private secondary schools are today better funded, and organized and have better academic performance than government secondary schools. There may be an exception to this, especially in the eastern states of the country where the Catholic mission still play a dominant role in the establishment and control of secondary education in those states.

Whatever be the merits of these private secondary schools, there are some private schools that employ and maintain poorly paid staffs who thereby feel disgruntled. This must have adverse effect on the overall performance of such schools.

(e) Secondary Modern Schools
Secondary modern schools were peculiar features of the then Western Region and Midwest. They were quite different from the two-year modern classes offered to girls in the Eastern Region and Lagos as an extension of primary education in domestic science, needle work and housekeeping that had also phase out.

Secondary modern schools as they existed in the Western Region were of three-year duration, open to primary school leavers, self-contained and aimed to give practical education. They were created for those primary school leavers who were unable to proceed to grammar school or unable to finance the grammar school education. The curriculum was an extension of primary school curriculum with an inclusion of practical subjects such as agriculture, wood work metal work, domestic science, needle work.

Their product secured junior posts in the civil service and some proceeded to teacher training colleges, technical institutes and trade centers. Some grammar schools later had a
parallel four-year programme in commercial subjects, such as typing, shorthand, book-keeping or accounting. These secondary modern schools have been phased out.

In the Northern Region, secondary modern schools never existed. Selection into teacher training colleges, technical institutes and trade centers was at that time by an intensive competitive regional common entrance examination and for those interested in vocational education on completion of standard seven at the primary level.

(f) Secondary Commercial Schools

Secondary commercial schools existed alongside the grammar schools. They offered literary and commercial subjects leading to the West African School Certificate (WASC) in commercial subjects and certificate of the Royal Society of Arts of London (RSA). Secondary commercial schools were not very common in the northern region, but there were popular ones like the commercial college in Bukuru, and in the late 1960's the commercial colleges in Kano and Okene. Commercial college Kano later became Aminu Kano College, Kano, named after Alhaji Aminu Kano in the early 1980's while commercial college in Okene became Lenon memorial College, Okene when the Kwara State Government took over the College in early 1980's.

In the northern region, secondary school students were allowed at the Form III level to choose their art area of Specialization (i.e. Arts Science or Social Science). In any secondary school where a course of offering was not available, the students were always transferred to the nearest secondary school where such a course was available, A typical example was that of Dekina secondary school where all social science students at the end of their third year always moved to Abdul-Azeez Attah Memorial Secondary School in Okene for the completion of their social science course With the adoption and implementation of the national policy on education, however, all these anomalies were taken care of.

(g) Junior High Schools

The Junior High School type of secondary education was recommended by the Banjo Commission of 1961 and received blessing only in the then Western Region where six junior high schools were established. As it was not well received by the populace it did not make any significant impact on the Nigerian secondary education development. The six junior high schools opened by local government authorities in the Western Region offered prevocational education and a few non-technical streams before they were phased out.

(h) Comprehensive High Secondary Schools

The origin of what could be called comprehensive high/secondary schools could be linked with the secondary school built in 1895 by the United Presbyterian Church at Calabar, as a multi-lateral school and technical college "all in one" that later became Hope Wadell Institute. But in a modern sense, an attempt to diversify education curricula was made prominent by the type of secondary education recommended by the Diko and Banjo 1961 commissions called Comprehensive High School, tin- curriculum was based on the British. American and Swedish experiences comprising literary and science subjects. The course was in three stages, namely the junior stage of three years, a senior stage of two years and a third (higher school) stage of two years leading to Higher School Certificate or its equivalent: the General Certificate of Education at the Advanced level in two or three subjects.

A model at Aiyetoro near Abeokuta for the Western Region and another in Port-Harcourt for the Eastern Region were set up as pilot projects. That of Aiyetoro was established and financed by the Ford Foundation and staffed by Nigerians and Americans. Drop outs at the first stage could continue their education at a trade or vocational centre or go into the labour market. Those that completed the second stage took the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) like other secondary school students, while students at the third stage were prepared for university education by offering two or three subjects at the Advance level.
Most significant about comprehensive high schools was that admission was without examination because entry was based on mere recruitment from the neighborhood. It, therefore, attracted a greater deal of criticism and the scheme was not popular even in those regions with the passage of time, because admission became selective through competitive entrance examination. The programme in mid-stream lacked qualified teacher's particularly graduate teachers and sufficient fund for expansion.

(i) The International School in Ibadan

The International School in Ibadan is a secondary school, but a class in its own right that deserves separate discussion. It was principally established for the children of expatriate staff with a broad curriculum to cover the needs of these children that would eventually return to their home countries. The classes were, thinly populated and the students enjoyed considerable amount of freedom compared to what obtained in other secondary schools in Nigeria. Character training was emphasized and it formed an integral part of the curriculum.

Some privileged Nigerians especially around the Western Region benefited from this programme with the exit of the expatriate members of staff from the University of Ibadan, the school became localized and as of today the name "International" only reminds one of her past glory.

(j) The Federal Government colleges

Federal government colleges are a set of secondary schools run by the federal government. The dire need to use education to develop in the Nigerian youth's a sense of unity, patriotism and love of the nation, especially after the Nigerian independence, gave birth to the concept of Federal government colleges otherwise called unity schools. The objective was to foster in the youth a sense of national belonging. In this way, young pupils in their formative and impressionable years from all parts of the federation with different languages, ethnic and cultural background are given the opportunity to work, play and grow together, learn to understand and tolerate one another and thereby develop a horizon of one strong Nigeria.

Admission, through nationally administered common entrance examination, depends on a quota system. The colleges, initially one in each of the twelve states, were set up to complement Kite's College and Queen's College, Lagos, which were the first secondary schools established by the national government. They were initially also essentially residential, well-staffed and well-equipped.

As if now, each of the thirty six states has one male and one female federal government colleges and day schooling is being encouraged and practiced as means of reducing cost. These colleges have served the nation some measures, but the purpose for which they were established needs to be placed in clearer focus.

(k) Special Secondary Schools

The term "special" as used here means secondary schools different from those discussed above so far. In Nigeria there are two types of such secondary schools namely: School for the handicapped and one secondary school for the gifted children which is in Suleja near Federal capital in Abuja. The schools for the handicapped are for children that cannot function in the normal secondary school environment while the secondary school for the gifted children is for those so identified as academically gifted at the primary school level. The aim is to create enabling and conducive environment for those sets of children. These secondary schools, especially the schools for the handicapped children, need be encouraged because the need for out-weights those available in the country.

Having examined the various structures of secondary schools in Nigeria, it is worthwhile that the examination systems for the products of secondary education both in the past and the present are mentioned.

The Examination systems in Nigerian Secondary Education
Initially, both the missionary and colonial government secondary school pupils at the terminal stage of their education were prepared for one of the school certificate examinations which were conducted by examining bodies set up by the English Universities. A sufficiently good pass in one of these examinations carried exemption from the matriculation examinations of Universities in Great Britain. Later the pupils were prepared for examinations of Oxford and Cambridge Examination syndicates and the duration of secondary education was six years. By 1954, this arrangement was deemed to be unhelpful to the local needs. Four governments in British West African Countries Nigeria, then constituted a West African Examinations Council, the members of which included expert educationists representing each territory, to conduct West African School Certificate (WASC) Examinations. The purpose was to promote the conduct of such examinations in West African territories as may enable these countries manage their own educational affairs.

With the creation of the West African Examinations Council, students who completed secondary school successfully with required credit passes to proceed to university were first to take a two-year sixth form course (based on the English system) for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) which was used for University entry.

By Decree No. 2 of 1978 which was later amended as Decree No. 33 of 1989, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board was established and empowered to conduct matriculation examinations for entry into all degree awarding institutions. The purpose was to place suitably qualified secondary school leavers in the available places in institutions of higher learning and prevent multiple admission for candidates seeking admission into Nigeria universities. The first matriculation examination for entry into all degree awarding institutions in Nigeria was conducted in 1978. Initially, the creation of this board met with stiff opposition from the northern states, but gradually the exercise was accepted. But as of now, it seems that the Board is once again in a predicament especially with the university autonomy that is being proposed by the present democratic government in Nigeria, at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

The Future Prospect of Secondary School Teaching

By any standard of living in any African community particularly in Nigeria. Teaching was at the initial period a lucrative job. Even when teachers were poorly paid, they were a class in their own right and teachers were well respected at least amongst the rural communities. But professionally speaking, qualified teachers at all levels of education at any period of educational development in Nigeria were in short supply. The dilution of intakes into the teacher training colleges, especially during the education era, led to the production of unqualified teachers while the unattractive conditions for teachers made brilliant pupils prefer to enter secondary schools. At times qualified teachers sought hotter paid employment outside the teaching profession. The necessary expansion of secondary schools, therefore, proceeded at all times at the risk of using unqualified teachers.

It is, however, an indisputable fact that, the quality of a nation's education depends to a large extent on the curriculum contents, teaching methodology, and interaction of theory and practice that are ultimately functions of the quality of teachers. The quality of the secondary school teaching could not be better than available teachers. The issue, therefore, remains that the availability of well qualified teaching staff especially at the secondary school level is a pre-requisite to the development and acquisition of high technological skill needed to develop a nation. The predicament facing secondary school teachers all over Nigeria in the year 2001 needs urgent government attention.

Count Down on Secondary Education in Nigeria

One thing that needs to be remembered about the colonial policy on secondary education in Nigeria since its inception in 1959 is that whatever be the kind of defects inherent in the system, the opportunity provided lesson for future education development. Even years after
independence, it still can be argued that, the Nigerian secondary education system largely remained British in practice, structure, organization and even in administration. The National Policy on Education, in its section on secondary education, attempts a laudable policy statement for which implementation largely remains bookish in nature, thus very weak in support of science teaching for engineering, medicine, agriculture and practical work. How else does explain the fact that in year 2000, the ratio of entrants into Nigerian Universities still remains 70:30 in favor of Arts and Social Sciences as against science and technology. In fact, the policy statement in the policy on education shows little insight into the diverse nature of the Nigerian people and their culture, their wide range of physical conditions and economy as well as the needed working ideology.

For instance, the current entrants into universities that are on the average between 16 and 18 years old are considered, by this writer, too young for the lecture method and the general freedom of a university campus. It is felt that these youngsters in their "formative years" need intermediate colleges at least to enable them hold the responsibility of prefect ship. Fairly matured students with IJMB. Colleges of Education and Polytechnic Certificates for direct entry have good advantage over the indirect youngsters coming directly from the secondary schools.

The current rush for high education with the attendant evils such as cultism, university unrest, examination malpractices and hand-out crisis to mention but a few, seems to portray Nigerian youths as human beings endowed by their creator with all manners of ills. But with better planned secondary education in a good enabling environment, youths are indisputable inheritors of adults with all the gifts and talents with which other human beings are endowed. Our secondary education policy, therefore, should be set to solve the problems of the youths as a group of dynamic human beings to be accommodated like other human beings and not merely tolerated, but treated on the basis of equality and respect for human dignity.

Conclusion

In democratic governance, the secondary education system, should be geared towards social and personal needs to create awareness in the recipients, such awareness that promotes rational thinking. Thus, the philosophy of secondary education should be aimed at promoting habits of discipline, industry and truthfulness as means of improving standard of living in any environment.

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