Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): The Nigeria Perspective

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Abstract
This paper is aimed at addressing the problems of underdevelopment in Nigeria, harnessing education as a tool. Specifically, this paper employs expository method to x-ray how education can be utilized to bring about sustainable development. In this paper, the researchers first made attempts to discuss the three elements of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The second part of this paper dwell's on the pedagogical approach to ESD, value, peace and human rights education as means to driving sustainable development. The later part of this paper considers the roles of Education in Sustainable Development (ESD), a major tool for both developed and developing countries. Conclusions are drawn from this paper where it shows that there exists high positive relationship between education and sustainable development. This paper through recommendations encourage the promotion of all forms of education ranging from casual, non-formal, informal and formal education if knowledge, attitudes and skills that will bring about wealth creation, poverty eradication and human development among others must be acquired. The paper also, encourages the promotion of peace, value and human rights education so as to reorient people on the need for peaceful co-existence.
Key words: Sustainability, Education for Sustainability, Value Education, peace education and human rights education.

Education for Sustainable Development

Introduction

Right from time immemorial, scholars have demonstrated high concern about the positive correlation between education and development. The likes of political philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, affirmed the dictums enunciated in the phrases, "as is the state, so is the school' 'what you want in the state, you must put into the school'" (Akinsanya, 2004). It is observed that education is the only mechanism to sustainably develop any group, people or society and therefore arguing this opinion will be a job in futility. Education, as already pointed out, is the process of imparting and acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, value and experiences in institutions of learning. The skills so acquired are in turn applied to sustain both the present and future generation in their everyday life. It is the proper nurturing, transmission and application of such skills and knowledge that guarantees development and sustenance of the society (Abiodun, 2002).

In December 2002, the UN general assembly adopted resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations decade of education for sustainable development, spanning the years 2005 to 2014, with the United Nations educational scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency for the decade (Ilechukwu, Sims & Pearsons, 2014).

The overall goal of the Decade for sustainable Development as reported by Ilechukwu et al (2014) is the integration of the principles, value and practice of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning social, informal, non-formal and formal. The decade's four key objectives according to authors are:

i.   Facilitating networking and collaborating among stakeholders in education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
ii.   Fostering greater quality of teaching and learning in ESD
iii.   Supporting countries in achieving their sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education for sustainable development.
iv.   Provide countries with new opportunities and tools to incorporate ESD in education reforms efforts.

The political Development adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 2002) as quoted by Ilechukwu et al (2014 P.3) states that sustainable development is built on three "'interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of economic growth, social/human development and environmental protection and sustainability. ESD is therefore an approach to teaching and learning based on the ideals and principles that underlie

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sustainability. The role of education for sustainable development is to help people develop the right attitudes, values, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and for the future, and to act upon tow decisions.

Definition of the Concept
According to UNESCO, "Education for Sustainable Development empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity."
The concept of sustainable development emerged as a response to a growing concern about human society's impact on the natural environment. The concept of sustainable development was defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission) as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This definition acknowledges that while development may be necessary to meet human needs and improve the quality of life, it must happen without depleting the capacity of the natural environment to meet present and future needs. The sustainable development movement has grown and campaigned on the basis that sustainability protects both the interests of future generations and the earth's capacity to regenerate. At first it emphasized the environment in development policies but, since 2002, has evolved to encompass social justice and the fight against poverty as key principles of sustainable development.

Three Elements of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
1. **Learning Outcomes:** ESD is targeted at teaching children the many ways of making timely and informed decisions as well as taking responsible actions. Instead of working under someone else directives, students should be encouraged and taught to be leaders. ESD wants students to think and act for themselves. Students taught with these qualities grow up to be change makers. They bring positive change through innovation, creative ideas and bold leadership. They should have the courage to take risks that reap huge rewards. In a world where everyone is concerned with their own selfish desires, there is a need for young aspiring students who think systematically, look into alternative futures and have critical thinking about sustainability of the society.
2. **Learning Content:** The subjects taught in schools should give students knowledge as well as ideas on how to build a sustainable society. Subjects like economics teach students about the scarcity of resources, subjects like biology teaches about the depleting of natural resources and subjects like sociology

studies the effect of all these factors in a society. The curriculum of the school should inter-relate various subjects that gives students ideas about solving the problems of scarcity of resources, poverty, unemployment etc.

3. **Pedagogy:** The manner in which subjects are taught to students has a huge impact on their behavior, mentality and ideas. If a student is made to sit through boring lectures, he will be very lazy and dull. However, if the teacher encourages debates, discussions, it allows students to speak out their mind, developing confidence required to be a change maker. Subjects should be practical based, where students are given a problem and made to solve the problem using their knowledge. Group Discussion, Group Seminars and Field Work will allow students to experience the real problems related to sustainability.

Pedagogical Approaches (Teaching Methods) in ESD

There is no 'correct' pedagogy for sustainability education, but there is a broad consensus that it requires a shift towards active, participative, and experiential learning methods that engage the learner and make a real difference to their understanding, thinking and ability to act (Abiodun, 2002).

1**. Critical reflection** – including the more traditional lecture, but also newer approaches such as reflexive accounts, learning journals, and discussion groups.

2. **Systemic thinking and analysis** – the use of real-world case studies and critical incidents, project-based learning, stimulus activities, and the use of the campus as a learning resource.

3. **Participatory learning –** with emphasis on group or peer learning, developing dialogue, experiential learning, action research/learning to act, and developing case studies with local community groups and business.

4. **Thinking creatively for future scenarios** – by using role play, real-world inquiry, futures visioning, problem-based learning, and providing space for emergence.

5. **Collaborative learning** – including contributions from guest speakers, work-based learning, interdisciplinary/ multidisciplinary working, and collaborative learning and co-inquiry.

Ways to Promote Sustainable Education

Value Education

Values signify the quality of an individual or things which make that individual or thing important, respectable and useful. But from philosophical or educational point of view, values signify neither a thing nor an individual, but a thought or a point of view. As such, anything which is useful to an individual

becomes valuable to him. From this point of view, values refer to objects that we cherish or desire and consider them worthy of acquisition.

According to UNESCO "Value-education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of the positive values in the society."

Aims and Objectives:
1. To develop total personality.
2. To make the child aware of the right values, to feel the proper emotions and to internalize values in words and deeds.
3. To develop in children moral, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values.
4. To enable the students to understand and appreciate the values of democracy, secularism, equality & scientific attitude.
5. To develop in child, the habits like truthfulness, tidiness, punctuality, honesty etc.
6. To develop character and morality in children.
7. To encourage the students to become progressive and responsible citizens in their personal and social life.
8. To make them liberal in thought and practice.
9. To enable them to rise above prejudices based on religion, language, caste and sex.
10. To develop right attitude towards self, society, religions etc.

In consideration of the above objectives, it is expected that teachers of all kind should live up to their responsibilities by imparting the right values in children at all levels of education to ensure that sustainable development remain not just in theory by in practice.

Peace Education

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Peace education is a planning strategy of eliminating the conflicts and violence caused by injustice, inequality and human rights violations, and implementing the ways and means of reducing the same through appropriate teaching and learning tactics by means of producing responsible global citizen to attain and spread the peace in the world. Therefore, peace education is a goal of education.

Aims and Objectives
1. To develop sense of universal values in every individual.

2. To prepare citizens to cope with difficult and uncertain situations and fitting them for personal autonomy and responsibility.

3. To educate the individual and develop the ability to recognize and accept the values which exist in the diversity of individuals.

4. To strengthen peace and friendship between individuals and people.

5. To develop the ability of non-violent conflict – resolution among the individuals.

6. To cultivate the ability to make informed choices, basing their judgments and actions not only on the analysis of present situations but the vision of a preferred future among the individuals

7. To teach the citizens to respect the cultural heritage, protect the environment and social harmony.

8. To cultivate citizens in the line of solidarity feeling and feeling of equity at the national and international levels in the perspectives of a balanced and long-term development

Human Rights Education (HRE)

There is a mutual relationship between the enjoyment of human rights and national development. Hence, it is recognized that a civilized society cannot be conceived of without ensuring human rights to all. These rights are fundamental for the existence of human beings.

Human rights are commonly understood as being those rights which are inherent to the human being. The concept of human right acknowledges that every single human being is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Human Rights Education (HRE) is learning that develops the KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, and VALUES of human rights with the broad goal of building a universal human rights culture.

In other words, students should be aware of the issues, concerned by the issues, and capable of standing up for human rights. Human rights education will move students from understanding human rights concepts to examining their experiences from a human rights perspective and incorporating these concepts into their personal values and decision-making processes.

Aims and Objectives
   a. Enhance the knowledge and understanding of human rights.
   b. Foster attitudes of tolerance, respect, solidarity, and responsibility.
   c. Develop awareness of how human rights can be translated into social and political reality.
   d. Develop skills for protecting human rights.

e. Encourage students to fight for the human rights of the poor, destitute and marginalized communities in the society.

Chapter 36 of agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, identifies four major thrust of education for sustainable development (Ilechukwu et al, 2014) they include

i. Promoting and improvement of basic education.
ii. Reorienting existing education at all levels to address sustainable development.
iii. Develop public understanding and Awareness of sustainability
iv. Training.

Promoting and improvement of basic education recognized that sustainable development requires changes in attitudes and values towards sustainability and development and that basic education has central role to play in achieving those changes. In order to achieve this, progress must be made toward universal basic/primary education in the areas of infrastructure, quality of education, completion rates and teaching capacity. The necessity of basic education is to transform and improve the conditions of both the learner and the community towards sustainable development (Association of African Universities, 2009).

Reorienting existing education at all levels involves educational reforms of principle, skills, perspectives and values that are qualitative, quantitative, appropriate and relevant to the socio-cultural and school curricula (Ilechukwu et al 2014). There are three areas of educational processes relevant to these reforms. These are the contents of what is being taught, the method and the education and professional development of those who are responsible for implementing education for sustainable development.

In public understanding and awareness of sustainability, ESD requires a population that is aware of the goals of sustainable society (Ilechukwu et al 2014). For sustainable development to be attained there must be conscious efforts towards friendly environmental practices which must be practiced in tandem with improved health and sanitation training which is the fourth principle and presupposes that the society needs a literate and environmentally aware citizenry and workforce to help guide nations in the implementation of sustainable development goals. All sections of the society (both in the formal and informal sectors) are encouraged to train their leaders and workers in environmental management." Training is distinct from education as it is often specific to particular job or class of jobs (Ilechaukwu et al 2014).

Therefore, the role of education in sustainable development can be summarized as follows:

1. Education is here regarded as an instrument of social change which could transform the society in significant ways. Education is paramount when trying to enable a change in values and attitudes towards sustainability. The report of UN's World Commission on Environment and Development. (WCED) (1987) recognized that "sustainable development requires changes in values and attitudes towards environment and development" and that education plays a central role in achieving those changes in values and attitudes (Sims & Falkenberg, 2013). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is one of the most important tools for raising awareness about the environmental issues within a sustainable development context.

2. Education for sustainable Development grows from a variety' of sources and it is delivered through casual, informal, non-formal and formal strategies. Topics of sustainable development usually addressed here include but not limited to, conflict resolution, human rights, ethics, gender equity, poverty alleviation, peace, human security, citizenship, democracy and governance, energy, health, water, rural and urban development, corporate social responsibility, social and environmental effects of globalization, production and consumption patterns, cultural diversity, biological diversity, ecological principles and eco-systems, natural resources, management, climate change and disaster prevention (Bedawy, 2014).

3. Contemporary sustainable development education is therefore expected to be focused on the above issues and must be oriented on future development, ensuring proper quality of present and future life. In addition, sustainable development concepts/issues" should be taught formally and informally so much such so that they form part of the core of the people's lives in ways that the people develop skills necessary for sustainable development. Educational providers are also encouraged to provide sustainable training to professionals and practitioners and should encourage research on sustainable development issues.

4. Education for sustainable development involves learning how to make decisions that considers the long term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities. UNESCO argues that education has a special responsibility to generate the knowledge needed as well as communicate this knowledge to decision makers and the public at large. (UNESCO, 2001, 2003). As a result, the body calls on all relevant stakeholders to review the programmes and curricula of schools and universities, in order

to better address the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. Therefore contemporary sustainable development education is expected to orient on future development, ensuring proper quality of present and future life.

5. Education empowers people for their roles in society. Therefore, formal, non formal and informal education is key actors in education for sustainable development. Formal Education cannot implement education for sustainable development alone. Because education for sustainable development is a life-long process, the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors should work together to accomplish education for sustainable development goals and objectives (Ilechukwu et al 2014), It is important just as the adult for young people to be educated for sustainable development because they are our future. Doing this will provide them with the opportunity to begin to value the world's cultural diversity and appreciate the issues facing our world and of the impact they have on those issues (Davidson, 2003).

6) Education for sustainable development functions to educate, train and undertake research to contribute to the sustainable development of the society. For example, the training of people in monitoring of targets and detection of sustainable concerns and graduates with skills, knowledge and attitudes to make sustainability contribution (Hbutior Pearson, Honeywood, & O'Toole 2005, Bedawy, 2014)

7) In addition, education should provide learners with skills, perspectives, values and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities. Education also produces leaders of the country who manage the affairs of government and private sector industries who constitute the stake holders of sustainable development. By so doing, the educational **WMW**: creates a "vanguard group" of leaders in each sector of society who will take primary and leading roles in promoting the values for sustainable development (Bedawy, 2014).

(8) To enhance learning about sustainable development, different teaching approaches should be adopted throughout all levels of the educational strata. Methods that will help disseminate information quickly and easily to learners should be applied and should be combined with other methods for effectiveness. Doing so will facilitate learners, involvement, communication skills and critical thinking about sustainable development issues.

(9)   Educational institutions play a leading role in building more sustainable societies and creating new paradigms as they have the mission to promote development through both teaching and research. But it should be noted that sustainable development can be practiced only through a teacher who himself has been trained on values and perspectives of sustainable development. Therefore, teacher education is seen as an important actor or agent of change in promoting the social, economic and environmental values of sustainable development and the society (Johnson. 2007).

Summary

This paper has looked at education for sustainable development in Nigeria and other developing countries. The paper can be summarized as follows:

1. Development paradigm has shifted from economic growth to human development and now, sustainable development.
2. Education is the basis for sustainable development and as an important end in itself. Education remains the surest way to sustainable development in any society.
3. A high positive correlation exists between education and sustainable development.
4. Nigeria's educational system has many outlets that include causal, informal, non-formal and formal education.
5. Causal, informal, non-formal and formal educations sectors are all involved in education for sustainable development (ESD). One sector cannot implement ESD alone.
6. Nigeria's development cannot be divorced from her educational institutions and structures that have been put in place.

Conclusion

Conclusively, education for sustainable development is the process of achieving sustainable development be it economic growth, human development or environmental protection and conservation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:
1. Contemporary sustainable development education should focused on a variety of issues such as health, human rights, conflict resolution, ethics, gender, poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability to mention but a few.
2. Sustainable development issues/concepts should be taught formally and informal in ways that they become the core of people's lives.

3. People-students, community members, professionals and practitioners should be encouraged to develop skills necessary for sustainable development.
4. The reorientation of existing education at all levels to include principles, skills perspectives and values of sustainable development.
5. The education and professional development of those who are responsible for implementing sustainable development.
6. Promotion of formal, non formal, informal and causal education for knowledge, attitudes and skills for poverty alleviation and human development by optimal investment in quality education in line with UNESCO's minimum standards of 26% annual budgetary allocation.

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