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## IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION OF BASIC EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Basic education is the ignition of knowledge and the fundamental right of every individual. Its roles and powers in the contribution to mankind and the society in totality are overwhelming. Basic education fosters in the development of human potentials as well as the nation's economy. In any case, no stem or branches survive without a root hence basic education is the solid foundation on which every other educational system stands. It sets the stage for the inculcation of diverse knowledge in individual from cradle ranging from numeracy, skills, morals and values which eventually fortifies them to face and surmount challenges in the future as well as live in harmony with others. Regrettably, this all importance educational system has been left to struggle in the midst of numerous challenges, thereby subduing its success. It is on this basis that the study beamed its search light on the improvement and innovation of the basic education for the achievement of sustainable development of the nation, to determine how best the system can be restored to its original state.

Keywords: Improvement, Innovation, Basic Education, Sustainable Development.

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### INTRODUCTION

Globally, basic education has been marked the author, teacher, developer and instructor of intellect. Several scholars have rated it as a transformational tool, due to its powers in moulding individuals and generating wealth for a better society. The peculiarity of basic education cannot be down played, as it fortifies the citizenry and the entire society against poverty and strives to liberalise knowledge. Education from the basics sharpens and grooms' people from the cradle, equipping them with morals, values, norms, ethics, attitude, numeracy, manipulative skills and

literacy for socio-economic growth and peaceful co-existence. It is a known fact that knowledge is a gradual process, which emanates from the basic to the unknown till eternity. This indicates the fundamental role of basic education in the inculcation of knowledge in sequence for individuals and societal development. No wonder why Arikpo (2017), assert that any learner that has gone through basic education has acquired appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills: as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for a life-long learning. It is on this basis that improving basic education becomes very important for sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Concept of Basic Education**

Basic education is an evolving programme of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives (<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw>). It is a whole range of educational activities taking place in various settings that aim at meeting basic learning needs. The word basic means essential, necessary or fundamental to life or a process. This indicates that basic education is a level of education that cannot be skipped in the life of an individual. From birth, a baby learns to suck breast, seat, stand and walk. These processes are never averted by any means. This explains the nature of basic education in one's life before expanding his knowledge for self-actualisation.

However, basic education is classified into crèche, kindergarten, nursery, primary and lower secondary schools. These are where the basic knowledge about life becomes inculcated into the child for future growth and development. International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), identifies two stages of basic education which includes primary education and lower secondary education. In some countries where there is no break between primary and lower secondary education, basic education covers the entire compulsory school period. The curriculum principles of basic education revolve around the following:

- Learning centred, inclusive, developmentally and appropriate.
- Relevance, responsiveness and research based.
- Gender and cultural sensitive.
- Flexibility for localisation and indigenisation.
- Spiral progressive approach for mastery.
- Adherence to mother tongue based multilingual education.
- Contextualisation and global. (source: <https://en.m.wikipedia.com>)

### **Concept of Innovation**

Innovation is the act of improving on a programme for continuous success. It is an agent of change and acquisition of new ideas, skills, creativity and vision. From Mkpa and Izuagba (2012), point of view innovation is a process of initiating change in order to resolve a problematic situation. They further describe it as a deliberate, well-conceived undertaking with a definitive purpose, which is beneficial to the school and community. To Obizue et al. (2015), innovation is the introduction of something new that departs from what has been traditionally

known to exist. It is on this premise that Emediongokon et al. (2015), conclude that innovation does not only mean bringing in or adopting new ideas, strategies or techniques but also creating new ones. This is to say that whatever that has not been done before that can be done to bring about improvement and better output is innovation. It therefore implies that the only way to improve on basic education for the achievement of sustainable development is innovation, which is an embodiment of careful planning, high sense of rationality and creativity. Innovation of basic education will automatically involve modification, restructuring and re-organisation which will aim at curtailing waste and proper management of human and material resources to achieve effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, embracing change will also bring about improvement in the entire system, thereby enhancing teaching and learning that will bring about development.

### **Concept of Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is the development that continues to meet today's needs in ways that it will not jeopardize future generations, (Taylor cited in Emendu, 2018). It involves organisation of principles for meeting human development goals while simultaneously sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services based upon which the economy and society depends (Wikipedia of Sustainable Development, 2017). In line with the above assertion, Anyaehie and Areji (2015), insist that sustainable development is the actualisation of human potentialities and proper understanding and management of the environment and the resources therein for sustained human wellbeing.

This establishes the importance of basic education in the life of humans and the entire society. It is encompassed with the ability of setting precedence for which this goal is actualised. Sustainable development comprises of the physical environment, socio-economic and political aspects of life, which are independent on the efficacy of the nation's educational system. To this end, the role of basic education for sustainable development cannot be overemphasized as it lays a solid foundation for the pursuit of these goals. The sustainable development goals (SDG's) as indicated by Okeke (2017) are:

- Eradication of poverty.
- Eradication of hunger.
- Ensuring healthy living and promoting wellbeing for all ages.
- Providing quality education.
- Gender equality.
- Provision of clean and healthy water.
- Ensuring renewable and affordable energy.
- Creation of good jobs and economic growth.
- Establishment of industries, innovation and infrastructure.
- Reduction of inequalities.
- Establishing sustainable cities and communities.
- Ensuring responsible use of resources.
- Climate move.
- Sustainable ocean.
- Sustainable use of land.
- Peace and justice.

- Partnership for sustainable development.

## **History of Basic Education**

Basic education emanated in Nigeria with the establishment of Nursery of Infant Church (NIC) as the first primary school by the Methodist mission town of Badagry in 1843. Subsequently, other primary schools emerged in Abeokuta and Ibadan in the southwest of Nigeria. In 1845, the school was renamed St. Thomas Anglican Nursery and Primary School and relocated to Topo. In the north, western education could not thrive since it was aimed at converting pagans to Christianity, rather Islamic education flourished under the highly educated Islamic scholars.

In 1865, the Bishop Crowder Local Government Area primary school was instituted in Lokoja, Kogi state by the Anglican missionary. In 1899, the colonial government established a Government Primary School in Lagos for the Muslim students due to their unwillingness to attend the missionary schools. After the independence in 1960, the military head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the free universal primary education (UPE) in September 1976. In 1999 the universal basic education (UBE) was launched on the 30<sup>th</sup> September by the same head of state to replace the (UPE) programme of education that was aimed at providing free and compulsory education for the children in primary and junior secondary schools in the country.

### **The objectives of (UBE) programme include:**

- Ensuring an uninterrupted access to 9year formal education by providing free and compulsory basic education for every child of school-going age under six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education providing early childhood care development and education (ECCDE).
- Reducing school dropout and improving relevance, quality and efficiency and
- Acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life skills and values for life-long education and useful living.

### **Specifically, the goals of primary education are to:**

- Include permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
- Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment;
- Give the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity;
- Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trade and crafts of the locality (National Policy of Education, 2014).

## **Roles and Benefits of Basic Education.**

Basic education has several benefits and functions in the development of individuals and society.

- It supports social and emotional development of citizens
- It improves reading and communication skills.
- It serves as an incubator for the next generation of leaders, thinkers and innovators.
- It fosters the development of cultural, cognitive and physical skills.
- It helps in the development of sense of independence and self-confidence.
- It shapes individuals into better thinkers, learners and human beings.
- It inculcates right values and basic skills for poverty alleviation.

However, it is imperative to note the enormous benefits of basic education beyond the aforementioned. It is fully beamed with the overwhelming responsibilities of creating awareness in the masses, opening avenues for opportunities as well as self-advancement and improvement and reduces chronic and inter-generational poverty. As a first step in the creation of welfare and just society, universal basic is an absolute pre-requisite for sustainable development (Target study, 2018). To compete globally, children are prepared from very early childhood to embrace and sustain ideas and knowledge for lifelong development. This basically is advised from the fact that the pace of development during this period is extremely rapid. This is the reason basic education is necessary for all as it develops confidence and personality formation in readiness for sustainable development.

### **Operations and Implementations of Basic Education**

The operations of the basic education in Nigeria have not been smooth. From inception, there have been hiccups in the achievement of educational goals. Switches in policies and programmes have continuously been recorded in the bid to realise these goals. Dating back to 1843 when basic education found its way to Nigeria till date, much progress has not been made. To buttress this fact, Obianuju (2014), posits that universal basic education (UBE) was established in Nigeria as a response to the low rate of literacy in the country. In 1996, when the blueprint was conceived, Nigeria had a literacy rate of 52 percent with 14.1 million children out of 21 million children of school going age enrolled in primary schools, invariably 6.9 million children of school going age, out of schools upon this low enrolment, only 64 percent accounted for completion rate for primary schools or what could be called transition rate to junior secondary school. In line with the above, federal government of Nigeria (FGN, 2014), affirms that with the growing interest in the world on the achievement of millennium development goals (MDG's), education for all (EFA), coupled with the 1989 convention on the right of the child in Geneva, to which Nigerians signed in 1990, Nigeria exclaimed the best way to give the child his full rights, increase literacy in the country and reduce poverty in general.

Subsequently, the implementation process of the (UBE) programme has been on since 1999, but its progress has been hampered by lack of enabling law to execute certain aspects of the programme. Finally, it was established on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2004 as a singular project which was conceived to all three challenged areas. The (UBE) act makes provision for basic education comprising basic childhood care education (ECCE), primary and junior secondary education. Its funding is the responsibility of states and local governments, with the intervention of the federal government (FG) on the provision of 2% of its consolidated revenue funds for the basic education, owing to the compliance of states to some set criteria if they are to benefit fully from the fund. The act also provided for the establishment of the (UBEC) universal basic education commission to coordinate the implementation of the programme at the states and local

government level through the (SUBEB) state universal basic education board of each state and local government education authorities.

Great! Beautiful policies, dreams, hopes and aspiration of the nation. How have they fared so far? Basic education would have constituted one of the best programmes to equip the country with knowledge and skill to sustain her development, but the programme has failed due to lack of proper implementation. It has been observed that a huge gap exists between Nigerian policies and their implementation. This may be blamed on some factors like corruption, improper planning, inadequate provision of facilities, inadequate funding, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds etc. Obviously, the main purpose and relevance of education in Nigeria is the provision of much needed manpower to accelerate the socio-economic development of the nation (Nwosu et al., 2014). This has remained impossible due to the inability to implement the policies and guidelines towards the realisation of basic educational goals.

### **Challenges of Basic Education in Nigeria**

Basic education has suffered a lot of setback due to some impeding factors ranging from:

- Inadequate funding;
- Corruption;
- Mismanagement;
- Inadequate facilities;
- Quality and access; and
- Shortage of personnel.

### **Inadequate Funding**

Funding of educational projects in Nigeria has become an issue to worry about even in the midst of overflowing resources. The neglect is obvious and has not augured well with the nation in terms of its development. Basic education ought to be the number one priority for the nation but the reverse is the case. Underfunding of education has become a recurring phenomenon as almost everybody seems to agree that funds allocation in the sector cannot meet the needs in view of monumental decadence in the sector (Onuka, 2008, Ezekwesili, 2006, cited in Nwosu et al., 2014). Even though United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organisation (UNESCO) has recommended 26% of its allocation of the total budget to education because of its importance, the federal government has not spent up to 15% of its total budget on education in the last 15 years. Perhaps, this stems from Amadioha (2014) view, that a country like Nigeria with so much foreign debt and dwindling economy has a challenge to meet the huge cost of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Underfunding of education has set precedent for series of strike actions, lost to commitment and motivation, most of all lack of belief in the efficacy of our educational system. It is on this note that Orgu (2012), stresses that underfunding of education was the reason for the exodus of students to countries such as Ghana, China, South Africa, and others which have good educational system. He concludes that Nigerian education could be better structured, funded and well positioned to train their youths and prepare them for the future task.

## **Corruption**

Corruption has gradually formed a norm in Nigerian society. From the apex to the bottom and across the nation, none can vouch for total abstinence from corrupt practices. Nepotism, tribalism and ethnicism are now part and parcel of our administration. And these have not fostered in the achievement of our educational goals in any form. Accordingly, Nwosu (2019), confirms that corruption is the most worrisome issue in all sectors in Nigeria, and cannot be down played as it has accumulated a heavy burden on the nation.

Mediocre has transcended to the recruitment of unqualified manpower based on relationship or bribe against the qualified, misappropriation of fund on one side and embezzlement on another side. The government has always been accused of not paying proper attention to educational sector generally, but what are the contributions of those in charge of basic education? The truth is that in as much as the government does not allocate the 26% of the annual budget of the nation as recommended by UNESCO, it has also voted huge amount of money into education on yearly basis (Nwosu et al, 2014). To support Nwosu et al. (2015) Olarenwaju and Forulonso cited in Nwosu (2019), maintain that federal government has spent #1.13 trillion on education alone with little to show for such expenditure. This indicates that our basic educational goals cannot be actualised in the face of this monster (corruption).

## **Mismanagement**

The level of productivity of any organisation depends majorly on its management. Effective management is the panacea for goal achievement. The management of basic education in Nigeria cannot be acclaimed effective due to obvious cases of lack of policy implementation, improper planning, misappropriation of funds and misplacement of human resources, ineffective coordination and supervision. Management of the basic education for sustainable development cannot flourish except for effective utilisation of material and human resources for the achievement of goals in the organisation (Nwosu & Maduiké, 2015). This is the reason the right management principles and administrative behaviour should be employed to right the wrongs and strive towards the actualisation goals.

## **Poor Educational Facilities**

Poor educational facilities have constituted serious menace in the achievement of basic education. The review of the basic education in Nigeria portrays a picture of unserious and fruitless effort. It is amazing to think that learning can take place in a classroom of 200 students without proper sitting arrangement, some on the floor, others standing with the rest hanging and sitting on the desks. What about the teaching and learning activities that happen under the trees, deroofted and dilapidated buildings?

The work of Ezekwu, cited in Jaga (2014), shows that many institutions of learning do not have the physical facilities and those which have do not have current and relevant ones so that practical lessons are taught on theoretical while equipment and materials are inadequate and sometimes borrowed for external examination. Basic education in Nigeria records poor curriculum content and lack of instructional materials to build the knowledge for sustainable development.

## **Quality and Access**

Realising and sustaining the quality and access of basic education in Nigeria has posed a huge challenge. Despite the emphasis of the national policy and philosophy of education on access and quality, their achievement is still in doubt, because enabling environment has not been created to attain these objectives (Nwosu et al., 2014). The achievements of these factors in basic education are basically inhibited by socio-economic and political factors. The attribution to inaccessibility of basic education may include; costs of schooling, illness, poverty, socio-economic factors, economic, late school age, negative attitudes of parents, lack of interest and commitment on the part of the child,

The aim of universal basic education is to open access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria. (Vanguard, 2010, Emenike, (2015), stress that education is still not properly accessible in Nigeria at all levels. To Nwosu (2018), access to education means the extent to which people have unhindered opportunities to education. But the issue of dropout rate or out of school (OOS) at the primary school depicts the level of access to education by Nigerian children, which defeats the objectives of UBE programme. On the side of quality, basic education cannot be assessed above average as a result of its flaws in proper programme delivery (Nwosu, 2019). She further stresses that the programme emphasized development and initiative for early childhood education which covers the acquisition of appropriate literacy, numeracy, manipulation, communication, life skills, relevant, ethical, moral and civil values. Unfortunately, this quality has not been realised as a result of the gap between policy formation and implementation.

In addition, the quality of an educational programme is determined by the quality of the personnel, content and content delivery. No wonder why Maduewesi and Ezeoba (2010), emphasize that the problems of quality and standard in Nigerian educational system has been traced to attitude towards the teacher. Teachers are the mainstream in the delivery of quality education in secondary schools, but the issue is how they have been developed and equipped to pursue the educational goals (Nwosu, 2019). Judging from the foregoing, quality can be accessed through staff development. Reviewing and updating the knowledge of the educational personnel to keep abreast with the expanding knowledge on education, in order to continually refine their conceptual and craft skill to match the global trend is pertinent. In order words, prompt realisation of quality basic education depends on the adoption of innovation, creativity and initiation of good ideas coupled with the application of the right methods, strategies and principles required.

## **Shortage of Personnel**

Shortage of staff in basic education is a challenge that requires serious attention if sustainable development of the nation should be achieved. Up till the present year 2020, Nigeria is still battling with acute shortage of qualified teachers for all levels for our educational system. The universal basic education (UBE) has placed excessive demand on the existing teachers. The increase in school enrolment, which is an aftermath of the UBE programme, is demanding a corresponding increase in the number of qualified teachers for the primary and junior secondary school levels (Akude, 2010). It is shocking and disheartening that a particular teacher could handle about eight to twelve arms of above hundred students per arm in his subject area. Yet government is blowing trumpet about free education. What will be the outcome of this venture

and the programme itself? This surely will affect the steam of the teachers, the students and the quality of the programme. This is adduced from the fact the teacher cannot effectively deliver his content as well as evaluate the students. This is why Eze cited in Okafor (2010), posit that education sector has responsibility for producing and supplying the personnel required to propel and sustain the citizens of any country.

### **Improving Basic Education for Sustainable Development: (Innovation)**

The utmost concern and interest of stakeholders of education should be on the improvement of basic education at this auspicious time of economic meltdown. Basic education having been adjudged the branch of knowledge concerned with the preparation of youths for better citizenry when they grow up. And also, the tool for wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, value reorientation and national literacy. The need for quick intervention should arise to nip its prohibition in the bud. The menace of poverty, incessant killing, bombing, banditry, rape and other societal vices can be curbed through improved basic education. On this basis, the following steps could be adopted to improve basic education for sustainable development.

- Improving the general environment for teachers in primary schools and teachers training facilities;
- Strengthening practice-oriented teacher training; and
- Developing inclusive approaches to supporting primary school children with learning difficulties.

Despite these, other measures can be applied to improve basic education for development.

- Application of right management principles;
- Provision of adequate facilities;
- Staff development;
- Improving curriculum content;
- Job enrichment strategy;
- Entrepreneurship/vocational education;
- Leadership styles; and
- Implementation of policies.

### **Application of Right Management Principles**

Application of right management strategy is the way to achievement of productivity in every organisation. In spite of the impediments of basic education, its goals could still be actualised through the use of right managerial principles, techniques and administrative behaviours. Management as the ability to plan, organise, direct, coordinate, control, make decisions and evaluate programmes of any organisation ought to be considered a priority in basic education system. When policies and goals are been formulated, reformulated, scrutinised, evaluated, and implemented, it portrays a clear picture of success. To Salami and Ufoma (2013), management involves human activities directed towards planning, organising, directing, coordinating, and controlling human and material resources for achievement of the organisational goals. In a nutshell, improvement of basic education requires the adoption of Total Quality Management

(TQM) which implies the search for excellence, creating the right attitudes and controls to make the prevention of defectives possible and optimise customer satisfaction by increased efficiency and effectiveness (Nwosu & Maduiké, 2015). As a matter of fact, the quality of basic education in Nigeria will be adequately reached through innovation, initiating ideas, creativity, problem solving, conflicts resolution, active leadership, proper decision making, and implementation of policies.

### **Provision of Adequate Educational Facilities**

When the tool for a particular task is available, the work becomes easier. Facilitations of basic education depend majorly on the educational facilities available. The government should without hesitation and reservation fund basic education according to UNESCO's specification. Standard buildings in conducive environment that are befitting for educational activities should be provided instructional materials and qualified personnel are also required to reach this goal of Sustainable Development. Other facilities include ICT, health facilities good convenience incentive and motivational structures etc.

### **Staff Development Programme**

The achievement of qualitative education at all levels is the aspiration of the educational policies. Quality delivery of education can also be actualised through quality staff development (Nwosu, 2019). This is why the basic educational organisation is expected to be committed to creating an equitable development and motivate working environment which values, empowers and energises the workforce to be committed to duty (Nwosu, 2019). In addition, Supports Council Education Service (SCES, 2014), maintains that the main route of achieving professional and personal development of the three categories of staff in the school system, which includes the teachers, administrators and support staff is staff development.

In light of the above, it suffices to state that staff development will manifest in the following:

- Competence of teachers to carry out their work effectively through knowledge and skill acquisition;
- Modification of behaviour through learning experiences;
- Knowledge on how to perform current jobs;
- Updating knowledge to cope with educational reforms and curriculum changes;
- Increasing confidence, motivation and commitment;
- Enhancing responsibility;
- Personal satisfaction of staff through the development;
- Improved quality of staff; and
- Keeping up to date with ICT/technologies generally (Abosede, 2015).

To buttress the fact, staff development will deepen teachers' knowledge in the subject area; sharpen their skills and ability to monitor students work. These expose the fact that competence is rooted in training and learning. On this note, government and educational authority should adopt the continuous training and development approach for staff through the organisation of

conferences, seminars, talk shops and refresher courses for mastery of subject areas and methods of delivery to ensure quality.

### **Improvement of Curriculum Content**

The importance of curriculum of the basic education will foster in the attainment of what it seeks. Again, the content of the curriculum and its method of Implementation will determine the survival of the system. Unfortunately, the curriculum of the basic education is obsolete, as there is no regular review. For the system to fulfil its obligation, the need to respond to the societal change is important. In the last decade, a lot of hideous activities have dominated the nation, ranging from religious, political, socio-economic and other vices. These issues of nepotism, tribalism, ethnicism, hatred for beliefs and likes of others can be curbed through the introduction of moral, value, peace unity, security and integration education in the curriculum of basic education. It is also condemnable that the history of the giant of Africa (Nigeria) is not told to the younger generation. How then will the culture of the people be inculcated in the young minds. Reviewing the curriculum of basic education periodically with the view to keep abreast with national and global challenges will perform this magic.

### **Job Enrichment and Strategy**

Job enrichment is another angle to the improvement of basic education. A motivated work force is a great enhancement for productivity. Nwosu (2016), opines that the more employer provides incentives the more the worker is motivated to greater productivity. For jobs with good remuneration (incentives) package and job security, the worker is known to be motivated, hardworking and striving for excellence with little or no incidence of truancy and loss of man hours. She further argues that where the incentives package is absent workers have been known not to be dedicated to duty, regularly absent from duty post and when present not committed to the duties of his office. He rather indulges in services that would bring instant personal reward to him as against the overall productivity of the employer.

This is because generally incentives have been known to be the motivating factors at the workplace. Job enrichment strategies are indispensable tools in the basic education system, to achieve stated educational goals. It is qualitative change to a job that increases the degree of autonomy, feedback, satisfaction, and significance of the job, enabling workers to have greater control and feedback in their work environment. Similarly, victor vroom's theory of expectancy buttresses this assertion by expressing that every individual is an organisation works for a reason, which implies a reward to satisfy his needs. Hence personnel of basic education need to be happy on their jobs with the provision of their regular salary, promotion, allowances, medical facilities, good accommodation, and a conducive work environment. With these, commitment to the organisational goals will be ensured.

### **Entrepreneurship/Vocational Education**

A major way for lifting the quality of basic education for sustainable development is through entrepreneurship and vocational training. In the midst of dwindling economy, acquiring skills for self-reliance, being employable and employer of labour will promote the stability of the economy. This is in line with the goals of technical and vocational education as advocated by national policy on education:

- To provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft and technical levels;
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development.
- To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

It is imperative that government fortifies entrepreneurial and vocational studies in basic education to match the changing trend in the nation's economy.

### **Leadership**

The determinant factor of success in any group or organisation is the leadership. Leadership is the welding force that propels the activities of the organisation. The basic education in Nigeria requires proper co-ordination through effective leadership. It implies adopting a synthetic style of leadership which is diagnostic in nature as it tries to proffer solutions to problems discovered. However, basic education leaders need to be accountable, transparent, proactive and devoid of corruption. Adoption and maintenance of these virtues will sanitise the system and build it up to the desired standard.

### **Implementation of Policies**

Lack of policy implementation has deterred the entire effort of basic education towards sustainable development, one thing is to make decision another thing is to execute. This inertia attitude was observed by the former governor Oyakhilome of Rivers State in an address delivered to the convention of the Nigerian association for educational administration and planning in 1986. He further expressed concern about the problem of policy implementation thus: we know it is difficult to realise planned objective one hundred percent, but our experience in this country shows a disturbing gap between planned objectives and attained results... as professionals in the field of education, it may be pertinent to identify whether those critical gaps are results of faculty planning or faculty implementation (Oyakhilome cited in Nwosu, 2019) this should appeal to the senses of our educational administrators and policy makers to refrain from this ugly attitude so that the good dreams and hopes of basic education can be realised.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the discussing so far, basic education is the pillar of education. Having examined its goals towards the development of the nation, urgent attention is solicited to adopt strategies to surmount its challenges in order to actualise its goals. It is obvious that the nation is wallowing in abject poverty in the midst of socio-political problems. This explains the need for total acceptance of basic education as antidote to these menaces.

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