

THE PLACE OF POVERTY ON EXAMINATION STANDARDS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper wishes to look at the place of poverty on examination standards in Nigeria and as well proffer a way out in improving the standards of education. Also the paper wish to identify the place of poverty and ethnicity on our examination standards and the results of the examination, example, poverty we know destroys the reliability of an examination as a predicator of competence, ability and excellence. The research is a survey type of research. The research finding indicates that poverty can destroy the standards of our examination because the poor standards of examination make our certificates unacceptable and unreliable. Education stakeholders need to appreciate the high standards of examination it is only in this manner that all certificate issued in Nigeria could be authentic, reliable and accepted.

INTRODUCTION

Nigerians have witness various educational reforms brought about to enhance the country's educational objectives. Let us look at the aims of education in Nigeria.

1. The acquisition development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and the society.

2. The development of the intellectual capacities of individual to understand and appreciate their environment.
3. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills that will enable individual to develop into useful members of the community.
4. The acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environment (FRN 1998:22)

These goals can only be achieved effectively through research, dissemination of existing and new information. On of the reforms i.e. 6-3-3-4 system is well structured to accommodate the educational taxonomy objective that allows the evaluation of students in examination at the end of every programme. The results of examination are being used for judgment, promotion, placement and admission into higher schools of learning, test and examination have remained an integral and necessary part of teaching and learning which no teacher can neglect in the course of discharging his/her duties. Tests or examination are the common instrument used in education. The term examination in the assessment of person's performance when confronted with series of questions, problems, or tasks, designed to measure the individual's skills intelligence achievement aptitude, ability, knowledge etc. (Encyclopedia Puritanical 1972, Okpala

et al 2003) states that standard of examination should be devoid of all sorts of cheatings and there must be proper supervision. Examination malpractices have become one pernicious malady afflicting our educational system from primary, secondary to tertiary institution in Nigeria.

Examination malpractice is an act intended to benefit or give advantage to oneself by fraud before, during and after an examination, thereby reducing the standard of the examination Alabi (2010) states that the gross social indiscipline which is rampant in schools in Nigeria in the morbid craze of get rich overnight and the excessive emphasis on paper qualification thereby reducing the standard of the examination. In his argument he stated that education is the greatest power man has developed either for his continued progress or eventual destruction. Also he further stated that examination standard should be maintained highly so that there will be a contrive programme in economic, political, social and other sector of the nation. Nnamani (2005) observed in his paper that examination is an instrument of testing, assessment, evaluation and accreditation. It is used for the purpose of selection, placement, certification and promotion. Examination is a potent instrument for judgment of knowledge or competence. For any examination to be credible, it must possess these elements, which are validity and reliability. These key elements can only be present if the examination is free and fair devoid of partiality, cheating and all sorts of malpractices.

Examination malpractices have reduced the standard of examination in Nigeria. It has made examination results unacceptable and unreliable for assessing competence and ability. Nnamani (2005) stated that almost all examinations either internal or external, aptitude test for employment and virtually at every level is now riddled with brazen acts of irregularities, and malpractice. The most

disturbing aspects is the involvement of key officials that are supposed to fight the scourge taking active part in perpetrating these acts example principals, teachers, examination officers, supervisors invigilators, law enforcement agencies, parents and even the whole community involved in these acts.

According to Imandojemu (2001) cheating in examination has become fashionable, uncreative and well researched by those who gain and live by it. In these times of snapping austerity and economic down turn anything goes for the average Nigerians to make ends meet. Imandojemu (2001) went further to state the investigation over the years and studies by the major examining bodies in Nigeria example WAEC, JAMB, NECO, and NABTEB have revealed that various malpractices in public examination in Nigeria have their sources from one or combination of the following:

1. The examiners who set and mark the papers.
2. Officers of the examining body who process question papers during printing arrangement transportation of paper.
3. Custodians of the question paper.
4. Invigilators and supervisors of the examination at their various centers.
5. Principals of schools, teachers, government agencies, law enforcement agencies, desperate students call the (smart guys) and the society at large.

Due to the short coming that is associated with the conduct of examination this research therefore examine how levels of poverty and ethnicity have affected the standards of examination and as well extent to which school administration, teacher and community have influenced examination standard. The research is trying to proffer a remedy and the implications involved in poor examination standard in Nigeria and thereby making some

recommendations towards this national problem, and make necessary examinations.

The poverty situation in Nigeria is a paradox i.e. poverty in the midst of plenty. The human conditions have generally deteriorated thereby resulting from large-scale poverty neat disposable income which has dwindled, while malnutrition rates are in the increase Anyanwu (1997).

Ashalu (1998) in his own bids stated that seventy percent of Nigeria is living below average. The poverty level depends solely on the decrease. The nation is experiencing one lowest per-capital income in the world. Many of our workers cannot afford to eat three solid meals, shelter and even transportation due to the ridiculous salaries they take home. Looking at other countries which Nigerians belong to the same organization like Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) their average per capital income is about 2,000 dollars compared to Nigeria 200 dollars per capital income. It is disturbing by the rating of the United Nation, Nigeria is rated as the twentieth (20th) poorest nation in the world Anyanwu (1997) incidence, depth and severity are measure of poverty in an area. Incidence shows the level of occurrence depth shows the gap while severity shows the impact of poverty in such areas. Generally, the higher these measures

in an area, it shows that the level and both local and international development analysts of the situation in Nigeria. Impacts of poverty in such areas are high. Looking at Table 2 in 1985, 1986 Niger State was adjudged the worst area heated by poverty.

The Table attests to the fact that a good number of Nigerians are living in poverty. These levels of poverty cuts across all facets of life, from the government that is supposed to execute the educational objectives and the custodians of examination materials turning into examinational malpractices.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) are there fighting out for government to equip learning, but government turning deaf ear to it instead concentrating on politicians. These situation has made our various institution into what they are today where teachers, lecturers are charging students to give them better grades in their various examination, example are the WAEC/NECO/NABTEB examination if one goes to these centers in the name of no enough infrastructure to conduct examination, those things that are happening are beyond human imagination and this is as a result of poverty level in the nation that are supposed to be custodians of the examination, but rather use the opportunity to make cool money, undermining what standard the examination stand for.

TABLE 1

AGRO-CLIMATE	TOTAL POPULATION	POOR	EXTREMELY POOR	TOTAL POPULATION THAT ARE POOR
North	16 m	46%	47%	45%
Middle Belt	36m	22%	22%	31%
South	45m	31%	31%	24%
Total	100m	100	100	

SOURCE: AJIOLAH (1999)

Table 2 showing the percentage of poverty in some selected States in Nigeria 1985-1986

States	Incidence	Depth	Severity	Incidence	Depth	Severity
Lagos	24.0	7.0	3.2	27.9	0.9	0.3
Anambra	30.9	10.4	4.51	6.3	5.9	3.1
Borno	42.1	16.8	87.0	41.3	13.5	10.8
Niger	56.6	28.5	18.2	44.4	20.0	12.2
Kwara	41.3	13.0	5.4	31.4	13.6	8.2

Source: Ejiobih (1999)

There are visible situations where results of aptitude tests for employment are influenced because some set of ethnic group are the Chairman of such establishment. Examinations for promotion are at times twisted to include the head of department candidates who are from their ethnic groups. There are instances where examination are being conducted and the Chairman of government council insisted that some candidates must be employed not minding their performance in the interview test. It is even a common thing to receive letters from above, stating "please, interview and employ, the bearer is my brother". At last what do you expect from such candidate who has a low mark to productivity, it is going to be low productivity.

THE ROLE OF TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATORS

The teachers and administration in the standards of examination could be due to the way teacher lobby for positions in government to be made principal of schools, an incident occurred in Edo State where teachers pay up to one hundred thousand Naira to be made principal and later tag their schools as magic schools where students sits for examinations once and make their students who as bend in money from innocent student who as bend in making their five credit at all cost. These principal call these money "cooperation fees" he will go round and observed that they are perfectly done. Can you imagine a school where the principal reminded the students

principal wants his students to fail the final external examination like WAEC/NECO/NABTEB. As a result of illegal fee collected from these innocent candidates in the guise that it will be used for logistics. In reality, it is used for bribing the invigilators to look not to disturb them while they are perpetrating their evil acts. It is shocking that the policemen are always around to ensure peace and orderliness among those struggling to cheat if not for poverty, what else could have forced a principal who is supposed to be the custodian of examination to ask students to pay "cooperation fees" so that they can have free access to their books or materials relevant to the said examination.

The supervisors are not left behind as they also pose threat to examination standards. At times some of these supervisors pretend to display a stone face so that students will pay them attention while some equate the season of examination as harvest season. In some cases the school influences the supervisors so that their social performance can be rated high. Some examination officers and chief inspectors of education in the Ministry demand gratification from the supervisors these shows that the officer that are supposed to clean the area are circumventing the process as well.

The implication of examination malpractice:
- Poverty and ethnicity brought poor standard of examination which destroys the confidence and reliability of

- examination as a predicator of competence, ability and excellence deprives the system the ability to determine what a learner knows.
- Poor standard of examination brought by poverty and ethnicity distorts the moral psyche of the perpetrators by giving them the wrong sense of achievements and capabilities.
- It determines the foundation of scholarship and excellence and the certification of academic competence are in question or shamble.
- It also reduces the production capacity of the economy when the right things are not done at the right time.
- Poor standards of examination ranks as one of the most dangerous problems of the society, makes the whole system nonsense of educational system by undermining the various purposes of education.

The poor standard of examination has reached a height that the issues of the conduct of examination in Nigeria today to the extent that government and the general

public and greatly concerned about in which employer of labour tend to lose confidence in the certificate issued by National Examination Board.

Ike (1996) citing from the work of Gamaliel Benly observed that "the first and worst of all frauds is to cheat yourself" you cheat yourself because the effects of our actions may be postponed but remember that they will not get lost. Oyedokun (2009) also states that the progresses to higher education undetected but finally end up with a false certificate, which they might not be able to defend. Another implication bothers on the credibility of the certificates within and outside the country, even currently; the post JAMB examination are conducted for those that are seeking for admission into Nigeria Universities as to reach their excesses while in secondary schools.

Action taken to standardize examination

1. The government promulgated Decree No. 22 of 1984 and the Miscellaneous Offences Decree No. 20 of 1990 which stipules jail form for any offender in examination misconduct.
2. Examination ethnic project founded in 1996 to probe the ethnics, integrity and credibility of examination.
3. Prosecution of any examination malpractices cut.
4. Dismissal of any examination board staff involved in any way of examination malpractices.
5. De-recognition of any school or centre involved in examination malpractices.
6. Cancellation of results of students involved in the acts of examination malpractices.
7. Demotion of any teacher, supervisor, and invigilator known to be involved in compromising the standard of examination in all nationally conducted examination.
8. The formation of examination ethnic's society in both local, State and national levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The research has expatiated how poverty and examination malpractices in Nigeria has dealt with its citizen since the education system is failing in its role of generating good manpower for economic and national development of Nigeria. Education that is known as an instrument of change must rise above the moral decadence of the society Shonekan (1996). It has also been observed that poverty have an adverse effect on our examination standards. Therefore all stakeholders' government, principals of schools, parents, students and teachers has to have a change of attitude. All hands must be on deck to fight out the national malaise that is eating deep into our educational and developmental systems so as to sustain credibility and reliability of our certificate all over the world.

These research therefore recommend that all

- Schools be well equipped and well funded for better improvement.
- The Educational Trust Fund (ETF) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should come together to improve the facilities in the schools.
- Adequate teaching and learning workshop and seminar be organized to augment teachers and administrator of innovations in the educational system.
- Instructors should be involved in the constitution and implementation of curriculum i.e. (Teachers).
- Teachers welfare should be one of the paramount problems that needs urgent attention to boost their moral in the work.
- Government should make sure libraries are provided for both learners and teachers as poverty afford to buy textbooks that will assist them.

Students should be guided towards assuming positive self worth, and taught that they do not have the same calling or vocational skills that each should have a sense of personal achievement and explore other changes of self-actualization if they fail to

achieve in an initial endeavor. Students should be made to realize the evil of cheating in order to possess a certificate that they cannot defend Uddin and Idialu (2005).

Emphasis should be laid on productivity, efficiency and effectiveness than ethicist. Also less emphasis performs the assignment.

Poverty alleviation programme initiated should be pursued to the letter, as it will reduce the principals and teachers involvement in destroying the standards of examination.

All supervisors and invigilators must attend workshops and seminars on the evils of examination malpractices and its effects on the standard of education.

The decree on examination malpractices should be looked upon and

make it work as promulgated and any offender be punished either a student, supervisor, invigilator, law enforcement agent etc so that it will serve as deterrents to others that are perpetrators of examination malpractices in Nigeria.

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