

Human Capital Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines the concept of Human Capital and its role in national development with a view to situating the importance given to it in Nigeria. It identifies the avenues through which human capital is developed such as provision of formal education, on-the-job training, adult education, health services, labour market information and support for internal migration, among others. The paper then briefly looks at the administrative structure of the Nigerian state and the constitutional responsibilities given to each level of government (local, state, and federal) and observes that the federal government plays a leading role in human capital formation. It therefore considers the tasks of the federal government in promoting human capital development, bearing in mind the avenues for developing human resources – formal education, and so on. It also highlights the support that the federal government has given to the private sector in its efforts to develop human capacities in the country. Moreover, it considers the responsibility of the federal government in helping international agencies to advance human capital development as one of the latter's responsibilities toward member nations. Specifically, the paper focuses on the policies, programmes and agencies of the federal government that have helped to promote human capital development. The constraints that have impeded the efforts of this tier of government in meeting stated objectives such as inadequate funding of formal education and brain drain are also discussed. Finally, the paper makes appropriate recommendations to ensure that the nation's human capital development process serves the expected purposes effectively.

Introduction

Human capital refers to human beings who possess skills, knowledge and attitudes which are utilised in the production process. It is generally believed that human capital is the most important factor of production. It is the human capital that coordinates other factors of production to produce goods and services meant for human consumption. Human capital is the most active catalyst of economic growth and development. Since 1959 and at the eve of political independence gained by Nigeria from Britain in 1960, when the Federal Government set up the Ashby Commission to investigate the needs of Nigeria in the field of post-primary and higher education between 1960 and 1980, human capital development has been given high premium in national development process. The federal government has accorded priority to human capital development through its policies and programmes and has set up agencies which oversee the implementation of those policies and programmes.

This paper examines the concept of human capital and its role in the development process, in order to situate the importance given to it by the Federal Government in Nigeria. It also focuses on the avenues for developing human capital such as formal education, on-the-job training, adult education, health services, and support for migration. The paper further discusses the administrative structure of Nigeria and the constitutional responsibilities given to each level of government (local, state, and federal). It then considers the tasks of the federal government in promoting human capital development, bearing in mind the avenues for developing human resources – formal education, on-the-job training, adult education, etc. It also highlights the support that the federal government has given to the private sector in its efforts to develop human capacities in the country. Moreover, it considers the encouragement which the federal government in Nigeria gives to international agencies to develop human capital as one of the latter's responsibilities toward member nations. Specifically, the paper focuses on the policies, programmes and agencies of the federal government that have helped to promote human capital development. The challenges that have impeded the efforts of this tier of government in meeting stated objectives such as inadequate funding of human development

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programmes, mismanagement of resources, and brain drain are also discussed. Finally, the paper makes appropriate recommendations to ensure that the nation's human capital development process achieves the stated purposes effectively.

Concept of Human Capital and its Importance in the Development Process

Human capital means human beings who have acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes which are needed to achieve national development. These human resources are either employed in work organisations or are self-employed. They help to realise organisations' objectives with the overall intention of promoting national growth and development. The skills, knowledge and attitudes gained through human capital formation are a direct result of deliberate investments in human beings. Human capital has become important in the development process because human beings are the most-prized assets of a nation. Other factors of production such as land, unskilled labour, financial and physical capital need skilled human resources to create wealth. Those countries of the world that have realised sustainable development have invested heavily in human beings. A nation with abundant natural resources cannot achieve its full potentials without skilled human resources. Technical innovations that have occurred in the developed countries and a few developing countries are a product of human capital development. When the creative potentials of people are developed, their ability to participate in the development process is enhanced. In spite of the fact that human capital development also focuses on self-development so that individuals can realise their potentials and meet their aspirations, the key objective of human capital formation is the transformation of the social, political, economic and technological life of the society. The desire is to increase the capacity of people to do productive work and serve as agents of national growth and development. Viewed from another perspective, human capital development focuses on all activities directed toward producing people with appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes, motivation and job-related experience which are required for national development. Human development also occurs when national development goals are realised, since human beings are expected to be the objects of development.

The significance of human resources in the development process has therefore compelled its development. That is why the federal government in Nigeria considers investments in human beings as an important task. Since Nigeria attained political independence in 1960, human capital development has featured in the policies and programmes of the federal government. The federal government has invested in formal education, on-the-job training, adult education, health services, and has offered support for migration, among others, to develop human capital in Nigeria.

Avenues for Human Capital Development

Scultz (1961) observes that investments in formal education, health facilities and services, on-the-job training, adult education and migration improve the capabilities of human beings and are therefore avenues for promoting human capital development.

Formal education is perhaps the most important avenue for improving the abilities of human beings. It is the form of education given in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. These institutions offer full-time educational programmes to their beneficiaries. However, most tertiary institutions of learning organise part-time, evening or sandwich programmes for adults who cannot secure admission into full-time programmes or combine study with work. One of the major tasks of Education in economic growth and development is the production of skilled human resources for the various sectors of the economy. Apart from performing this quantitative function, formal educational institutions

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also impart appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes in their clients. These skills, knowledge and attitudes assist them in coping with the demands of their jobs. This is called the qualitative function of education. It is upon these skills and knowledge gained through formal education that employers of labour build on through on-the-job training. Education also increases the mobility of labour and promotes technological development through science and technology education. Education also raises the productivity of workers through the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Provision of health facilities and services to people in a society is also a way of developing human capital. Health care services increase life expectancy, thus ensuring that workers can contribute to national development for a long time until they reach the retirement age and ensure that the resources invested in them are not wasted as a result of premature death. Health services also improve the strength and vigour of people and guarantee that they remain healthy for productive work.

On-the-job training programmes organised by employers of labour also remain a vital way of developing human capital. No matter the level of skills, knowledge and attitudes inculcated in people through formal education, on-the-job training will still fill some gaps in human capital development. Situations always arise for employers to conduct on-the-job training for workers, within or outside the premises of the organisation. On-the-job training may become necessary when employees are promoted, when they assume new responsibilities, when the organisation notices that there is declining productivity, when there is the need for specialisation among workers or when they need additional skills and knowledge to cope with the demands of the job.

Adult education, in form of adult literacy programmes, agricultural extension services, mobilization/enlightenment programmes and so on, also improve human capacities. Numeracy and literacy skills inculcated through adult literacy programmes can help increase the competence of people involved in productive work. Agricultural extension services rendered to non-literate farmers have also assisted in enhancing their productivity. Enlightenment programmes also develop the capacity of people to make informed choices.

Investments in migration have facilitated the reduction of unemployment and under employment among skilled people. When there is abundance of human resources in some areas of a country and other areas are in short supply, support for internal migration will ensure even development of the country because areas experiencing shortage will benefit from areas where there are abundant skilled human resources. Sometimes, migration enhances the productivity of people if they move to new geographical locations with better facilities and social infrastructure. Support for international migration can promote transfer of technology and knowledge and increase the foreign exchange earnings of a country through the income of those who migrated to other countries in search of greener pastures.

Administrative Structure of Nigeria

Nigeria is a Federation consisting of 36 States and a Federal Capital Territory. There are 774 local government councils in the country. There are therefore three levels of government – federal, state and local. By virtue of the provision of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in its Fourth Schedule, the functions of a local government council, which bear relevance to the focus of this paper, include participation of such council in the Government of a State in the provision and maintenance of primary, adult

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and vocational education; and the provision and maintenance of health services. The State and Federal governments have jurisdiction over post-primary, university, technological and professional education. The state and local governments exercise control over primary education. With the promulgation of the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, the federal government only assists the state governments in the management and financing of primary education.

The three tiers of government are involved in the provision of health services to the people. Both state and federal governments support internal migration of people because the 1999 Constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination and right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria. The federal and some state governments have also set up agencies which provide on-the-job training especially to people working in the public sector, apart from investing in adult education. However, the federal government plays a leading role in human capital development, since the whole country is its jurisdiction and because it controls larger resources than any state government.

Federal Government and Human Capital Development

This section focuses on the role of the federal government in human capital development through the afore-mentioned avenues – formal education, health facilities and services, on-the-job training, adult education, and support for migration. Other policies and programmes of this level of government that have encouraged human capital development are also considered.

Formal Education

The National Policy on Education, which was published in 1977 but revised in 1981, 1998 and 2004, captures the intentions of the Nigerian government on Education. The National Policy on Education, NPE (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) has 13 sections, namely: Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria; Early Childhood/Pre-Primary Education; Basic Education; Primary Education; Secondary Education; Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education; Science, Technical and Vocational Education; Tertiary Education; Open and Distance Education; Special Education; Educational Services; Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education; and Financing of Education.

All levels of education – primary, secondary and tertiary – have roles to play in human capital development. Primary education is the foundation upon which the two other levels rest. Some of the goals of primary education as stated in the NPE are to: inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively; give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity; and provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality. Primary schools produce unskilled but literate people who can be engaged in productive work in the future. The skills gained in primary schools can be built upon by employers of labour through on-the-job training. It should be stressed that the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act 2004 mandates every parent to make sure that his/her child or ward completes primary and junior secondary school education. The Child's Right Act 2003 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003) states in Section 29, sub-section 2(e) that "a child shall not be used for any purpose that deprives the child of the opportunity to attend and remain in school as provided for under the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act". The implication is that no child who is aged 15 years or below can be engaged for paid employment.

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The two broad goals of secondary education are to “prepare the individual for useful living within the society; and higher education. In concrete terms, secondary education provides trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; and technical knowledge and vocational skills required for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. To achieve these goals, the junior secondary schools offer pre-vocational subjects such as Agriculture, Business Studies, Home Economics, Local Crafts, Computer Education, Fine Arts and Music. Students who complete the junior secondary education proceed to senior secondary school, technical college, out-of-school vocational training centre or join apprenticeship scheme. The vocational subjects that are available in senior secondary schools include Agriculture, Applied Electricity, Auto-Mechanics, Book –keeping & Accounting, Building Construction, Commerce, Computer Education, Electronics, Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Home Management, Metal Work, Technical Drawing, Woodwork, Shorthand, Typewriting, Fine Art and Music. Some of these subjects are not taught in a good number of secondary schools because of shortage of teachers, equipment and workshops. The absence and irregularity of electricity in most schools is also a problem. There are also technical colleges at the post-primary level. These colleges provide a wide range of courses (Mechanical Trades, Computer Craft Practices, Electrical Engineering Trades, Building Trades, Wood Trades, Hospitality, Textile Trades, Printing Trades, Beauty Culture Trades, Business Trades and Leather Goods’ Manufacture including shoe making and repairs). Graduates of the colleges are employed as craftsmen, artisans and middle-level supervisors in commercial and industrial enterprises.

Tertiary educational institutions promote national development through high level manpower training. Such institutions include colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in Nigeria. Colleges of education produce teachers for primary and junior secondary schools. The polytechnics specialise in vocational and technological education, although a number of them offer programmes in Administration, Environmental Sciences and Management Sciences. Universities offer first degree and post-graduate programmes in Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Human Medicine, Law, Pharmacy, Sciences, Social Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. A good number of these higher education institutions offer part-time programmes to cater for the needs of working people.

The federal government contributes a block grant of 2% of its Consolidated Revenue and makes other contributions in form of federal guaranteed credits to assist in the implementation of Universal Basic Education programme which covers primary and junior secondary education and some form of non-formal education. The federal government owns and manages 102 Federal Government Colleges at the secondary school level. It is also the proprietor of 27 universities (including the Nigerian Defence Academy), 20 polytechnics and 21 colleges of education out of 91 universities, 59 polytechnics and 74 colleges of education that are in existence at the tertiary level. In addition, it owns four inter-university centres – Nigerian Arabic Language Village, Nigerian French Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages and National Mathematical Centre – which encourage the teaching and learning of the relevant subjects (Arabic, French, Nigerian languages and Mathematics).

Health Facilities and Services

The Federal Ministry of Health co-ordinates the delivery of health care services at the federal level and in the entire country. In doing this, it ensures the development of National Health Policy through supervision, monitoring and inspection; ensures the implementation

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of the National Health Policy as far as it affects the Federal Ministry; liaises with the national health departments in other countries and with international agencies; encourages adherence to norms and standards for the training of personnel for health services; identifies health goals and priorities for the nation as a whole and monitor the progress of their implementation; co-ordinates health and medical services delivery during national disasters; promotes health and healthy life styles; ensures the provision of tertiary and specialised hospital services; co-ordinates health services provided by the Federal Ministry of Health, states, local governments, wards, private health care providers and development partners and offers additional health services that may be necessary to create a comprehensive health system; and prepares strategic, medium-term health and human resources plans for the implementation of its duties (<http://host1.maasinfotech.com/healthministry/mandate.php>). Some of the core departments of the Federal Ministry of Health are: Department of Health Planning and Research (DHPR), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Hospital Services (DHS), Department of Food and Drug Services (DFDS), and Department of Community Development and Population Activities (DCDPA) (<http://host1.maasinfotech.com/healthministry/departments.php>). Its Department of Hospital Services (DHS) supervises the operation and management of all tertiary hospitals and tertiary health services in the country. The DHS co-ordinates and manages 15 teaching hospitals, 23 Federal Medical Centres, 8 Federal Neuro-Psychiatric hospitals, 3 National Orthopaedic Hospitals, 1 National Eye Centre, 4 Professional schools, 2 Federal Staff Hospitals, 26 Federal Staff Clinics in the States and Abuja (the Federal Capital), and a Forensic Science Laboratory. The tertiary hospitals render teaching, research and referral services.

On the Job Training

There are federal government agencies that conduct on-the-job training programmes for the personnel in the public and/or private sectors. These are: Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Centre for Management Development (CMD), Industrial Training Fund (ITF), National Centre for Economic Management and Administration (NCEMA), Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), and National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS). Those federal agencies that mount on-the-job training programmes for teachers and education personnel are the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) and National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

ASCON was established through Decree No. 39 of 1973; now ASCON Act, Cap 6, Vol. 1 LFN 1990 to offer higher management training for senior executives of public and private segments of the Nigeria economy; offer and plan for a comprehensive study and exploration of the principles and techniques of management and administration, and for exchange of ideas and experience and for promotion of better understanding among persons engaged with management and administration arising in diverse areas of national life; carry out research into the difficulties of management and administration connected with different aspects of national life; and commence and facilitate study courses, conferences, lectures, seminars and the like and to support the aforesaid objects; among other objectives (<http://www.ascon.org/>).

Though founded in 1973, the existence of CMD was formalised by Act 51 of 1976. CMD is the operational branch of the Nigerian Council for Management Development (NCMD) which is charged with the responsibility of stimulating, promoting and co-ordinating management education, training and development in the country. The Centre exists to "coordinate the activities of, and give proper direction to institutions engaged in the training

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and re-training of managerial personnel in Nigeria” (Taire, 1992). Specifically, the enabling law authorises the CMD to provide for the NCMD background information and other technical data needed for the Council’s policy making and co-ordinating tasks; offer management advisory and consultancy services to Nigeria enterprises; set up and maintain current library for management studies; publish journals, research papers and books on modern management and supervisory techniques; and sponsor, support and conduct research into all areas of management and related subjects relevant to the Nigerian context. The Centre also accredits and registers management trainers and management training institutions working in Nigeria so as to maintain training standards (<http://www.trainingdirectorynigeria.com/index.php>).

The ITF was set up via Decree 47 of 1971 and is empowered to “promote and encourage the acquisition of skills in industry and commerce with a view to generating a pool of indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the Nigerian economy” (<http://www.itf-nigeria.com/about.htm>). Some of the responsibilities of the ITF are to provide direct training, vocational and apprentice training, research and consultancy services; reimburse up to 60% levy paid by employers of labour registered with it and administer the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme. ITF also provides human resource development information and training technology service to industry and commerce to improve their manpower capacity and in-house training delivery efforts. The main focus of its programmes and services is to encourage human performance, enhance productivity, and achieve value-added production in industry and commerce.

NCEMA was established in 1986 through Decree 51 of 1989 as a training and policy research institute under the defunct Federal Ministry of Planning and Budget (now the National Planning Commission). The major function of the Centre is to organise in-service or post-experience training for economic planners, budget officers, policy advisers and project managers on regular basis so that the ministry or agency of government at the federal, state and local levels and the private sector will not, at any time, lack officers needed for effective planning and budgeting. The training, provided through short in-service courses, familiarises participants with policies of government, the framework for their design, monitoring of the implementation of policies and projects in order to improve the quality of economic management (<http://www.ncema.gov.ng/>). Before the Centre was created, the training of public officers involved in economic management was done in institutions outside the country, an example of which is the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, based in Washington D.C.

The Nigerian Management Group, precursor to the Nigerian Institute of Management, was established in 1961 by a general meeting of top managers in Commerce, Industry and Government. The Nigerian Management Group became the Nigerian Institute of Management and was incorporated under the Nigerian Companies Act, Cap. 37. The Nigerian Institute of Management Establishment Act 2003 now makes the Institute a corporate body. The objectives of the Institute are to “to encourage and develop the art and science of good management; provide facilities for interested persons to meet and discuss managerial practice and problems with a view to improving standard managerial practice in Nigeria; collect and disseminate information on management subjects; and provide such facilities as may be required by those aspiring to or studying for professional examinations in management studies” (<http://www.managementnigeria.org/aboutus2.html>).

NIPSS was founded by Decree 20 of 1979, now known as Act 20 (Cap 626 of 1990). The Institute serves as Nigeria’s foremost policy “Think Tank”, producing top class technocrats who will conceptualise and direct the implementation of policy initiatives and strategies

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vital for national development. The Institute, therefore, organises courses for high level policy makers and implementers, conducts social and public policy research, seminars and workshops and brain storming sessions for its clients (<http://www.nipsskuru.org/content/about.html>).

The National Teachers' Institute was established in 1976, but its enabling law was Decree No.7 of 1978. It was founded to produce trained and qualified teachers for the education system. The major objective of the Institute is to provide "courses of instruction leading to the development, upgrading and certification of teachers as specified in the relevant syllabus using Distance Education Techniques" (<http://www.ntinigeria.org/about.html>).

NIEPA was created in 1992 to train education sector planners and managers for effective planning and management of the education system through capacity building, constant training, monitoring and information dissemination. Specifically, some of the objectives of the Institute are: the provision of specialised and relevant planning skills for Nigerians; provision of educational management and development activities such as training, consultancy services, research and development; continuing professional development of practitioners through planning and implementation of training programmes targeted at equipping and enhancing the competence of serving education planners and administrators; projection and forecasting of future trends in educational management and practices and their relevance to education in Nigeria; and monitoring and review of regional and world trends in educational management and planning practices (Alani, 2001).

Adult Education

One of the parastatals and agencies of the Federal Ministry of Education is the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC). NMEC was established through Decree 17 of 1990. It works in collaboration with all concerned to stamp out illiteracy in Nigeria; devise and support strategies and programmes for the conduct and execution of a National Mass Literacy Campaign in consultation with relevant agencies of the federal and state governments, the universities and non-governmental agencies; monitor and co-ordinate activities connected with the National Mass Literacy Campaign so as to ensure the swift and successful elimination of illiteracy in Nigeria; monitor and co-ordinate the implementation of all activities for the removal of illiteracy in Africa and ensure the collection and circulation of information on the implementation; organise in-service professional training courses for senior staff and operate training seminars for various levels of staff from government and non-governmental organisations; among other functions. NMEC supports the state governments in Adult and non-formal education. It does this through its adult learning centres located all over the country and through capacity building for instructors (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

Support for Migration

As earlier mentioned, the 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of movement to every Nigerian citizen. This has enhanced the capability of skilled people to move from their states of origin to other parts of the country without any hindrance. Nigerians can therefore make use of better job and human capital development opportunities available outside their geographical enclave. For example, under the Federal Teachers' Scheme, teachers are recruited and posted to all parts of the country to help in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme. State governments that are in dire need of skilled people also appoint non-indigenes to fill vacant posts. The Technical Aid Corps (TAC) programme was introduced in 1987 by the federal government to provide development assistance to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in order to promote South-

South cooperation. Two major objectives of the programme are: to share Nigeria's know-how and expertise with other ACP countries, that is, the recipient countries; and to render assistance on the basis of the assessed and perceived needs of the recipient nations. The TAC volunteers are experienced Nigerian professionals and experts who are recruited on the basis of particular requests from the ACP nations to work for two years. The volunteers must possess a university degree or its equivalent, with at least three years post-qualification work experience. The professionals mostly demanded are health practitioners (doctors, nurses/midwives, nurse tutors, and laboratory and medical technologists); teachers of teacher training colleges, secondary schools, universities, and vocational training centres; agriculturists/agronomists; engineers and lawyers.

The federal government also introduced the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2005 to improve the quality of lives of Nigerians, create social safety nets for the weak, and meet the needs of people displaced by the reform process. Education is considered as essential in meeting the goals identified by NEEDS. According to the National Planning Commission (2005, p. 35), the general policy direction of NEEDS in education is to:

- provide unhindered access to compulsory universal basic education to all citizens as a bridge to the future socioeconomic transformation of Nigerian society.
- establish and maintain enhanced quality and standards through relevant, competency-based curricula and effective quality control at all levels.
- enhance the efficiency, resourcefulness, and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through training, capacity building, and motivation.
- strengthen Nigeria's technological and scientific base by revamping technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial education and making optimal use of information and communication technologies to meet the economy's manpower needs.
- provide enabling environment and stimulate the active participation of the private sector, civil society organizations, communities, and development partners in educational development.

NEEDS identifies six goals for education. They include:

1. Ensure and sustain unhindered access to education for the all-round development of the individual.
2. Enhance the quality of education at all levels.
3. Use education as a device for improving the quality of life through skill acquisition and job creation for poverty reduction.
4. Ensure periodic review and effective implementation of the curriculum at the secondary school level to meet the requirements of higher education and the world of work.
5. Mobilise and develop partnerships with the private sector and local communities to support and fund education.
6. Promote information and communication technology capabilities at all levels (National Planning Commission, 2005: pp.35-36).

NEEDS also recognises the critical importance of tertiary education in producing high-quality human resources and therefore advocates the need for basic reforms of higher education. Parts of the strategies for reform are: diversification of funding by attracting private sector participation and appropriate pricing of facilities and services; updating and restructuring of curricula to meet the needs of the national economy; establishment of

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effective monitoring of public and private universities to ensure firm adherence to standards; and developing innovative approaches to ensure continuing retooling and capacity building of academic staff so that they operate at the cutting edge of their disciplines at all levels (National Planning Commission, 2005: pp.37-38).

The federal government enacted Act No. 9 of 1993 which legalises the establishment of private higher education institutions (colleges of education, polytechnics and universities). At present, there are 34 universities, 10 polytechnics and 14 colleges of education that have been granted licences to operate as private institutions in Nigeria. These institutions contribute their quota to human capital development. The federal government also promulgated Act No. 7 of 1993. By virtue of the provision of this law, registered limited liability companies are made to pay 2% of their annual profits as Education Tax. The proceeds are shared in the ratio of 50:40:10 among higher, secondary and primary education institutions. The amount going to tertiary education is distributed in the ratio of 2:1:1 respectively among public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. This is a way of ensuring private participation in the funding of publicly- owned educational institutions for them to perform the function of human capital development creditably. The federal government has also promulgated laws that give backing to the manpower training conducted by the professional bodies. In other words, such professional bodies in Accounting, Architecture, Banking and Finance, Dentistry, Engineering, Estate Management, Insurance, Law, Medical Laboratory Science & Technology, Medicine, Nursing, Quantity Surveying, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and so on, organise professional education for their members and supervise relevant undergraduate programmes in the universities and programmes run by polytechnics to regulate entry into the various professions. Institutions of higher education providing courses of instruction in those professional fields must open their doors to the professional bodies to scrutinize the programmes and determine whether or not they meet the required standards. The provisions of the Acts on the “supervision of instructions and of examinations leading to the approved qualifications” appear similar for most of the professional bodies. A cursory look at one of them will suffice here.

The *Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria Act No. 5 of 2007* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2007), which repealed the *Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria Act (Cap. C8) of 1990*, states that the Governing Council shall keep itself informed of the nature of:

- (a) the instruction given at approved institutions to persons attending approved course of training; and
- (b) the examination as a result of which approved qualifications are granted and for the purposes of performing that duty, the Council may appoint, either from among its members or otherwise persons to visit approved institutions or observe such examinations.

Section 12(2) provides that the persons appointed under Section 12(1) shall report to the Council on:

- (a) the adequacy of the instructions given to persons attending approved course of training at institutions visited by him;
- (b) the adequacy of the examinations attended by him; and
- (c) any other matter relating to the institutions or examinations on which the Council may, either generally or in particular case, request him to report, but no such person shall interfere with the giving of instruction or the holding of any examination.

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The *Medical and Dental Practitioners Act No. 23 of 1988* has similar provisions in Section 10, subsections 1 and 2. However, the *Legal Practitioners Act of 1962 as amended up to date* is the only exception. The Council of Legal Education only accredits Faculties of Law for the purpose of recognising them as competent to send their graduates to the Law School for the mandatory one-year training programme.

The federal government is responsible for international cooperation in education. It cooperates with development partners such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank and other bilateral organizations to promote human capital development through investments in education, health services and manpower training. For example, the World Bank, since 1992, has provided loans for basic education. UNESCO gave technical support to the Education Sector Analysis in 2000-2003 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2003). UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and other development partners sponsored the 2000 pan-African Summit on Roll-Back Malaria held in Nigeria. Between 1999 and 2000, over 40 million children aged below 5 years were immunized against polio in successive National Immunization Days under the initiative of UNICEF. In 2001, UNICEF and other programme partners assisted the Federal Government of Nigeria to implement a child-friendly schools initiative which was designed to create model learning facilities in selected areas of need for broader subsequent replication (Federal Government of Nigeria/UNICEF). Some Nigerians, especially from the Federal Ministry of Education, have benefited from the training programmes of the International Institute for Educational Planning, an arm of UNESCO. The federal government also provides counterpart funds for some of the projects executed by these international organisations.

Challenges

In spite of the efforts of the federal government to promote human capital development, some challenges have to be overcome. These include inadequate funding of programmes, poor quality of products of educational institutions, brain drain, corruption, and poor curriculum implementation. These problems are discussed below.

Inadequate funding of human capital development programmes is a major problem in Nigeria. For instance, in spite of the recommendation of UNESCO that developing countries such as Nigeria should set aside 26% of their annual budgets for education, Nigeria allocates a low percentage of its annual budget to education. The federal government allocated 10.81%, 11.53%, 9.61%, 11.13%, 8.70%, 7.00%, 7.90%, 4.70%, 4.54%, 5.30% and 8.19% of its annual budgets to education in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007 respectively (Alani 2004; Punch Newspaper of March 1, 2005; May 2, 2006 and February 13, 2007). With this scenario, there is the perennial complaint about insufficiency of funds to procure material and human resources and to construct physical facilities in educational institutions.

Unfortunately, some of the funds allocated to programme execution in the public sector are mismanaged. For example, the Punch Newspaper of October 31, 2006 claimed that several reports indicated that corruption is the bane of educational development in Nigeria. Particular mention was made of the 2004 report on the Millennium Development Goals which stated that resource mismanagement through inflation of contracts and general official corruption characterised the implementation of Universal Basic Education programme. The problem of mismanagement of resources is so endemic in Nigeria to the extent that the civilian Administration that came into office in 1999 had to make eradication

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of corruption a cardinal objective. That Government established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). It also introduced the due process in the award of contracts in the public sector. Yet, cases of graft in government ministries and agencies still dominate the pages of Nigeria newspapers. That is why programmes (including human capital development) are poorly executed and government does not get value for money.

With the problems of inadequate funding and corruption, the quality of products of educational institutions remains suspect because of dearth of resources to conduct the teaching-learning process. Education Sector Analysis (2004) reports the results of a survey carried out on the perception of the quality of graduates by professional bodies. Only 25% of the respondents rated university graduates to be of good quality, 25% rated their quality to be fair, while another 25% opined that they were of poor quality. On the quality of polytechnic graduates, 25%, 50% and 25% of the respondents rated them to be of good quality, fair quality and poor quality respectively.

Brain drain is another hindrance to human capital development in Nigeria. This is a situation where highly-skilled professionals leave the public sector – public universities, teaching hospitals, etc – for greener pastures in the private sector and outside the country. This reduced the number of academic staff available in the universities and colleges of medicine required to train university students. The situation was so critical during the military era and that prompted the federal military government to set up a Presidential Committee on Brain Drain in 1989 to recommend strategies for combating the problem. The Committee suggested short-, medium- and long-term measures to solve the problem. In the short-term, the Committee recommended that government should provide the facilities and equipment required in the universities and teaching hospitals, ensure adequate funding of universities, enhance the salaries and allowances of university personnel, among others. The medium-term measures suggested are that government should ensure security of lives and property, guarantee security of tenure, encourage the use of Nigerian professionals in the execution of national development projects, recognise those professionals that have distinguished themselves in their fields and so on. In the long-term, it was proposed that government should work toward improving the state of the Nigerian economy, encourage the production of basic scientific and hospital equipment locally, and embark on the re-orientation of Nigerians on the need to demonstrate patriotism so that the common good of the society rather than selfish interests of individuals will be uppermost in their minds. The civilian Administration that took office in 1999 improved the conditions of service in the universities and other arms of the public service. This action reduced the problem of brain drain. However, with the problem of unemployment and other social vices (insecurity of lives and property, etc), highly-skilled people still continue to leave the country. Their services are therefore lost by the country and the resources invested in their education amount to a waste.

Poor curriculum implementation is a problem in the Nigerian education system, which is a major producer of human capital. With dearth of teachers, equipment, workshops and other vital resources required for teaching and learning, most vocational and technical subjects in the curriculum of secondary schools cannot be taught in a large number of public schools. Teaching of science subjects is also adversely affected by inadequate resources. Public higher education institutions are not exempted from this general decay. Education Sector Analysis (2003, 2004) confirms this state of affairs in the Nigerian education system. The situation has not changed amply from what it was in 2003 and 2004. That is why the capability of human resources to serve as real agents of national development is seriously impaired in the country.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In view of the constraints to human capital development mentioned above, the following recommendations become pertinent:

1. Education and health care delivery system have to be given the priority they deserve through increased budgetary provisions by the federal government. Increased parents'/students' participation in education (especially higher education) financing is needed in view of the high returns accruing to individuals' investments in education.
2. The EFCC and ICPC have to be more alert to their responsibility of eliminating corruption in the country. They need to beam their search lights on all government agencies including institutions of learning to eradicate the vice so that resources meant for human capital development projects are judiciously applied.
3. The agencies responsible for quality control in education (for example, Inspectorate Services, National Universities Commission, etc) should ensure minimum standards in all educational institutions, from the primary to the higher education level. This will ensure that needed resources are provided by the proprietors of such institutions to promote quality of instruction. Quality should be maintained in other agencies engaged in human capital development too.
4. More efforts are required on the part of the federal government to stem the problem of brain drain. There is the need for greater security of lives and property in the country. Basic social services have to be guaranteed and the conditions of service for workers in the public sector need further improvements.
5. Government needs to demonstrate sufficient political will in the implementation of the curricula of educational institutions at all levels through the provision of needed resources. This will ensure that the education system remains relevant to the world of work and skills required for job creation are inculcated in the beneficiaries of education. School curricula should always reflect the changes in the society for them to remain relevant to societal needs.

In conclusion, this paper has highlighted the role of the federal government in human capital development through the provision of formal education, health facilities and services, on-the-job training programmes, adult education and support for migration. In spite of the efforts made, some constraints that might affect the efficacy of the human capital development process mentioned in this paper have to be addressed. Government also has to pay attention to human resources utilization in the country so that the investments made in human beings would not be a waste. This is necessary because of the economic costs of the prevailing unemployment problem among school leavers and the brain drain syndrome common among highly skilled professionals in the country.

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