

## Functional Secondary Education in Nigeria as Panacea for Effective Poverty Alleviation

---

**Theresa Orakwe**

*Department of Educational Psychology,  
Niger State College of Education, Minna*

---

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijdshmss.v13.i1.06

### Abstract

Education is one of the crucial components of human development and change for sustainable development. It is through education that the individual is able to become productive citizen and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to an ever changing political, social, and economic environment. One of the developmental problems in Nigeria is the increasing rate of poverty in the country, despite various policies and strategies of government and other stakeholders in alleviating poverty problems the rate continues to increase rapidly. The objective of this paper is to examine functional secondary education as a force that can reduce poverty, create job opportunities and raise income rates of any citizen therefore; the success of any nation in major development problem such as poverty alleviation, unemployment, inequality, among others can be traced on their effective functional secondary education. The paper discussed concept and issues in education, concept of functional education, poverty alleviating through functional education, infrastructural support for functional secondary education, financial support, and inspectoral support. The paper posits that effective and functional secondary education in Nigeria remains the most fundamental vehicle for the eradication of poverty. The paper therefore recommends among others a serious overhauling of the educational system and sector in the country to produce a total person with requisite skills, knowledge and value relevant to Nigeria society.

**Keywords:** *Functional Education, Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Development and Entrepreneurial Skill, Secondary Education*

*Corresponding Author:* Theresa Orakwe

### **Background to the Study**

Education is accepted as a process of transmitting the cultural heritage, stabilizing the present and improving or changing the future, all over the globe. As asserted by the National Policy on Education (2004), education is an instrument par excellence for effective national development. According to Abubakar (2009), education is a key to success and development of an individual, family, community and society at large. For any country to have a sustainable development, the government of that nation must invest on education of her people. Aggorwal (2008), also points to the fact that education is the direct means by which people seek to share its own destiny and transform it from what it knows itself to be into what it would hope to become. In the modern world today, living without education seems difficult because specific skills are often needed to work and education remains the only means to acquire such skills. Therefore, for any nation to utilize their environment properly, they have to invest on science and technology education. God has endowed every environment with huge and specific amount of resources which differs from locality to locality, state to state, country to country and continent to continent. The natural resources of the environment have to be properly utilized to better the lives of the people. Without a sound knowledge of how to convert those resources to improve the society, Nigeria cannot move ahead to face the challenges of the world. Science and technology education is one of the necessary keys to unlock the opportunities created by these natural resources. It is in the light of the above, the write up determine how to achieve functional secondary education, in order to create job opportunities, raise incomes and make secondary education more effective by placing high premium on technical, vocational, and citizenship education because it is the force that can reduce poverty and raise incomes.

### **Concept of Secondary Education**

Secondary education or post-primary education covers two phases on the international standard classification of education scale. Level 2 or lower secondary education (junior secondary education) is considered the second and final phase of basic education, and level 3 (upper) secondary education or senior secondary education is the stage before tertiary education. every country aims to provide basic education, but the systems and terminology remain unique to them. Secondary education typically takes place after six years of primary education and is followed by higher education, vocational education or employment. In most countries secondary education is compulsory, at least until the age of 16. Children typically enter the lower secondary phase around age 12. Compulsory education sometimes extends to age 19. Since 1989, education has been seen as a basic human right for a child; Article 28, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that primary education should be free and compulsory while different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, should be available and accessible to every child.

In classical and medieval times, secondary education was provided by the church for the sons of nobility and to boys preparing for universities and the priesthood. As trade required navigational and scientific skills, the church reluctantly expanded the curriculum and widened the intake. With the reformation the state wrestled the control of learning from the church, and with Comenius and John Locke education changed from being repetition of

Latin text to building up knowledge in the child. Education was for the few, up to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, secondary schools were organized to satisfy the needs of different social classes with the laboring classes getting 4 years, the merchant class 5 years, and the elite getting 7 years. The rights to a secondary education were codified after 1945, and some countries are moving to mandatory and free secondary education for all youth under 19 (Deighton, 2000).

Of all the levels of education in Nigeria, secondary education occupies a unique place. Its dual role gives it a prominent position in the system of education. First, secondary education consumes the products of the primary school system. Also, the various higher educational institutions depend on secondary education for their entrants. Thus, with its consumer and producer status, secondary education not only determines the fate, but also dictates the pace of education of the primary and tertiary levels. If Nigeria is to forge ahead economically, socially and politically, then secondary education must be taken out of its present morass, and it must be made more functional for the economic and social reconstruction in Nigeria (Adaralegbe, 2013).

### **Concepts of Functional Education**

Functional education is the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. Arogundade (2011) adds that functional education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers who will contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. The need for functional education started emerging in the mid-1980s. In the mid-80s, the Nigerian economy collapsed while youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof. There was large scale layoff of workers and retirement as a result of structural adjustment programmes and bad economic trends in the country. During this situation, functional education, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged. He further observed that tertiary education has not properly included the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new productive cultural environment that will promote pride in primitive works and self-discipline, encouraging people to actively and freely take decision affecting their general welfare, promoting new set of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges.

In many European countries, universities and technical colleges train students of science, economics and business management in skills that help to build more sustainable societies, (Arogundade, 2011) he further stated programmes such as peace education, human right education, environmental education, and youth entrepreneur schemes are carried out in many schools. Hence, such initiatives help students and teachers to gain an understanding of inter-linkages needed for sustainable development. The emphasis has been on education that will provide life and occupational skills that will enhance the potentials of individuals reinforcing self-sufficiency and improving quality of life.

Functional education is the education in which the ability to perform productive tasks is more emphasized than education that aim at producing ideological conformity. It is a kind of

education that emphasizes practice more than theory Coockey (2003). He went further to say that Nigerian education has not been functional because too much emphasis has been placed on theoretical and academic knowledge. There is undue emphasis on the possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. According to Minzer (2015), the education processes are geared primarily to prepare students for examination. Through this process of education, the students acquire knowledge and facts without understanding and without saleable skills, the result of this dysfunctional education is that schools turn out graduates without useful knowledge and skills and who becomes alienated from their own environment. Functional education is a leveler of opportunities. The case in Nigeria where majority of graduates of the educational institutions search for white-collar jobs that are very scarce and difficult to secure will be a thing of the past if Nigeria operates a functional curriculum.

Functional education will produce graduates who are entrepreneurs and self-dependent and ready to practice what they have learned in the school. These entrepreneurs will also become employers of labour. More jobs will be created and income will be generated. The end result is that many will be lifted from their problems of unemployment and poverty. Functional education will lead to reduction or elimination of other developmental challenges and social ills presently experienced in the country. Thus, vices like corruption, insecurity, poor governance, ethno-religious crisis and even illiteracy among others could be attributed to high rate of unemployment and poverty in the country. According to Minzer (2015), for functional education to be functional, it should be relevant to the needs of the nation of society and should not only train high level man power but contribute to all development of the nation. Functional education promotes the welfare of its citizenry, advances science and technology and economic growth, enhance democracy. Education is a pivot on which other factors are resolved.

### **Concept of Poverty**

Poverty can be defined as a point in an individual's life where he experiences a lack of basic essential needs in his life. It is the state of experiencing lack and want, it is the process of having little or not enough aid and sustenance for one's self and family members. Poverty is the stage at which you get to and it seems like there is no other way to go, it is the feeling of helplessness and the point where an individual has nothing else to do and starts to think of negative things to do to himself or his family. Poverty is a self-destructive disease that eats into the mind of an individual and turns him or her inside out to reveal how naked they are inside. Poverty is the only thing that can drive an individual to the point of no return and it is not only in the economy of Nigeria, it is also in the lives of so many citizens of Nigeria. It is not when you waste things, it is when you do not have enough to eat or drink, not to talk if waste. Poverty is the only lifeline an individual does not want to experience because it is not a lifeline at all. There are so many definitions and ideology if poverty really is, and if one is not careful, poverty can lead an individual into doing the things he would not normally do if he was in the right frame of mind. Thousands of people in Nigeria have lost their loved ones through poverty, and thousands more are still dying every day due to poverty. It is very different from a hunger strike; it is not a deliberate act not to eat anything because you do not have anything to eat in the first place. (Information Nigeria, 2013).

Poverty has been defined by different authors from different perspectives. These definitions cover the absolute and relative dimensions of poverty. In a simple term, poverty is a condition in which individuals and households cannot meet or satisfy the basic necessities of life i.e., food, clothing and shelter and other basic social services and privileges that will make them to live a decent and fulfilled life. Okoh (2008) defines poverty as “a state of deprivation in terms of both economic and social indicators, such as income, education, health care, and access to food, social status, and self-esteem and self-actualization, Poverty is a pronounced deprivation in wellbeing, and comprises of many dimensions. It includes low incomes and inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. It also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water, and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (World Bank). Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family; not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living; not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implied living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water and sanitation (United Nation, 2009).

From the above definitions, poverty is no doubt synonymous to underdevelopment. Thus, development implies the eradication of poverty. The definition of development by Seer and adopted in this paper gives credence to the above assertion. Development cannot be achieved without eradicating poverty due to the fact that poverty is a major attribute of underdevelopment especially in developing countries. Poverty implies economic, social, political and cultural deprivations. Therefore, developmental goals should be geared toward improving the economic, social, political and cultural needs and aspirations of the people. But the question is, is Nigeria a developed nation based on the above criteria? The answer is obviously “no”. There is therefore the need for capacity building through a qualitative and effective education.

### **History of Poverty in Nigeria**

Nigeria is said to have one of the highest growth rates when it comes to its economy, however, poverty is a known order of the day in the country and it is rated at about 33.3%. Nigeria is a developing and commercial country, that has a lot of natural resources that are enough to sustain the lives of the citizens in the country try, however, this resources seems to not be shared appropriately throughout the country try, and while some people take more than what they should not, some others have nothing entirely to take. The rate at which poverty has struck the country Nigeria, it is very unexpected and confusing because a country with so many minerals and resources, should not have a backward economy or have a big number of poverty-stricken people in it.

Poverty in Nigeria started with the emergence of corruption in the masses and corruption in the government. Where there is corruption, there is usually no headway, and Nigeria is not making headway as long as its economy is concerned. Nigerians have a mentality that if I



cannot get it, then no one should get it, and aside from that, some other people in Nigeria believe that a certain set of people do not deserve some things, so it is best to keep it to themselves. Not judging anyone, or putting anyone to shame, poverty in Nigeria is the fault of everyone and no one is innocent of this. People want to fend for their families but soon enough they become very greedy about it. Others want to find something doing but cannot because corruption has eaten deep into the country and therefore made way for poverty in the lives of so many. Nigeria is one country that experiences mass poverty and the leaders and even the masses who put the leaders in their seats are doing nothing about it. The first issue to be addressed is corruption, and if corruption is wiped out from the government, then poverty will start to decrease.

Nigeria owns a large capacity of leaders who have come and gone and have made no change in the economy when it comes to poverty. Poverty dates back to when a man would rather see his neighbor starve than share his pot of soup or water. Poverty started in Nigeria when the people began to have a notion of “if not for me, then for no one else”. It began to eat deep into the economy when everyone decided to be greedy in the face of power. It cannot be duly noted on paper the date in which poverty started in Nigeria, but it is good you know that Nigeria was also experiencing poverty with the colonial masters here, so it is as good as saying that there is no specific time when poverty started in Nigeria. (Onuba, 2012).

### **Causes of Poverty in Nigeria**

- 1. Low Economic Growth Performance:** An essential factor that works towards alleviating poverty and reducing the rate of unemployment in any country, is a strong and viable economy. The performance rate, as well as the growth rate of the Nigerian economy, is disappointingly low and the country owes a large percentage of its poverty level to this very reason. The country experiences an inadequacy in the area of employment generation for the teeming manpower. A diversified economy, rather than the one which currently relies heavily on oil, would go a long way in helping this situation.
- 2. Violence and Criminal Activities:** Poverty in the country can be directly linked to the high level of violence and unrest due to insurgency within the country. One only needs to look at the internally displaced population that has now become a part of the poverty-stricken populace. Unrest has been seen in the country, leads to migration, a phenomenon that is faced with the heavy problem of resettlement and integration. The level of security to combat this insurgency is nothing to write home about and should be beefed up if this is to be combated.
- 3. The Phenomenon of Weak Governance:** Corruption is the poster child of Nigeria's problems and stands front and center when those issues are being called forth. Programs that have been set aside for poverty alleviation are both poorly implemented as well as poorly monitored. In the area of revenue allocation, funds are most often, diverted to private pockets and to other endeavors for which they were not initially set aside for, and usually, either no one or the wrong people end up being held accountable for these lapses. Badly allocated resources, as well as inadequacy in the aspect of infrastructure due to bad governance, are all part of the causes of poverty in Nigeria.

4. **Health Problems and Diseases:** When one looks at poverty besides bad health and diseases, one is faced with a “chicken and the egg” conundrum. Which comes first? But then again, is that really the question one should be asking? Entrepreneurial activities, as well as productivity, are two aspects that are greatly hampered by poor health meaning, while ill health can be a result of poverty, that same ill health can be a cause of poverty. A phenomenon such as poverty, especially at the scale experienced in Nigeria is not without its effects which are widespread and intricately connected (Okoh, 2008).

### Effects of Poverty in Nigeria

1. **Education:** It has been statistically shown that children from low-income families are far less likely to perform well in school. Without properly educated youths to take up posts of authority both in the workplace and in the ruling offices of the nation, there can really be no hope for progress. Those children end up as poor as their parents were in most cases, and the cycle continues.
2. **Development of Children:** It has been shown that children who grow up in poverty, have a higher probability of picking up activities that do them more harm than good health-wise. They have also been shown to be more susceptible to mental illnesses and record terrible cognitive development as opposed to their counterparts from average to rich backgrounds. These children are usually unable to socialize properly and may feel less than capable of handling the available education opportunities that may be open to them. This all works towards negatively affecting their employment prospects in the nearest future.
3. **Crime:** Owing to the large rate of poverty in Nigeria, there has been an increase in the number of illegal activities in the country as well. The phenomenon of online fraud most popularly described as “419” or “yahoo yahoo” has seen an astronomical spike in recent years. Youths, frustrated by the lack of jobs despite attaining the necessary degrees required for the attainment of those jobs, take to criminal activities to make ends meet. Armed robberies, kidnappings, ritual killings, are only but a few of these criminal activities that have stemmed directly from poverty (Information Nigeria, 2013).

### Ways of Alleviating Poverty in Nigeria

There are so many ways to end poverty in Nigeria. The following are recognized ways by Asaju (2012)

- 1 **Functional Education:** An educated child has a promising future, and not only a promising future, but an educated child can also bring something to the table of the economy of Nigeria. In so many foreign countries, people have a way of making the youths go forward and do exploit, invent things and break records, this will no doubt set the record of the economy of the country straight and a lot of people will benefit from this initiative. Education in a child helps to broaden the mentality of such a child and makes the child be a free thinker in most cases. Education will help you to open your mind to different opinions and settle for the best.
- 2 **Acquire a skill:** The truth is not everyone is made to be in school, not everyone has the

patience to be in school, but that does not mean that you have to be a nuisance and live off of bread crumbs thrown at you. The truth is, in whatever you do, you must strive for excellence, and it is not in any way compulsory to go to school to achieve your goals. Many great men on earth did not sit down in the four walls of a classroom, they put their hands to good use. Learning a trade or acquisition of skill will go a long way to eradicate poverty in the lives of so many people and in the economy at large.

- 3 **The government should invest in the country and develops its own resources:** The government should desist from going abroad for every single thing and invest its money on its own resources.
- 4 **Do away with child marriage:** As much as anyone does not consider this to be one of the reasons to eradicate poverty it is. A child who is supposed to have a future and add to the growth of the economy of its country is forced into a marriage at a young age. This is done by a myopic and poverty-stricken individual and in the end, such a child will be left with nothing other than what she has learned from her parents and husband which is not even enough to carry on in the world.
- 5 **Some other ways to end poverty in Nigeria are;** make provisions for privately owned enterprises in the country, have a plan and budget for the economy and see it through, put the government officials to work in different parts of the country and make them know that the people come first in everything, The government should be selfless and set their goals, rule of law (nobody should be above the law) and make provisions for indigenous farming.

### **Alleviating Poverty through Functional Education**

- 1 Through functional education, qualitative manpower can be produced, if the educational system of any nation determines its type, nature and caliber of manpower to be supplied. The educational system and the commitment to human resource development have been attributed to their level of achievement and other breakthroughs experienced in functional education. The economic success of the so called 'Asian tiger' has been attributed to the educational system which are functional and the priorities given to human resource development. Refereeing to the successes of these developed nations, Asaju (2012) opined that when there are fairly well developed human resources, lack of abundant supply of other factors such as physical capital and technology does not posed any insurmountable barrier to sustained growth.
- 2 Human resources not capital or income, nor material resources constitute the ultimate basis wealth of a nation because they are just passive factors of production. It is the human resource that accumulates capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry over national development (Harbison, 2013). All these are achieved through a functional education. No wonder, countries like Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland were adjudged to be the best countries to live due to their commitment to education (UNDP, 2009). While the developed countries have continued to achieve breakthroughs in every facet of their economy, the underdeveloped nations are still struggling to cope with the numerous developmental challenges inhibiting their progress. The development of these nations



are still bedeviled by challenges of high rate of unemployment, poverty, inequality, diseases, ethno religious crisis, and war political crisis among others that brought about untold hardship and pain to their populace (Asaju, Thomas and Silas, 2013).

- 3 The quality of the products of the educational system, the level of learner's achievement, the desperation of pupils to succeed as evidenced by unabated incidences and sophistication of examination malpractices, and falsification of credentials, frequency of teachers strike, and their poor quality, all point to inefficient performance of the system Ali (2000). The gross underfunding of the educational sector, coupled with other related problems of infrastructural decay, dearth of infrastructural facilities at all levels of the educational institutions, inadequate teaching and learning materials, incompetent teaching and learning materials, incompetent teaching staff, inconsistency and lack of clear cut education policy affect functional education.

Therefore, a functional educational system in Nigeria will bring about high-quality manpower that will turn around the available resources into wealth for the nation. The country will also experience a turnaround in science and technology, which will in turn affect all other sectors of the economy. Thus, the wealth of the nation will be redistributed to favour the poor populace. There would be many employment opportunities which will lead to income generation and invariably the decline in the high rate of poverty and inequality. This will further bring about an improvement in the well-being of the populace.

- 4 Functional education is a leveler of opportunities. The case in Nigeria where majority of the graduates of the educational institutions search for white collar jobs that are very scarce and difficult to secure will be a thing of the past. Functional education will bring about graduate who are entrepreneurs and self – dependent and ready to practice what they had learnt in school. These entrepreneurs will also become employers of labour. With this chain, more jobs will be created and income generated. The end result is that many will be uplifted from the dudgeon of unemployment and poverty. Thus, it can be adduced that there is a symbiotic relationship between functional education and poverty alleviation. Abubakar (2009) has attributed the poor quality of education in the country on the increasing level of poverty and unemployment in the country. He opined that if the problem of unemployment and poverty can be addressed in the country, the standard of education will definitely improve. Therefore, both poverty and functional education affect each other either ways. Solving the problem of poverty will also reduce or lead to the elimination of other developmental challenges and social ills presently experienced in the country. Thus, vices like corruption, insecurity, bad governance, ethno religious crisis and even illiteracy among others could be attributed to high rate of poverty in the country. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency has majorly been attributed to the high level of poverty and unemployment in the country, especially in the north eastern zone of the country.

### **Need for Re-organization of Secondary Education to make it Functional**

- 1 The need for proper re-organization of secondary education in order to make it more

- functional for the poverty alleviation in Nigeria today has become highly imperative. Of all the problems facing Nigeria today, none is as agonizing and persistent as the one relating to the problem of unemployment among school leavers. According to Aggorwal (2008) "All the knowledge a pupil gains in the school, all the culture the pupil acquires in the school will be of no use, if he cannot make both ends meet when he enters life". Secondary education can be made more functional, for economic and poverty alleviation if it is properly re-organised into vocational secondary education.
- 2 Realizing the unique place of vocational education as the basis for technological development and economic emancipation in Nigeria, the Federal Government has within the last three decades initiated some activities toward enlivening this aspect of education in the country. Such activities include:
    - a. Mass production of technicians in some overseas countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, France and so on, under the "Crash Training Programme".
    - b. Creation of more Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology, to supplement the six old Colleges of Technology located at Yaba, Ibadan, Auchi, Ilorin, Enugu and Kaduna.
    - c. Establishment of Universities of Technology.
    - d. Introduction of Technical Education courses into some Colleges of Education.
    - e. Expanding facilities of old Colleges of Technology.
    - f. Importation of sophisticated science and technical equipment.
    - g. Providing more places for science intakes in the University through ratio 40:60 Arts - Science admission policy.
    - h. Introduction of 3-3 secondary education structure with the Junior Secondary School, running pre-vocational and academic subjects.
  - 3 In spite of these laudable activities of the Federal Government towards improving vocational education, the volume of unemployment among school leavers in Nigeria continues to assume alarming proportions. As a way of reducing the incidence of unemployment among school leavers, the Federal Government in recent times has been campaigning for self-reliant education which is attainable through functional vocational secondary education.
  - 4 Vocational education includes: "All activities directed by the school for the specific purpose of preparing individuals for successful participation in different fields of service". Based on this definition, vocational education requires the acquisition of practical and applied skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.

### **Availability of Infrastructural Support for Functional Secondary Education as a Basis for Poverty Alleviation**

- 1 **Teaching Personnel:** One of the most effective ways to bring about curriculum change, teaching improvement and quality instruction in schools is through highly competent and well-motivated teachers. According to Adesina (1980) "The heart of Nigeria's educational system is the teachers. Whether at the primary, secondary or university level; the teacher is and would continue to be both the major indicator as

well as the major determinant of quality education". The economic and poverty alleviation in Nigeria can be well accomplished through functional secondary education, if the school system is well staffed with highly motivated and well qualified teachers. Many secondary schools especially those in the rural areas are understaffed, while some subjects, especially English language, Mathematics and Sciences are being taught in many schools by non-competent and unqualified teachers. The exodus of teachers from the profession to the more soul satisfying professions, occupations and trades has been a disservice to the school system. The rapid expansion of the secondary education system in Nigeria has not been adequately matched with increase in teachers' supply. Thus, the available teachers in the school are saddled with heavy teaching load. An overburdened teacher would undoubtedly produce a job of lower quality than would have been the case if he carried a normal teaching load. Therefore, in order to achieve effective economic and social reconstruction in Nigeria, through functional secondary education, the schools must be adequately staffed with sufficient, dedicated, motivated and innovative teachers.

- 2 **Physical Facilities and Instructional Materials:** Effective teaching and learning depend greatly on availability and adequacy of physical facilities and instructional resources. A functional secondary education as a basis for poverty alleviation in Nigeria, will be an onerous task to achieve if physical facilities and instructional materials are grossly inadequate in schools. As remarked by Adaralegbe (2013): From inspectors' reports over the years, there is abundant evidence of a catalogue of inadequacies in the appropriate provision and the judicious use of school buildings and materials for instruction. Classes had been held under unsafe and unhygienic conditions. Some school buildings had no ceiling with the unbearable consequences during the hot, very humid weather for about half of the school year. Some doors and windows had no shutters to keep off the rain from spoiling pupils and teachers' books and other school supplies. Some of the classroom floors had not been concreted, giving room for pupils to contact cold during the wet season and in the harmattan months. Also, library is non-existent in most of the schools. While the science laboratories are poorly equipped. Audio-visual materials like video tapes, transparencies, slides, pictures, audio-tape, film strips and graphic materials have been branded "luxuries" in most secondary schools in Nigeria. Thus, the poor physical and material support will make functional secondary education as a basis for poverty alleviation an herculean task to accomplish.
- 3 **Financial Support:** No education system can effectively carry out its function without sufficient funds at its disposal. Money is required to attract, retain and develop the staff, to maintain the school plant and procure other materials for effective functioning of the school. The secondary education in Nigeria today is poorly funded. Consequently, many schools have not been able to put up new buildings, major repairs of old dilapidated buildings have not been carried out and the purchase of equipment and apparatus for the technical workshops and science laboratories has become an onerous task. In spite of this poor funding, the Government has been placing high premium on free secondary education.
- 4 **Inspectoral Support:** Despite the fact that school inspection contributes significantly

to the improvement of the school system, inspection of most secondary schools in Nigeria is being haphazardly carried out. Periodic inspection of schools has become a thing of the past. Apart from inadequacy of school inspectors, lack of fund and transport facilities, also militate against effective supervision of the schools. Unless school inspectors are adequate in number to cope with the staggering number of primary and secondary schools and are provided with adequate funds and transport facilities, with well-defined goals of the mission, a functional secondary education as a basis for poverty alleviation in Nigeria may be an onerous task to be accomplished.

### **Conclusion**

In a society, where certain educational institutions are meant for the privileged few, where parents have no prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children due to social, economic and political conditions and where the secondary education system is plagued with problems of inadequate teaching personnel in terms of quality and quantity; poor physical, material, financial, managerial and inspectoral support; it becomes an assiduous task to achieve poverty alleviation through functional secondary education. The following submissions are therefore made towards achieving effective poverty alleviation through a functional secondary education in Nigeria.

Thus, functional education is a panacea for reducing the high rate of poverty in Nigeria. Although, the educational system in Nigeria is still inefficient due to many factors, its functionality will bring about accelerated growth in the economy. When graduates of the country's educational institutions can independently practice what they learnt in school without waiting for office or government jobs, more jobs will be created and income enhanced. The technological revivals that will follow will also positively lead to industrial revolution which will lead to more job opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on what has been deliberated on, the following recommendations are proffered:

- 1 Teaching in schools should be geared towards critical thinking rather than reciting received knowledge from teachers and textbooks. Also, the school work should be practical and life centered.
- 2 As a result of high diversification of the secondary school curriculum with special emphasis on technical, vocational and citizenship education, the need for professional growth of the secondary school teachers becomes highly imperative. In-service education programmes such as workshops, seminars, refresher courses, vacation courses, conferences and so on should be periodically mounted to correct deficiencies of the poorly trained teachers, to help the inexperienced and to keep the teachers abreast of educational and social development.
- 3 Functional secondary education as a basis for poverty alleviation requires adequate funding. There is need for every taxable adult in Nigeria to pay education levy. Also, all companies, firms, commercial houses and other parastatals (both private and public) should contribute at least 25% of their annual profit to Education Fund. This policy must be enforced.

- 4 Regular field work, use of local technicians and environment should be emphasized in the secondary schools. Both boys and girls should be trained in building construction, tile decoration, bricklaying, motor mechanics, electronics, metal works, technical drawing, wood works, creative arts, book keeping, typewriting, data processing, hotel management, catering services, telephone technology, poultry keeping, welding and so on.
5. The government at all level should show its commitment and political will to ensuring functional education through its funding, policy making, supervision and monitoring of educational projects and programmes.
6. A law should be enacted that will mandate the federal and state governments to adhere strictly to the UNESCO's recommendation that 24 percent of their annual budget be allocated to education.
7. The various supervisory agencies of the educational institutions and the Ministry of education should be more committed to playing their role as a watchdog in ensuring that all educational institutions from primary to tertiary operate within and abide by laid down standard.

## References

- Abubakar, S. (2009). Education: One step forward, too many steps backward, *Daily Trust Newspaper*.
- Adaralegbe, A. (2013). *Secondary education in Nigeria (trends, progress, problems and illness)*. In Adesina S. Akinyemi K. and Ajayi, K. (eds.), *Nigerian Education: Trends and Issues*. Ile-Ife. O.A.U Press.
- Aggorwal, J. C. (2008). *Theory and principles of education: Philosophical and sociological basis of education*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd.
- Akumah, R. (2008). Achieving functional education: The essential requirements, *Nigerian Journal of Functional Education*, 1(1).
- Ali, A. (2000). *Teacher production, utilization and turnover patterns in Nigeria*, in Kabiru Isyaku Anikweze, C.M. Maiyangu A.A., and Olokun G.M. (eds.), *Teacher Production Utilization and Turnover Patterns in Nigeria*. Kaduna: NCCE Press.
- Arogundade, B. B. (2011). Entrepreneurship education: An imperative for sustainable development in Nigeria, *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)*, 2(1).
- Asaju, K. (2012). Human capital development and poverty alleviation in Nigeria: A symbiotic relationship, *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 2 (4), Retrieved from [www.macrothing.org/jpag](http://www.macrothing.org/jpag).



- Asaju, K, Thomas, J. K. & Silas, F. A. (2013). Human resource development and educational standard in Nigeria, *Global Journal of Human Social Science: G Linguistics & Education*, 13 (7).
- Cookey, S. (2003). Achieving functional education: The essential requirement, *Nigerian Journal of Functional Education*.
- Deighton, L. C. (ed) (2007). *The encyclopaedia of education*, U.S.A. Macmillan Company.
- F.M.E. (2004). *National Policy on Education* (2004).
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1980). *New perspectives. In African education*, London: Macmillan Educ. Ltd.
- Good, W. (2009) in Eze G. C (2003). Achieving functional education: The essential requirements. *Nigerian Journal of Functional Education*, 1(1).
- Harbison, F. H. (2013). *Human resource as the wealth of nations*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Information Nigeria (2013). *Nigerian youths were without Jobs in 2012, says NBS*, Retrieved from [http://www.informationng.com/2013/12/54ofnigerian youths were without jobs in2012saysnbs.htm](http://www.informationng.com/2013/12/54ofnigerian%20youths%20were%20without%20jobs%20in%202012saysnbs.htm)
- Minzer, K. (2015). *Making development more sustainable: sustain omics framework application*, Retrieved (<http://www.esearth.org/article/sustainabledevelopment-traingle>)
- Okoh, N. R. (2008). The concept of poverty and its measurement, *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 39(2).
- Onuba, I. (2012). *Million Nigerians live in poverty NBS. Punch Newspapers Online*, Retrieved from [http://www.punchng.com/business/businesseconomy/1125millionnigerianslivein poverty nbs.html](http://www.punchng.com/business/businesseconomy/1125millionnigeriansliveinpoverty%20nbs.html).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2009). *Indicators of poverty & hunger in "poverty*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, [encyclopaedia.mht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty).
- World Bank (2004). *Poverty and inequality analysis in "poverty*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia. [mht](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty).