Abstract

This study investigated the challenges of educational training and professionalism that confront oil-rich developing countries especially, Nigeria in her development pattern. These challenges constrain institutional capacity development, which although, are not inherent are likely to be accentuated in the presence of abundant natural resource wealth. Sustained growth and elimination of poverty will for a long time remain elusive in Sub-Saharan African until the region succeeds in building, retaining and nurturing the required human and institutional capacity vital for grooming the successor generation and interfacing with other development partners and process. The critical challenges thrown up for investigation were the need to embark on massive educational training in the context of professionalism so as to indigenize major production processes to ensure more export of locally refined goods especially, in the oil and gas sector where we have more comparative advantage and remove the wage dichotomy between local and foreign wage earners. Appreciation and application of information and communication technologies in capacity development was also discussed. In order to have in-depth knowledge about the causality of these challenges, two sociological theories were utilized. These were Dependency and Marxist Perspectives. The methodology of analysis was descriptive and heuristic, drawing from the experience of several oil producing developing countries and an earlier analysis. It is expected that the findings of this study for policy makers, would emphasize sustained increase in human capital development.

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately however, these efforts to ensure education for all worldwide seem not to be bearing enough fruit as to reduce the overbearing increase in the general...
dependence on foreign capacity utilization especially in energy sector by the Third World countries. Experts reasoned that because the development of the manufacturing sector depends wholly on energy, these countries remain underdeveloped because of high cost of generating power. Many factors have been attributed to this (World Bank, 1995). They include lack of access to education and decline in professionalism. Globally, it has been identified (Hallak, 1994) that economic, political, managerial weaknesses and negative attitudes toward education are the major impediments to its access. Lynch (1997) is also of the view that an intellectual paradigm of formal schooling with malnutrition, gender related factors and socio-economic status are among the major obstacles to children’s education.

Education as a human right was enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Right in 1948 (Bamiro, 2008). In today’s knowledge driven society education is perceived as a vaccine that solves all problems. It serves as a catalyst for economic well-being, democracy and good governance, social justice, environmental preservation, peace building among others. In this age of globalization and in the realization of the United Nation Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it will continue to be a catalyst for genuine Empowerment, reconciliation and the bridge building in the context of the eight point MDGs. Education does this not merely through learning of Universally–shared values, but also through everyday practice in classroom, schools, colleges, and indeed all learning environments including the non-formal structure. Education is instrumental to poverty alleviation and reduction of hunger, diseases, gender equity, maternal health & sustainable development (Aderinoye, 2008). Several initiatives aimed at enforcing education as human right had been made both at national and international levels.

At Jomtien Thailand in 1990 representatives of 155 countries and 150 organizations gathered at the same time to discuss the theme: Education for all (EFA), it was envisaged at the conference that between 1990-2000, some planned actions decided on at the Conference would have resulted in creating among concerned nations a climate that will provide opportunities for all children, youth and adults to have an education appropriately designed for meeting their specific learning needs (UNESCO, 2006). The same Conference made a declaration intended for the provision of basic education for all by 2000.

Another Conference in Dakar, Senegal in 2001, adopted what it tagged ‘Dakar Framework for Action Education for all’ meeting our collective commitments. More realistically than the Jomtien Conference 1990, requested for greater commitments from all government which subscribed to the ideals of the Jomtien Conference so that the goal of education for all by 2015 can be achieved? Two major offshoots of education for all are UBE in Nigeria launched in 1999.

Secondly, MDGs which came into being in 2000 emphasizing education for all through UBE as conceived in Jomtien and Dakar Conference. It was instituted to improve the socio-economic condition of the world poorest people (WHO, 2005).
With eight points agenda, it target that by 2015, Universal Primary Education (UBE) will have been achieved (World Bank, 2006) so as to eradicate poverty, epidemics like malaria and other diseases, HIV/AIDS, gender equity and sustainable good environment. Although, education for all promised to achieve Universal Primary education by 2000, it is however disturbing to note that by 2001 over 1 million school age children were still not in school (World Bank, 2006). It is therefore, assumed that the millennium development project will carry on the task of providing basic education for all till the 2015 deadline. Experts are of the view that rising poverty level in some countries can pose a great threat to the realization of these various efforts to making education for all possible at least by 2015 (UNESCO, 2003).

POVERTY AS A CHALLENGE TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Since early 1980s, poverty has compelled parents to keep their wards out of school, for economic activities and partly because they could not bear the cost (Gidado, 2008). Economic factors, largely determine both individual and public investment in education. Economic consideration in this regard could be seen in two angles; distorting professional orientation and the ability to pay for direct cost of education, (for example, fees, levies, school uniforms, learning materials, as well as indirect cost of education, that is, the opportunity cost for attending school). These two factors determine the extent to which education will be made accessible to all males and females both at the family and state levels.

They also determine the extent to which individuals continue with and complete the school Cycle (Gidado, 2008). Poverty has resulted in lack of quality-emphasis on qualitative education (Stephen, 1997). There is more emphasis on political issues like quota, federal character and paper qualification at the expense of merit. Paper qualification should be backed by ability to demonstrate practically one’s skills as contained on the study.

Harves and Stephen (1990) defined quality as cited in Stephens (1991) to mean three interconnected factors: Efficiency (example, better use of available resources), relevance (example, to needs and contexts); and something more (example to journey a little further than mere efficiency and relevance into professionalism). There seems to be consensus among scholars in Nigeria that the quality of education in the country is declining due to inadequate supervision of schools and inadequacy of the school themselves (Tahir et al., 1994). This has hampered local capacity utilization and posed great threat to the emerging energy prospects in Nigeria. The fact that the country’s economy strongly depends on energy as both economic mainstay and means to power the manufacturing sector that will expedite development effort, informed the need to sustain the drive for local capacity utilization.
Supervision of school is largely in the hand of the state except the private schools. Once good governance in the context of responsible leadership is in place, it facilitates capacity development and utilization. What is clear is that educational training in itself cannot guarantee professionalism in the absence of responsible leadership, demonstrated respect of and for constitutionalism and the presence of a vibrant civil society that can mobilize the masses on issues of appreciating and demanding accountability from the state, and the wider public, private and not for profit sectors. Good governance is the highest state of development and management of a nation’s affairs (Agere, 2000). This incontrovertibly suggests that good governance as a concept and as an act of administration is central in any country’s political, socio-cultural and economic development. While acknowledging the importance of good governance that can be diverse, important here is to show that educational training and professionalism is the most essential factor and it forms the foundation for entrenching other issues of good governance needed for capacity development and industrialization.

Educational training and professionalism is not only central to eradication of poverty but also critical to the resolution of the crises of governance and ensure growth and development (Balarabe, 2006). It is not the formulation of fine plans and policy framework alone that is important in ensuring quality capacity development and utilization for sustainable development, but the extent to which these policies are judiciously implemented using institutions that can adhere strictly to the basic issue of the policies. This is followed by the question; for whose interest is the policy targeted. To this end, institutional capacity becomes germane in the realization of policy framework for human capacity development.

Human capacity development has a lot to do with self organizing, inter organizational networks, interdependence and resource exchange. These can only be possible if a government that honors the rule of law is in place (Rhodes, 1997). It is the statutory duty of government to create enabling environment that will enhance not only basic education but also higher educational career pursuit. Coleman (1968) rightly argues that right from the time of Plato and Aristotle, political philosophers affirmed that quality of the school determines the quality of the state. This however, morally establishes the linkage between the state capacity and her local capacity development.

Consultations around the initiation of Nigeria’s development agenda called the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the State Economic Empowerment Strategy (SEEDS) initiatives, have opened new avenues for direct research and evidence-based input into policy processes. The NEEDS and SEEDS
programmes make-up Nigeria’s home-grown economic development and poverty reduction framework with the objectives of enhancing public service delivery; tackling corruption and inefficiency; achieving economic growth, as well as fostering institutional reform both in government institutions and the political systems. To this end, there is a need for greater advocacy, institutional linking, capacity building through adequate educational funding in the national development and poverty alleviation agenda in Nigeria (DFID, 2007).

The concept of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was a radical response to solving critical problems of developing countries characterized by poverty, low enrollment in primary schools, high incidence of school drop-out, high rate of child mortality, gender imbalance, poor maternal health and environmental degradation by the year 2015. In this instance, good health, national resources and infrastructure serve to complement the human resources. Sustained growth and elimination of poverty will for a long time remain elusive in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), until the region succeeds in building, retaining and nurturing the required human and institutional capacity vital for growing the successor generation and interfacing with other development partners and process and to date it remain the constraining factor in Africa’s development.

In short, the relevance of New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) must also be assessed as well as its capacity to revive the qualitative and quantitative capacity development especially in the energy sector, to give impetus to culture, science and technology in order to fight poverty and sustain increased infrastructural development. Education, Science and Technology are in a state of decline in Africa just when the world is experiencing a third scientific and technical revolution. In this context, Africa is being progressively left behind and its ability to compete in the world economy is more and more under threat (DFID, 2004).

After political independence, energetic policies in the fields of education and training were adopted with the opening of new Universities and research centers, and the transfers of technology. This yielded remarkable quantitative advancement. The number of primary school going children doubled between 1960 – 1980. Those at secondary schools increased fivefold. The annual increase in school attendance at primary level was at 6.5% between 1960-1970. Between 1970-1980, the level increased by 8.9%. During these decades, tertiary education also developed. The number of institutions increased tenfold in three decades, and in 1997 the total number of institutions reached 150.

However, decline in this momentary growth in infrastructure and human capacity started during the 1980s. Tertiary education was faced with serious problems of quality and training, financing and suitability to the world market. This decline occurred simultaneously with a new scientific and technical revolution, the third of its kind that was emerging and taking root in the contemporary world. The first scientific and technical
revolution made itself known between 1760 and 1840 and reached its highest point between 1850 - 1914. It originated with the use of local and steam energy. The second revolution emerged between 1880 - 1930 and blossomed fully between 1950 – 1970. This revolution relied on the use of the combustion engine and organic chemistry. The third revolution began in the 1960, with the help of biotechnologies, new materials, electronics and information technology. It became wide-spread between 1980 – 1970 and is still evolving today (Caron, 2000).

As with preceding revolutions, the third scientific and technological revolution gave rise to renewed economic transformation in the field of work organization in companies owing to automation and robotics. This revolution is primarily responsible for the tremendous growth leading to increase in productivity in countries and economic sectors that participated the most in those activities (World Bank 1988). In a world where the liberalization of international exchanges and deregulation has become the general rule, the competitiveness of African economies is severely weakened. Africa has been completely separated from the knowledge revolution.

Today, Africa has the least level of human capital development of all regions of the world (Adediji, 1989). Development however, can be neither quick nor sustainable if only a small number of people are trained or acquire skills. With the illiteracy rate of the adult population in Africa, at 54%, it represents the highest in the world. (Chennlouf, 2005). The challenges thrown up by this decline is of great threat to the continent of increasing energy demand in a volatile oil and gas price regime in a liberalized global economy and also the grooming of the successor generation which can only be possible given a massive educational training in the context of professionalism.

How far Africa will go in poverty reduction and sustainable capacity development depends on its preferred location and approach in the future energy dynamics within the context of sustainability, self reliance and self appreciation. Policies and realistic programmes around educational training and professionalism must anchor research and technological advances articulating and appreciating traditional cultural peculiarities. This self reliance and dependence on home grown technology will definitely give our local industries a face lift and advance our economy.

THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONALISM

For in-depth knowledge about the causality of these challenges two sociological theories will serve as models; they include dependency and Marxist perspectives. Dependency perspective (Renner, 1977)) arising from the theories accounting for the inequality in development of the developed, developing and underdeveloped world which are however, of practical relevance to the design of national and international development programmes. Dependency theory is centered on the hypothesis that poverty stems from inappropriate cultural values and a lack of scientific knowledge in the
underdeveloped World. It asserts that the solution to such poverty can be found in education, the transfer of technology from the First to the Third World and also the promotion of leaders or role models to inspire more backward people to innovate. This model projects the poverty culture thesis emphasizing certain constellation of cultural values perpetuating poverty by stifling initiative for change (Oscar Lewis, 1949). This model accounts for rising poverty induced illiteracy and career termination that are responsible for the decline in human and institutional capacity building.

Dependency theory however, represents the contradiction within capitalism with implications on developments in underdeveloped countries struggling to compete in capitalist markets. Those contradictions of extreme concentration of capital in huge corporate empires, over-production and falling rate exchange are the bane of the underdeveloped world. Unemployed people the world over compete to sell their labour to investors at the least possible wage. The colonial label of Africa’s culture as unfit made our human capital suffer unequal attention in the labour market and this is telling on the economy and proficiency of human capacity. In Africa, interim remittance from domestic products and from skilled professionals reduce the incentive for educational training.

The underdeveloped countries are in the worst possible position and try to compete with monopolistic capitalists. In the words of Frank (1997), such poor countries form hinterlands for the metropolis or centre of capitalism. Hinterlands are the underdeveloped areas that supply cheap labour and cheap raw materials or Semi-processed goods to the developed centres. Metropolises are the centers of capitalism, which dominate surrounding regions, extracting their economic surplus. Frank conceptualized the world capitalist system as hierarchically organized with each smaller metropolis forming a hinterland for yet larger centers. Should the business interest or investments be at risk, large corporations exert substantial political clout within the host country itself, the presence of an indigenous capitalist class that benefits directly from foreign capital investments helps to stifle unpurified opposition. The ultimate back up for this international system is the military might of the metropolis country (Martin, 1982.)

Max (1951) makes similar point as to why competition in the global labour market made Third World professionals redundantly unemployed and this affects further educational training. Considering this dependency through Marxian theoretical lenses, we observe that the few best educated are of the upper class who can afford to pay for educational training. While the lower class battles with adult education the upper class’ children are on top of their career advancement at a very tender age. This is bad and compounds the peril of the poor in training and being trained in that at even local labour markets age is deliberately pegged as a criteria for meaningful employment. For instance, Nigerian banks do not take age limit beyond thirty years of age on graduation. This class thing is working against capacity development through training at the expense of local initiative.
INFORTECH AND LIBRARY AS CENTRAL TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Information communication technologies (ICT) play a pivotal role in every educational training. Information according to Curra (1987) is described as a process by which we receive the events of the external world. Information both internally and externally generated is the life blood of knowledge-based institutions and it is essential in every educational process. It is generally acknowledged that information is now on the lead and whoever has information is always better. Access to timely, accurate and relevant information contained in research reports, books, monographs, documentaries, periodicals and databases etc. are essential for educational training. Mabawonku (2001) emphasized that access to information is important in capacity building.

Libraries are the custodians of information. They are established to meet the information needs of the society. A library is the bedrock for acquisition, organization, storage and dissemination of information contained in books and non-book materials. (Akinlolu, 2008). Libraries and librarians occupy an interesting position in relation to knowledge and skill acquisition. As depositaries, collectors, organizers, distributors and mediators of information, librarians play a unique role in the whole process of educational training and professionalism. Librarians provide access to information contained in diverse format and this is important in capacity building.

In the evolving electronic scenario, the cycle of educational training and professionalism is not complete without training in ICT use. According to Hamelink (1997), information and communication technologies encompass all those technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different form of communication among human actors, between human beings and electronic systems, land among electronic systems. This all communication cellular phones, computer and network, hardware and software, satellite systems as well as the various services and applications associated with them like teleconferencing, video conferencing, etc. No doubt, training and capacity building is essential for ICT use and appropriation. Training programmes should be relevant to one’s profession.

Generally, all training activities should include training in computer use, software applications, use of e-mail, internet navigation etc. In the emerging electronic environment professionals with the appropriate ICT skills will have a competitive edge over those without it. Omekwu (2003) maintained that “the process of acquiring appropriate training to operate in the digital environment is a critical professional imperative. That process may be formal or informal, institutionally supported or individually motivated. No matter how it is acquired, it is essential that it be acquired because professional relevance and excellence will largely depend on competence in the use and application of the digital systems”.

Interestingly, information and communication technologies facilitate contact, communication and cooperation which are the hallmarks of true professionalism. All
professions thrive on collaboration, cooperation and communication which promote knowledge diffusion, knowledge dissemination and knowledge generation. Omekwu (2003) stressed that “a professional of whatever discipline does not exist in isolation but in relationship with others which he keeps in constant touch with. His professional service is towards a clientele group and his own professional development is achieved through peer group relationship and interaction. Communication is the vital process for contact and cooperation among professional’s. Cooperation and sharing of information among professionals helps them to improve their skills and performance. It also improves productivity and conserves resources. Information and communication technologies that promote contact, cooperation and communication include the computer, internet (and its many services such as emails, voice mail, video conferencing, teleconferencing etc), telefacsimile and other electronic-based devices whose uses depend largely on telecommunication facilities.

Information and communication facilities are also deployed in every training programmes. The list of ICTS which are used in educational training includes motion pictures or films, projectors, laptops, computers, CD-ROMs, Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I), Digital Video Interactive (DV1), etc. The use of multi-media in training programmes makes training very interactive and interesting. Multimedia resources could be used to provide information and data in their natural settings. The expert use of multimedia facilities to present information in its natural form or situation makes room for individual differences that exist among trainees (Egwim, 2006). Multimedia resources such as public address system, projectors etc are used to disseminate information to a large audience during seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, lectures etc.

NEED FOR MASSIVE EDUCATIONAL TRAINING AND CAREER PURSUIT

Development and transformation of Africa’s energy sector presents a unique opportunity for cooperation between African countries and energy consumers, particularly since Africa is both geographically closer to the United States and safer than the Middle East as a source of energy. Lack of security, corruption, waste, and mismanagement are inexcusable to all stakeholders. Increasing transparency of oil and gas revenue is vital for Africa especially as African countries have great opportunity to use petrodollars to drive human and institutional capacity development. This idea calls for proper incorporation of the stakeholders especially the youth.

Examining the challenges facing young people and how these challenges have changed over time, experts agreed that young people’s interest be made paramount in the expansion in access to basic education. This is a way of keeping them busy productively and also considering the rising demand for young workers with higher educational skills, new health risk – especially high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, the changing nature of politics and growth of civil society, globalization, land and new technology (Nzotta, 2007).
This challenge goes beyond acquiring skills relevant to the labor market and emphasis is more on extending the skills to navigate future energy dynamics in the community and the society we live in so as to have full control of the exploitation of material resources we are endowed with to boost foreign exchange earnings.

The challenges of capacity utilization and development in this context are not only improving Africa’s rating in the United Nation human development index, but also transforming the natural resources to refined products as the only way to prosperity and Africa’s renaissance. After all, natural resources have played an integral role in the performance of many successfully industrialized economies such as Australia, Sweden, Finland, Canada and the United States, which have based their development strategies on natural resources and continue to be net resource exporters today. The example of these industrialized economies and their successful development stories can lead many to believe that natural resources dependence is in fact a blessing.

In fact, Ledeman and Maioney, (2007) argued that natural resources are actually richest that, when combined with human ingenuity to create human capital and knowledge innovation; do contribute positively to harness economic growth. Several researches significantly suggest that resource-rich countries perform poorly when compared to other economies and that the former tend to be cursed by their natural wealth (Stevens, 2003). Most notable Sachs and Warner (1995; 2001) found that resource intensive exporters actually grow more slowly than other countries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic factors, largely determine both individual and public investment in education For instance, since early 1980s, poverty has compelled parents to keep their wards out of school, for economic activities and partly because they could not bear the cost (Gidado, 2008). Once good governance in the context of responsible leadership is in place, it facilitates capacity development and utilization. Good governance is therefore, the highest state of development and management of a nation’s affairs (Agere, 2000).

The enumerable fine initiatives drawn by national and international agencies to ensure capacity development, for instance; NEEDS, SEEDS, MDGS and NEPADS are not enough until education is practically seen to be for all and not for few. How far African governments will go in poverty reduction and sustainable capacity development depends on its preferred location and strategy in the future energy dynamics within the context of sustainability, self reliance and self appreciation. Policies and realistic programmes around educational training and professionalism must anchor research and technological advances articulating and appreciating traditional cultural peculiarities. This self reliance and dependents on home grown technology will definitely give our local industries a face lift and advance our economy. Solutions to poverty can be found in education, the transfer technology from the First to the Third World, and the promotion
of leaders or role models inspire more backward people to innovate. To realize this, the
dependency jinx must be broken through self liberation from imperialism via massive
education.

Lack of adequate educational facilities such as well stocked library and functional
system of information technology, teaching equipments, functional land and other
infrastructures are the fundamental problems which limit access to qualitative education
and consequently lay at the root of several other problems such as poor governance, the
spread of diseases etc. The challenges of capacity utilization and development in this
context are not only improving Africa’s rating in the United Nation human development
index, but also transforming the natural resources to refined products as the only way to
prosperity and Africa’s renaissance as well as ensuring that we are not paid less than
what our expatriate counterparts are paid.

Policy formulation and implementation must target the interest of the majority.
Its implementation must be closely supervised to ensure down- up model of manifestation.
Policy makers and implementers must be held responsible for any policy shortfall in its
manifestation to ensure accountability and poverty eradication. A good research for
policy formulation needs to be enhanced through the establishment of well stocked and
accessible libraries with functional system of information technology.

People oriented government has to be in place before any meaningful strategy
to develop, empower and manage local capacity can succeed. This suggests that
the democratization process must not be compromised if majority of the people must be
empowered. Democratic ideals like rule of law must be enforced strictly. Third world
governments should immediately declare state of emergency on educational development
to usher in the needed renaissance.

Get the non functional refineries fixed to encourage local energy production.
Cancel subsidy for local energy consumption. Let locally generated energy price compete
in the global market so as test and control local capacity in terms of their foreign counterpart
for universality. To this end, institutions like the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation
(NNPC) should be made more proactive and productive by being enlisted as a public
limited company. Government and NNPC should adopt the direct processing cost for
determining the market price of all local fuel refined.

Vital infrastructures should be established to encourage human and institutional
capacity development. For instance, more schools should be built and the cost of education
should be subsidized and should not be left in private hands or people who capitalize on
the declining level of education and the desperation to get it, to exploit education seekers.
It is crucial that United State oil companies have a level playing ground in Africa’s harsh
environment so that their government-owned competitors cannot simply bribe their way
into the most juicy oil projects in the land without due process.
It is also important that USA and other principal energy consumers, such as China and India should ensure that governments supervising foreign investment in Africa maintain a modicum of transparency.

Making accessible for local investors an attractive investment environment, especially in the lucrative energy sector, is the key to Africa’s modernization. Developing sugarcane ethanol as an alternative energy source is an important avenue in diversifying away from oil.

The USA government and the private sector should strive to be the principal partners of their African counterparts in developing African energy resources for the benefit of Africans and Americans.

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