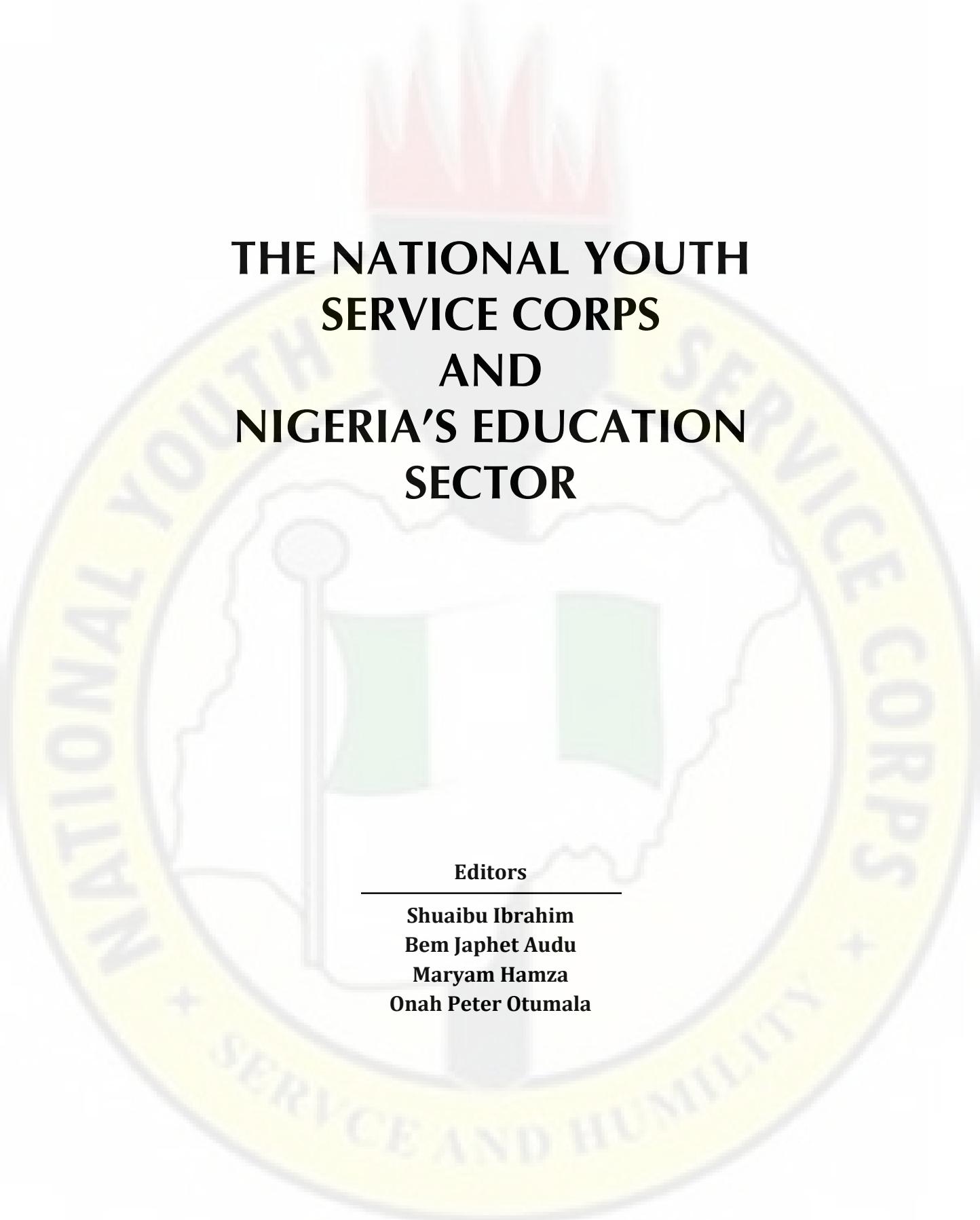


# THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS AND NIGERIA'S EDUCATION SECTOR

Shuaibu Ibrahim  
Bem Japhet Audu  
Maryam Hamza  
Rufai Aliyu  
Onah Peter Otumala



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Editors

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Maryam Hamza, Onah Peter Otumala

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## PREFACE

Education is a tool for national and societal advancement. Apart from being a fundamental human right, which has continually been replicated in several United Nations documents, education is one of the most basic and fundamental bedrocks of development of any nation. Education is the transfer of knowledge from one person to another or to a group of people to make them functional members of the society. It is a means through which society reproduces itself, passes its main characteristics to generations as well as a dynamic instrument of change and development. For this reason, it has been understood that the most veritable tool used by societies in fostering development is to heavily invest in qualitative education. This is why most governments develop policies and programmes aimed specifically at ensuring that all citizens within school-going age irrespective of gender, creed, and level on the social strata, race, and location and so on are entitled to education.

The Nigerian government, since independence made several attempts at ensuring that every Nigerian citizen right from childhood is given education. This is with the aim of making them functional by developing their abilities and capacities to attain their full potentials. This is meant to enhance the citizenry as tools for fostering development, aimed at promoting of a strong, democratic, egalitarian, prosperous, indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. Formal or non-formal education seeks to achieve these goals irrespective of curriculum, methods and organisation.

Since after independence, concrete steps were made towards revitalizing the educational system to suit the reality of the Nigerian state as against the colonial inherited education which was criticised for being too theoretical (neglecting practical educational activities) to make profound impact on Nigerians. As a result, Nigeria embarked on an overhaul of the education system which started with curriculum

reform by the National Education Research Council in 1966. This was followed by another Curriculum Reform in 1969 and a National Policy on Education was launched in 1977 and reviewed in 1981 and 2004. The sole aim of the programmes and policies put in place by the Nigerian government on education is total eradication of illiteracy for all citizens while inculcating national consciousness and unity, right types of values and attitudes needed for survival; and acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences needed to contribute to national development.

One of the veritable tools the Nigerian government has employed for the achievement and attainment of national unity and development is the National Youth Service Corps scheme. Studies on appraisal of the NYSC have shown that there is no aspect of the social, economic, political and cultural facet of the society that the scheme has not touched and impacted on. The NYSC has facilitated regular and effective distribution of skilled manpower while bridging socio-cultural barriers and fostering unity in the country. It has rekindled interest in areas of national development particularly in education by provoking and promoting youths' interest in teaching. This involvement of corps members in teaching has helped to prick their conscience to the course of development. Furthermore, with the complex problems faced by the Nigerian School system which include declining or fallen standard of education, dearth of properly trained and professionally equipped teachers to undertake the teaching profession, low number of teaching personnel, lack of government commitment aimed at improving education and so on, the participation of the NYSC has been very timely. It is noteworthy to state that without the NYSC, rural school system would have collapsed. This is because, most rural schools across the country are faced with a dearth of teaching personnel due to lack of incentives, thereby, bringing the NYSC corps members to the rescue.

In all, it should be noted that in spite of the role and contribution of NYSC in national cohesion, integration and socio-economic development, its contribution to educational system in Nigeria has received meagre scholarly attention thus the need for research on this theme. Therefore, this study is an attempt to document the roles and contribution of NYSC on education with the aim of contributing to the existing body of knowledge. This book does not in any way negate the possibility of further work on the subject matter, as it is not an exhaustive study on the role and contribution of the NYSC on education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, this book will serve as source material to students, scholars of various tertiary institutions across the nation as well as policy makers and other interested readers. The book which is a collection of fifteen chapters contains well-structured and researched discourse which comes after a brief history of the NYSC, showcase the NYSC scheme as service provider and a development partner, especially in education at all levels ranging from primary, secondary, tertiary education as well as adult and mass literacy.

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May God Bless us all.

**Shuaibu Ibrahim, Bem J. Audu, Maryam Hamza, Onah P. Otumala.**  
**April, 2021.**

## INTRODUCTION

### **Brief History of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 by the government of General Yakubu Gowon. The history of the scheme is traceable to the events that took place in Nigeria towards the last half of 1960s. The years 1967-1970 were characterized by the Nigerian civil war. At the end of the war, the General Gowon administration came up with new policies that would promote post-conflict peace, reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Consequently, the vital need for national unity led to the birth of the NYSC idea. The NYSC Scheme came into being through Decree No. 24 of 22nd May 1973. It states that the NYSC is being established with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity. After 20 years of existence, the 1973 Decree was repealed and replaced with No. 51 of 16th June, 1993, now referred to as the National Youth Service Corps Act, Cap. N84, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. The Act is preserved by Section 315 (5) (a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), thereby, making the NYSC Act part and parcel of the constitution.

According to Section 1(3) of the NYSC Act, the objectives of the Scheme are to:

- (a) inculcate discipline in Nigerian youths by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work and of patriotic and loyal service to Nigeria in any situation they may find themselves;
- (b) raise the moral tone of the Nigerian youths by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of nation achievements, social and cultural improvement;

- (c) develop in Nigerian youths the attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experience and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilization in the national interest;
- (d) enable Nigerian youths acquire the spirit of self-reliance by encouraging them to develop skills for self-employment;
- (e) contribute to the accelerated growth of the national economy;
- (f) develop common ties among the Nigerian youths and promote national unity and integration;
- (g) remove prejudices, eliminate ignorance and confirm at first hand the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups; and
- (h) develop a sense of corporate existence and common destiny of the people of Nigeria.”

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, Section 1(4) of the NYSC Act provides that the Scheme shall ensure:

- “(a) the equitable distribution of members of the service corps and the effective utilization of their skills in area of national needs;
- (b) that are far as possible, Nigerian youths are assigned to jobs in States other than their States of origin;
- (c) that such group of Nigerian youths assigned to work together is as representative of Nigeria as far as possible;

- (d) that the Nigerian youths are exposed to the mode of living of the people in different parts of Nigeria.
- (e) the Nigerian youths are encouraged to eschew religious intolerance by accommodating religious differences;
- (f) the members of the service corps are encouraged to seek a year for their one year national service, career employment all over Nigeria, thus promoting the free movement of labour;
- (g) that employers are induced partly through their experience with members of the service corps to employ more readily and on a permanent basis, qualified Nigerians, irrespective of the States or origin."

Basically, the aims and objectives of the NYSC is to reinforce institutional efficiency and effectiveness as well as youth development in the country. It is accepted in several quarters that NYSC is a viable platform for the transitioning of youths into self-reliant adults and the improvement of general welfare and development. The NYSC programme has since inception facilitated steady and effective supply and distribution of skilled manpower, breaking of social and cultural barriers as well as the building of friendly bridges across ethno-linguistic boundaries. It has also assisted in the promotion of values, national unity and development, rekindled interest in neglected but vital areas of national development and promoted leadership qualities in the youths. The Scheme has four (4) cardinal programmes which are: Mobilisation/Orientation, Primary Assignment, Community Development Service and Winding-Up/Passing- Out Exercise.

The maximum age requirement for youths under the scheme is thirty (30) years old. They are also engaged in community development programmes and activities. According to Section 2(2) of the NYSC Act, the only groups of youth exempted are those that have served in the

Armed forces or the Nigerian Police for a period of more than nine (9) months or in the security agencies, those over thirty (30) years of age and those conferred with National Honours. In addition, the choice of youths above every other age group was based on the fact that they are considered the most active change agents needed in building a united Nigeria, and a way of achieving this is for the youths to imbibe and nurture a sense of common belonging and national consciousness which would transcend political, social, state and ethnic loyalties.

At the onset of the NYSC in 1973, only 2,346 graduates were mobilized. However, judging by the evolution of the Scheme, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of graduates that are participating annually. NYSC is capable of bringing out the best qualities in Nigerian youth and imparting in them the right attitude and value for nation building that serves as catalyst to national development, sense of pride and fulfillment of its participating graduate youths. The criteria observed in the deployment of Corps members include:

- the equality of states,
- ability of states to absorb the service of participants,
- posting based on concessional considerations (marital and health grounds), posting on demand from various federal government establishments,
- the supportive role of a government is also increasingly becoming a factor in the placement of corps members,
- the deployment of corps members has retained its traditional process with the majority of corps members going to the classrooms.

The Scheme's presence is felt and noticed in all the LGAs in the country, creating higher emphasis in the rural and grass root development in line with its objectives since inception.

## Background to Educational Sector in Nigeria

# 1

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### **Introduction**

Education is the vital system through which human society attains changes and evolves advancement. Education is simply defined as the transfer of knowledge, skills and behavior to the learners. It is a way by which society transmits its culture, ethics, skills and norms to the next generations. Education is one of the most important means of societal growth. Joseph Adison described the indispensable value of education to humanity thus:

Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can enslave.

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At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament. It chastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives, at once, grace and government to genius. Without it what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage.<sup>1</sup>

In Nigeria it has shaped and sharpened the society in several ways. That is, education sector had contributed significantly to the level of historical progress the Nigerian society achieved currently, both positively and otherwise. This chapter examines the broad-spectrum historical view of the education sector in Nigeria.

This chapter analyses the existing traditional system of education prior to the contact the western world and the inception of the Islamic education before the British colonial rule in Nigeria. It discusses the Christian Missionary contributions to the educational development in Nigeria and the government's role in the sector through independence to contemporary period. Finally the role of the private sector involvement in education sector is highlighted to capture monumental changes and the effects they had on the Nigerian society.

### **Traditional Educational system in Nigeria**

The traditional education is an integral part of the culture of the people of Nigeria from ancient period. It is the first form of education in Nigeria that was highly valued and practised across Nigeria throughout the pre-colonial period. The traditional system of education has been proven to be a potent and functional means through which societal laws and norms are transmitted from generation to generation. It is a system that allows for the instillation of positive values, skills and attitudes that prepare individuals to become useful members of their

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in J. Eyisi "Education as Bedrock for Nigerian Development" J. Eyisi et.al (eds) *Education Across the Curriculum: In Honour of Emeritus Professor Thomas KolawoleAdeyanju*

## Background to Educational Sector in Nigeria

respective communities and cultural groups. This educational system is holistic and total in nature. The immediate members of the family of the learner not only determines the curriculum of studies but also constituted both the instructors and examiners, at the same time. In most pre-colonial societies in Nigeria the extended family and the entire community contributed their quota to the education of their children. In pre-colonial Africa, traditional education was all-encompassing with the objective of functional production of useful members of the society through which they are inducted into adulthood. It underscored “social responsibility, job orientation, political, military training and spiritual and moral values”<sup>2</sup>

The first area of the education is the sex roles of the children based on their masculinities and feminises. For instance, in the farming societies of the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria, male children were taught early how to handle hunting and farm tools like cutlasses, digger, hoe, bows, arrows, catapult, slings. In the same area, the girls are taught about their personal hygiene, menstrual health, and child care, elementary nursing, winnowing, and brewing of local beer, farm work and home chores.<sup>3</sup>

In the same vein the education system includes practical process of production with high occupational specialisation in the dominant profession of the geo-political area. The philosophy and main objective of the traditional education was to consolidate those aspects of the beliefs and practices of the people that emphasized such virtues as valour, tolerance, respect for others, dignity of labour and unity of purpose, and imprint such on younger generations.

The system is still found to be relevant in offering solutions to the multi-faceted problems of the contemporary complex Nigeria because

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<sup>2</sup>See BT Bingel "Traditional Education in Beromland" CC Jacobs (ed.) *Studies of Berom in History and Culture Volume 1*. Jos, BHP 1995. 157

<sup>3</sup>Bingel "Traditional Education in Beromland"

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it encompasses good moral behaviour, human dignity, emotional intelligence, environmental knowledge and the immediate culture of the individual leaner. Indeed the indigenous education is synonymous with what today is globally referred to as Indigenous Knowledge System.(IKS).<sup>4</sup> Some scholars and westernised elites might tend to suggest or conclude that traditional education is either dead or no longer of importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of higher technology. This perception is not true and should be rejected out rightly. Advanced technology without sound moral background, good norms and value for humanity will result in destruction and anarchy as exemplified in western societies where gay marriage, transgender, gun running and other social ills are legally accepted as norms.

### **Islamic educational system in Nigeria**

The Islamic education in Nigeria dated back to pre-colonial period. By the fifteen century the ruling Saifawa dynasty of Kanem-Bornu Empire was the first to accept Islam particularly during the reign of Mai Idris Alooma.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1804 and 1840, the Fulani jihad led by Othman Dan Fodio had fought and taken over most of the far North while the Sokoto Caliphate was established. The Islamic education spread to entire caliphate as the religion was spreading southward up to Nupe and Ilorin. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many contacts by traders, early colonial activities, transportation facilities and other developments enhanced the peaceful spread of Islam to other parts of Nigeria. This was the time when the Islamic faith took its place in the hearts of many Nigerians and in a great part of the country. With the spreading of the religion,

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<sup>4</sup>M.B. Oggunniyi “Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Fostering Quality Education in Africa” *UNESCO Journal of African Culture and International Understanding No.5*, July-Sept.2013. 13

<sup>5</sup><https://www.legit.ng/1188723-history-islamic-education-nigeria.html>  
see book on Kanem Bornu

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other cultural and traditional aspects of Islam like quranic citation and memorization education spread, too, and it was necessary to invent a new system of education for Muslim children based on its doctrine.

The education was standardised into three levels corresponding into the primary, secondary and Islamic higher education where scholars and learners move from one locality to other centres to learn and teach. Such higher educational centres are located in Kano, Katsina, Ilorin, Zaria etc. They study under renowned scholars like Shiekh Dahiru Bauchi, Sheikh Gummi and others.

The significance of Islamic education to the society includes:

1. *Islamic education* instils in a child the foundations of Islam. .
2. *Islamic education* instructs the child with the doctrines of Islam like how to perform ablution, prayer and fasting during Ramadan.
3. Islamic education provides guides to children on good moral behavior including how to greet an elder, respect people and the style of Islamic dressing.
4. It teaches the children to believe in one God.
5. It teaches children the need for good neighborliness and peaceful co-existence with other people in the society

### **Christian Missionary Education in Nigeria.**

The first encounter or attempt at introducing western education into the area later known as Nigeria was the Portuguese as early as the sixteenth century. The early missions tried to educate the children of coastal chiefs, *obas* merchants, influential citizens in Lagos, Benin, and Brass. This first attempt at introducing western education in Nigeria did not reach the interior and it was later abandoned because of inter-

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tribal wars and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The period of this first attempt was between 1515 and 1552<sup>6</sup>

The second attempt at introducing western education to Nigeria was led by Christian Missions and the British colonial Government in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the objectives of abolishing slave trade through evangelising, educating, trading and colonising the people of Africa.<sup>7</sup> The first to arrive the shores of Nigeria were the Methodist Mission through Badagry led by Rev. Freeman with some ex-slaves in 1842. They built the first school called “Nursery of the Infant Church” They were followed by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Anglican led by Rev. Townsend whose base was in Abeokuta. The church of Scotland Mission (Presbyterian) led by Rev. Waddel settled in Calabar in 1846, while the Baptist led by Rev Bowen moved to Ogbomoso. The Catholics of the Holy Ghost Fathers came through present Benin Republics to establish churches and schools in the present South-South and Igboland.

From this uncertain beginning, Christianity and western education took firm root in the Southern part of Nigeria. The number of primary schools established in this part of Nigeria by 1900 could be estimated around hundreds.<sup>8</sup> The persistent uproar for secondary school education by the few Nigerian educated people led to the establishment of the first secondary school in Nigeria – CMS Grammar School, Lagos, founded in June, 1859). By 1930 the number of secondary schools in the South was around thirties. See the table below.

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<sup>6</sup>SB Abolade and AF Oyelade “Historical Development of Private Secondary School Education in Nigeria: 1859-Present” eJournal of educational Policy, Spring 2018.. accessed <http://nau.edu/COE/ejournal/>

<sup>7</sup>EA Ayandele “External Influence on African Society” JC Anene and GN Brown (eds.) *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* Ibadan University Press and Nelson, 1966. 137-143

<sup>8</sup>There were no accessible data per time of the number of schools by 1900.

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**Table 1.1: Secondary Schools in Southern Nigeria as at 1930 and their owners**

S/No.	School	Location	Date	Proprietor/ ownership
1	CMS Grammar School,	Lagos	1859	CMS Anglican
2	St. Gregory's College	"	1876	RCM Catholics
3	Topo Industrial School	"	1876	"
4	Methodist Boys High School	"	1878	Methodist
5	Methodist Girls High School	"	1879	"
6	Baptist Boys High School	"	1885	Baptist
7	Hope Wadel Training Institute	Calabar	1895	Presbyterian
8	St. Andrew College	Oyo	1896	CMS
9	Baptist Training College	Ogbomoso	1897	Baptist
10	St. Paul's Training College	Awka	1904	CMS
11	Oron Training Institute	Oron	1905	Methodist
12	Wesleyan Training Institute	Ibadan	1905	"
13	Abeokuta Grammar School	Abeokuta	1908	CMS
14	Kings College	Lagos	909	Government
15	Eko Boys High School	"	1913	Private
16	Ibadan Grammar School	Ibadan	1913	CMS
17	Ijebu-ode Grammar School	Ijebu-ode	1913	:"
18	Duke Town Secondary School	Calabar	1919	Presbyterian
19	Ondo Boys High School	Ondo	1919	CMS

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20	Ibo Boys Institute	Uzuakoli	1923	Methodist
21	Dennis Memorial Grammar Sch.	Onitsha	1928	CMS
22	United Missionary College	Ibadan	1928	CMS/Methodist
23	St. Thoma's College	Asaba	1928	Catholics
24	St. Charles Training College	Onitsha	1929	"
25	Government College	Umahia	1929	Government
26	Government College	Ibadan	1929	"
27	Baptist Boys High School	Abeokuta	1923	Baptist

**Source:** Ogbole History of Education in Nigeria. Madugu "History of Education in Nigeria" Lecture Notes, University of Jos 2004.

The basic summary from the above table show the Christian missions owning 23, the Government 3 and 1 private school.

It was also clear from the above that the colonial government was not really interested in education or not willing to invest in education. This lazier faire attitude toward education of the people by the colonial government obviously reflected their nature of "reaping without sewing" basically to minimize cost in the colonies because most of the products of education formed the labour force that kept its' administration.<sup>9</sup>

The Christian Missions had borne a lot of sacrifices to establish these schools. They include: lack of trust by the indigenous people, shortage of funds, lack of communication and transport facilities, malaria and

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<sup>9</sup> Many reasons could be presented the actions of the colonial authority towards education in the colonies. The most genuine was basically to minimise the cost of colonial expenses.

Check Donald Omagwu *A wind of change: Bekwarra in an Age of Globalization*. Makurdi, Aboki Publishers. 2011.

## Background to Educational Sector in Nigeria

other tropical diseases attacks. There was no attention on the northern part of Nigeria until the first half of the twentieth century. This factor laid the foundation for the current educational backwardness, poverty and general dichotomy between the two regions.<sup>10</sup> Now let's look at the activities of Christian Missions in extending western education to the northern part of Nigeria.

### **Extension of Western Education to Northern Nigeria**

The first attempt to take Christianity and western education to the north was in 1841 by the Niger expedition team of 144 men led by Thomas Boxton. They were jointly sponsored by the British government, businessmen and the missionaries. It was a formidable team with several ex-slaves from Freetown, sailed along the Niger up to Lokoja on three ships and settled down for work. Unfortunately, they were heat by malaria and other diseases as 58 died within a short period. This disaster deprived the Northern Nigeria particularly the Middle Belt Peoples of early education.

The failure did not completely deter the zeal of the young Ajayi Chrowder whose effort with Dr Baike were able to establish a school and church in Lokoja in 1865. The school known as The Holy Trinity School was the first school in the north. By 1875 they set up the second school called "Institution Cause Preparadi" but it was closed down shortly.

By 1899, the Hausa mission of CMS led by Bishop Tugwell obtained permission to establish their activities in the north. The team got to Kano by 1900 and was rejected by the then Emir of Kano, Aliyu thus:

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<sup>10</sup>Check for recent poverty national poverty index based on six geo-political zones.National Bureau os Statistics.

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We do not want you, you can go. I give three days to prepare; a hundred donkeys to carry your load back to Zaria, and we never wish to see you here again.<sup>11</sup>

In Zaria the team was given a place at Girku and missionary activity commenced there. This laid the foundation for Zaria being the seat of most education institutions in the north currently.<sup>12</sup> It also opened the gate to educational establishment in the entire north based on the principle of where the Christian missions were accepted by the people. The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) team led by Rev. R.V. Bingham established their bases in 1903 at Pategi, Bida and Wushishi.<sup>13</sup> From there they spread their activities to other parts of the north.

The Sudan United Mission (SUM) an association of three sources /branches led by Dr. Karl Kuum in 1904 entered Plateau region.<sup>14</sup> They were rejected by the Emir of Wase and their station was burnt down in 1907. They moved to Ibi, Donga and Dampar to establish churches and schools.

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<sup>11</sup> Madugu, Study lecture notes, Institute of Education, University of Jos

<sup>12</sup> Zaria host more education institutions both governments, private and church owned.

<sup>13</sup> The name later changed to Evangelical Church of West Africa/Winning All ECWA

<sup>14</sup> The SUM had England, Danish and South Africa groups

### Background to Educational Sector in Nigeria

**Table 1.2: The Sudan United Mission SUM (currently,TEKAN) allocated three major areas of coverage/ work to their branches as follows:**

Area of influence	Branch/leader of mission	Current church name
Bauchi-Plateau region including Gombe and Kaduna	England led by Dr. Karl Kuum	Church of Christ in Nigeria COCIN
Adamawa Region Neuman	Danish led by Dr. Niels H. Bronumm	Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria LCCN
Tiv land	South African Dutch led by Rev. Dr. Botha	NKST

**Source:** Madugu "History of Education in Nigeria" Lecture Notes, University of Jos 2004.

The Roman Catholics Missionaries led by Father Oswald Waller moved to Shendam and expanded up to Kafanchan and Kaduna. Around Bornu axis, the Church of Brethren Missionaries from the USA led by Dr. Stolver Kulp entered Biu in 1922 but was rejected by the Emir. They went to Garkide and settled.<sup>15</sup>

In all the penetration and exploit of the Christian missions in establishing churches and schools in the North, the colonial authority was not happy but apprehensive of inter-religious crises. This explained why Lugard clearly restricted them from the Muslim areas, which in no small measure draw these areas back further than the Middle Belt Region and the Southern Nigeria educationally. Other factors include Lugard's agreement to protect the religion with the Emirs, the hostility of some emirs to western education, lack of indigenous ex-slaves to take a lead in the north like the south, lack of access to the coast or the hindrance of the Sahara Desert and many more.

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<sup>15</sup>This Mission is currently called Eklesyia Yan-uwan Nigeria EYN.

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However the missionaries finally penetrated in 1922 with establishment of the elitist school in the north called Teacher Trinity college (later named Barewa College) Kaduna/Zaria. Similarly, the Teachers College Toro was opened for non -Muslim areas among others. See table 3 below:

**Table 1.3: Secondary schools in Northern Nigeria as at 1970sand their owners**

S/No	School	Location	Date	Ownership
1	St. Paul College	Wusasa Zaria	1970s	CMS
2	St. Peters college	Kadunin	Na	CMS
3	St. John College	Jos	1965	"
4	St. Paul College	Bokkos		"
5	St. Benedict College	Panshin		"
6	Baptist High School	Jos	1960	Baptist
7	Baptist High School	Panshin		"
8	Teacher's College	Kagoro	1946	ECWA
9	Teacher's College	Kaltungo	1939	"
10	Girls Secondary School	Kwoi		"
11	Kent Academy	Jos	1946	"
12	Bristow Academy	Gboko		NKST
13	St Michael College	Aliade		Catholic
14	St Charles College	Ankpa		Catholic
15	St Francis College	Otukpo		Catholic
16	Wesley High School	Otukpo	19	Methodist
17	Methodist High school	Igede	1970	"

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18	Jesus College	Otukpo		"
19	Lennon Memorial School	Ageva-Okene	1967	Anglican*

**Source:** \**Daily Trust* Sunday August 6, 2017. **Source:** Ogbole History of Education in Nigeria. Madugu "History of Education in Nigeria" Lecture Notes, University of Jos. 2004.

In all, the Christian Mission schools both in the South and North were characterized by the following:

- 1 The content, like the Koranic School, was inclined towards the knowledge of the Bible, catechism and the hymns.
- 2 The main purpose of the education was to convert learners automatically to Christian faith
3. They were producing people with only the ability to work as salary earners and nothing technological, technical and entrepreneurship skills were included.
4. The schools lacked uniform standard because there was no central control or routine inspection.
5. There were poor funding and inadequate working condition for teachers

### The colonial state involvement in education in Nigeria

Initially, the government was actually not interested in direct investment both in terms of funding and the regulation of the educational standard. Prior to amalgamation of the two protectorates, the Southern government was able to establish three colleges (See table 1). The North was afraid of erupting crisis in the emirate areas. This was the status-quo until the Zaria experiment by the CMS mission and the Phelps Stoke commission report was released in 1922. The report criticized the education generally as not meeting the relevant needs of

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the people because it fails to take in to cognizance the African environment.<sup>16</sup>

It was actually this indictment of the report on education in Nigeria that pricked the British colonial state to come up with a Memorandum in 1925 which spelt out clear direction of education in Nigeria. It also included the need to include plans for girls' education. However, during the period of 1930 to 1950, the colonialists could not do much despite the good plans in the memorandum. This was occasioned by the general depression, lack of funds due to the Second World War expenditure which reduced colonial finances to the colonies. In spite of these challenges the pressure for higher education from the nationalist movements in the West African British territories was so tense that the colonial state had to establish the Higher College Yaba, Lagos in 1934 and the University College Ibadan in 1948.<sup>17</sup> This heralded the beginning of higher education in Nigeria

In the course of political development of Nigeria, specifically from 1950s when the three regions were given autonomy, each of them adopted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) at different times. The Western Region led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo first adopted the UPE, making education the priority in 1954. This policy put the region ahead of the other parts of the country educationally. In the Eastern Region the UPE scheme was planned well and launched in 1957. It was not successfully carried out in line with plan due to political issues, shortage of classrooms, trained teachers, teaching equipment, and opposition from some Christian missions. It was abandoned after one year of its existence.<sup>18</sup> This failure of the UPE to take root in the region actually left a deficit on enrolment and the general laxity and foot-dragging attitude

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<sup>16</sup>Ogbole 20-22

<sup>17</sup>Several vibrant nationalist movements were vehemently on the throat of the colonial officers both in Nigeria and Britain see T.Falola et al (eds.) History of Nigeria: Nigeria in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Book3

<sup>18</sup>See B.M. Ogbole 23-24

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towards education among the men in that part of Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> The Northern Regional Government did not adopt the UPE scheme but built more schools. From 1950s to 1976, education was in the hands of the Regional Authorities, and the number of years spent to graduate varied from one region to another. This period also contributed immensely to the widening of educational gap in enrolment and attainment across the country. The education curriculum was not unified but structured based on the region.

### **The Post-independent developments in Nigeria's education sector**

The most outstanding development in education was the establishment of tertiary institutions to meet manpower need of the country. In the Development plans of 1960s, first generation universities were established in Lagos, Ife, Zaria Benin and Nsukka while the existing University College Ibadan was given full status. Unfortunately the outbreak of the Civil war in 1967-1970 affected the development of education negatively not only in Biafran areas but across the country in terms of labour shortage, migration of people, war expenses taken large part of the educational funding, and general lack of peace.<sup>20</sup>

Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in 1976 as nationwide programme by the Head of State, Gen. Gowon to expand schools, increase enrollment and blend the primary education in the country. The scheme was not planned well and lack of data for its implementation seriously robbed its achievements grossly. For instance, lack of qualified teachers was roughly handled by recruiting all calibres of people and quacks to teach which rendered huge damage to the noble profession as well as compromised the standard of

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<sup>19</sup>The Igbo people of the region generally believe that they could make more money faster outside formal/ western education and then abandon it for women.

<sup>20</sup>VS Akran and JN Odoh "Economic Impact of The Nigerian Crisis And Civil War on Zaria,1966-1970" *Journal of History and Military Studies Vol.3, No 1 Jan 2017.* NDA kaduna. 229-232

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education generally in the country. However it had succeeded in the quantitative direction by providing more schools for the people and increased enrolment.<sup>21</sup>

Other milestones in education include the introduction of changes into the curriculum and publication of the National Policy on Education in 1977 which defines the philosophy and vision behind education in Nigeria. The National Educational resource Development Council (NERDC) was instituted to handle curriculum issues generally. In 1989 the education sector witnessed a change to 6-3-3-4 system where the secondary is broken into junior and senior with high emphasis on the teaching of technical skills. The goals of the scheme did not yield much result but crumbled from the onset for following reasons:

1. Lack of technological equipment for training.
2. Lack of skillful teachers to handle the equipment supplied.
3. High level of corruption and embezzlement in the education sector.
4. Massive establishment of profit oriented private schools and collapse of the public ones.

### Tertiary Education in Nigeria

The beginning of higher education started due to pressure from the nationalists particularly the National Congress for British West Africa (NCBWA) and the West African Students Union (WASU). As mentioned earlier, the University of Ibadan from 1948 opened the way for tertiary education, after which the federal and states have established many higher institutions of learning. Finally, in 1999 the Federal Government of President Obasanjo issued licenses to private Universities and other tertiary institutions to operate in Nigeria. See table 4 below.

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<sup>21</sup><sup>21</sup>See P.A. I Obaya "Growth and Development of Education in Nigeria Since Independence "B.Usman et.al. (eds.) Proceedings of the National Conference on in Nigeria Since Independence March 10,1983. Zaria, Gaskiya.

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**Table 1.4: Table of summary of approved tertiary institutions in Nigeria, as at 2019 below**

Serial no	Types of institution	quantity
01	Federal Universities	43
02	State Universities	48
03	Private Universities	80
04	Federal polytechnics	29
05	State polytechnics	42
06	Private polytechnics	42
07	Federal Colleges of Education	24
08	State Colleges of Education	54
09	Private Colleges of Education	91

**Source:** *Nigeria in a Decade*. A Special Publication of Industrial Leaders Communication Ltd.

### **Private Sector Involvement in Education in Nigeria.**

The history of private schools in Nigeria started far back in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when humanitarians and good-spirited individuals who valued education started investing in the sector. These early school owners were philanthropists rather than opportunists who saw need to contribute to the overall development of the society. Just like the Christian missionaries, profit was not the driving force for establishing schools in Nigeria from the early period till 1990s. Indeed most of them set up their schools out of real sacrifice because they were mostly established not by the wealthy members of the society but the middle class. For example the first private secondary school is Eko Boys High School Lagos, founded on 13th January 1913 by the Rev. William Benjamin Euba, a teacher and master of religion at the Methodist Boys High School, Lagos. It was with the greatest spirit and a desire to establish an African Institution that will provide educational opportunities for the less privilege citizens of Lagos that made Rev. Euba to establish this school. The school started with 28 students at 30

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Broad street Lagos, next building to St. George's Hall, Lagos, opposite the Methodist Boys High School.<sup>22</sup>

It was revealed that this premier private secondary school, like many of the period, witnessed rapid growth in enrolment which the available classrooms and learning facilities could not sustain, and the proprietor was unable to afford the rent. The school moved and relocated three times within the early years of its establishment. Students were not heavily charged to raise the money for accommodation and the premises. The principal was equally an embodiment of sacrifice like the proprietor. This explained why the school was totally handed over to him, (Mr. O.E Roberts) On October 8th 1931, the proprietorship of the school in a declaration stated thus:

"I William Benjamin Euba, founder and proprietor of Eko Boys High School, Lagos hereby decide to assign all and singular of my interest in the said school to my assistant Mr. Obadiah Edward Roberts the present principal of the school, absolutely in consideration of his services to the school and pecuniary expenses incurred by him on behalf of the school and otherwise to the intent that henceforth the said Obadiah Edward Roberts shall enjoy the whole and full benefits and advantage of the said school and the future profits thereof as fully as I have done hitherto. And Mr. O.E. Roberts shall use his best endeavour to maintain as he has done in the past the reputation of the said school"<sup>23</sup>

The sacrifice was clear from the declaration above. Presently, is there any proprietor or proprietress that can release his/her school to the principal? What of his children and grand-children? The sacrifice of the principal, Mr. Roberts continued until 1941 when he donated his piece

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<sup>22</sup>

<sup>23</sup>

### Background to Educational Sector in Nigeria

of land to build the school permanent site in Mushin Lagos. Other private owned schools with community-based institutions were popularly in the south and the Middle Belt, owned jointly by the villages, clans and communities which the core north did not establish.

The new private schools of the 1990s came into being because of the long abandonment and neglect to fund public owned schools by the military governments. They are profit driven and basically one man business enterprises. There are purely elitist in nature both in terms of cost, location, and structures. These schools charges tuition fees ranging from #500,000 to #5 million per term and were totally outrageous. These had denied the families of the rural poor and the lower rungs and subordinate workers in the Nigerian society good education. It has also permanently aliened the existing relationship and fraternization which hitherto flourished in schools from 1960s between the children of the top and those of the lower levels of the society.

The licenses given to the private universities and other tertiary institutions to establish and operate in 1999 by Obasanjo government was vital landmark in the history of education in Nigeria. After 20 years of the privatization of higher education, the numbers have gone beyond expectation as more are in the way.<sup>24</sup> In 2011, the government of President Goodluck Jonathan wanted to bridge the south-north educational gap and boost enrolment in the policy of Amajiri Schools. This attempt was rejected and denied support by people of the north so it died naturally.

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<sup>24</sup>In January 2021, the Federal Executive Council approved 20 new private universities in Nigeria

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### **Conclusion**

The long years of military rule and bastardization of education through poor remuneration, lack of training, poor facilities and incentives, exemplified by massive labour migration to developed countries of the world, uncountable strikes, corruption and embezzlement, quackery and incompetence among others had automatically devalued the public schools for the boosting of the exploitative profit oriented private schools in the country. Today there is no proper and effective regulation of the standard of private schools except the universities carried out by the National University Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and National Board for Technology Education (NBTE). Also, western education came from the southern part of Nigeria which had gone far beyond the northern parts whose peoples were dragging foot, moving sluggishly but also still reject it in many dimensions.

Generally, there is massive progress in quantitative education particularly in terms of the number of schools, increase in enrolment and the graduates turn out across all levels of education. The quality of education does not however grow with the pace of the quantity of education because of lack of political will among the elites and leadership class in Nigeria to invest in the sector.

National Youth Service Corps and Education in Nigeria

# 2

## **National Youth Service Corps and Education in Nigeria**

Achiaku Fanen

### **Introduction**

The genesis of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) can be traced to the immediate post-independence era of Nigeria. The period which was characterised by ethnic loyalties, mutual group suspicion and distrust that culminated in the traumatic events of a bloody civil war. During the time, Nigeria was further plagued by associated problems of under-development such as: poverty, mass illiteracy, acute shortage of high-

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skilled manpower, woeful inadequate socio-economic infrastructural facilities.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the Nigerian civil war, the Nigerian government led by Gen. Yakubu Gowon was faced with onerous task of nation-building to curb the issues of ethno-regional affiliation and religious crisis. The compulsory one year service for graduates ensures unity. In same vein, the scheme evolved the posting of Corps members to institutions of learning for educational purpose<sup>2</sup>.

Since the inception of NYSC, federal government of Nigeria has been making efforts to improve the level of literacy in the nation through the National Youth Service Corps scheme. Through the NYSC scheme, the federal government has promoted formal and informal education for the communities of the 36 states in the federation. This is why most of the Corps members of NYSC are posted to primary, secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities as places for their primary assignment. The Corps member of NYSC has played vital roles in the education of the host community members<sup>3</sup>. Against this backdrop, the study examines the NYSC scheme and the development of education in Nigeria with a highlight on its intervention, roles, impact and challenges.

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<sup>1</sup>Veronica E. Elemure, *Effectiveness of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme Among 2012-2013 Corps Members in Lagos and Oyo States, Nigeria*. (Ibadan: University of Ibadan unpublished Thesis, 2015) 22.

<sup>2</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education and The University Curriculum in History: Implication for Nation Building," *Journal of Education and Practice* 1, no 2 (2010): 14

<sup>3</sup>M. A. Oyebamiji and Inemesit Essiet Umofia, "Influence of The Activities of The National Youth Service Corps Scheme on The Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States," *International Journal of Education and Evaluation*, 2, no.1 (2016): 29. Issn 2489-0073 [Www.liardpub.Org](http://www.liardpub.org)

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### **Conceptual Clarification**

To ensure a proper understanding of the topic, an elucidation of some key concepts is necessary.

### **Education**

Education is the important means through which the society qualitatively improves itself, passes its main characteristics to generations as well as dynamic instrument of change and development.<sup>4</sup> According to Osinilu, education is the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help the individual develop physically, mentally, socially, economically, politically and even spiritually.<sup>5</sup> Ocho in his opinion stated that, education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society.<sup>6</sup>

In every society, education connotes acquisition of knowledge which is the most valuable thing in life. Thus, no community will remain underdeveloped if it has the needed capital and has properly invested in human capital through viable and qualitative education. This is because the acquired knowledge and skills will guarantee the economic and social liberation of the individual and by implication enhance their contribution to the community and national development<sup>7</sup>. In essence, this has prompted the then United Nations (UN) secretary general Kofi Anan to state that to “educate the child is to reduce poverty,” Many

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<sup>4</sup> K.K Abbagana, “Girl-Child Education; A critical issue for National Development in Nigeria,” *Journal of Education and leadership development* 5, no 2, (2013): 2.

<sup>5</sup> C. Osinlu, “Women Education” in Akinkugbe, *Nigeria and Education; The challenge Ahead proceedings and Policy Recommendation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Obafemi Awolowo Foundation Dialogue* (Ibadan: Spectrum books, 1994), 16

<sup>6</sup> O. Ocho, *Culture and Girl Child Education* (Enugu: Institute of Development Studies, 2005), 2.

<sup>7</sup> K.K Abbagana “Girl-Child Education; A critical...p2

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studies have taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, as a result of the importance attached to educating the child, successive governments in Nigeria have developed several policies and programmes to ensure that children in Nigeria are given the right to education every Nigerian child ought to get to make them functional in the society in line with the 1999 United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) child right-act which stressed that, every child [male or female] is entitled to receive free and compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education<sup>9</sup>.

Education is implicitly a part of culture as it is a life-long learning process that enables a person, irrespective of age; understand the relationship between the environment and his or her peculiar circumstances. Education, whether formal, informal or non- formal, helps towards the development of a complete, balanced and rational personality. Consequently, the lack of education will have negative influences on the individual, family and society at large<sup>10</sup>. It is in view of the importance of education that the NYSC scheme was designed to have its contribution to the development of education in the country.

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<sup>8</sup>Kofi Anan cited in May A. Rihani. *Keeping the Promise; Five Benefits of Girls Secondary Education* (Washington: Academy for Educational Development, 2006), 5

<sup>9</sup>V.O Money and J. Erhinyodawwe "Girl-Child Education in Nigeria; Some militating Factors and the way forward" *Nigeria Journal of Teacher Education and Teaching*, Vol. 1, No 1, 2005.P. 6

<sup>10</sup>Kobani Doreen "Impact of girl-child education on community development; a study of Ika Local Government of Akwa Ibom State," *Journal of Research on Humanities and Social Science* 4, no. 12, (20014): 122.

## National Youth Service Corps and Education in Nigeria

### **Background to the Development of Education in Nigeria from 1960**

It is widely accepted that education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attributes and forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. Invariably, it is a process for growth and dissemination of knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee systems. Whether traditional or western-oriented, it seeks to achieve these goals irrespective of curriculum, methods and organisation designed for the purpose. The colonial education inherited by Nigeria was that which did not conform to the already existing traditional education. The western colonial education failed to conform to the indigenous education as imposing of the foreign system on the traditional framework did not lead to a happy fusion of the systems<sup>11</sup>.

The colonial education which was inherited by Nigeria was criticised for being too theoretical to be able to make meaningful impact on the life of Nigerians. Subjects taught in schools reflected the taste of the colonial education officials; hence school curricula were built around the existing colonial values. Students were supposed to mimic their teachers in subjects like English Language which involved demonstration of competency. The same problem which informed dependency on past colonial education relics seems to have continued till date<sup>12</sup>.

Within the first two decades of Nigeria's independence, the education system and policy were characterised by series of committees and conferences. Concrete steps toward curriculum reforms started in 1966 by the National Education Research Council (NERC) under Chief Awokoya<sup>13</sup>. In September, 1969 the curriculum reform conference was

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<sup>11</sup>Babs Fanfua,*History of Education in Nigeria*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 17.

<sup>12</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education,9.

<sup>13</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education,10s

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held with discussions on appropriate curriculum contents and problems in Nigeria. Further conferences in 1973 led to the production of the National Policy on Education in 1977, 1981 and 2004. The production of this document and the eventual take-off of the policy in 1982 in some states of the country marked the end of the post-independence piece-meal and rather disjointed adjustments to the colonial education heritage bequeathed on Nigeria<sup>14</sup>.

Adopting education as an instrument for effecting national development, the Federal government of Nigeria realised that education is not only the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, but also an investment which the nation makes for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources<sup>15</sup>. In order to fully realise the potential contributions of education to the achievement of such desires, the National Policy on Education in Nigeria was launched in 1977. The orientation of the policy is geared towards self-realization, individual and national efficiency and national unity aimed at achieving social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological development. In 1985, the objectives of the policy were broadened to include free primary education among others. However, this policy has been reviewed from time to time<sup>16</sup>.

Until 1984, the structure of Nigeria education system was 6 years of primary schools, 5 to 7 years of post-primary schools (Secondary, Teacher Training College and sixth form) and 4 to 6 yrs of tertiary education (College of education, polytechnics, College of Technology and University education). From 1985, the structure that emanated can be classified thus, pre-primary or kindergarten education (2 to 3 yrs),

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<sup>14</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education,10-11

<sup>15</sup>Adamu Anjikwi Mbahi, *An Investigation Into The Factors Which Determine Students' Choice of Art Education in Secondary Schools in Nigeria*, (London: University of London, unpublished Dissertation, 1990), 17

<sup>16</sup>O. B. Adesina "The Effect of National Youth Service Corps Teachers,

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for the children of ages 3 to 5 years the primary school which is of 6 years period for children of ages 6 to 11 yrs, the post primary education which is of 6 years duration but divided into two halves (3 years of Junior Secondary School and 3 years of Senior Secondary School) and the 4 to 6 of tertiary education level. This is called the 6-3-3-4 system<sup>17</sup>.

The National Policy on Education has provisions for the teaching of basic subjects and courses at all levels of education. At the primary level, the general objectives of education include: "the inculcation of permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively; giving the child opportunities to develop manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity<sup>18</sup>. On Nigeria's return to democracy, led by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in 1999, the Nation launched a Universal Basic Education Scheme. The specific targets of the Scheme were total eradication of illiteracy by the year 2010 and increase in adult literacy rate from 57% to 70% by 2003<sup>19</sup>. The National Policy on Education has provisions for the teaching of basic subjects and courses at all levels of education. At the primary level, the general objectives of education include: "the inculcation of permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively; giving the child opportunities to develop manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity<sup>20</sup>.

The goals currently emphasized in general education centre on contemporary life outside schools - economic recovery, social justice, employment, training, self-employment, patriotism, etc. There is a little

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<sup>17</sup>O. B. Adesina "The Effect of National Youth Service Corps Teachers, 3

<sup>18</sup>A.A.Mbah, *An Investigation Into The Factors Which Determine Students'*, 17

<sup>19</sup>L.A. Amaghonyeodiwe&T.S. Osinubi, "The Nigerian Educational System and Returns to Education," *International Journal of Applied Econometrics and Quantitative Studies*, 3, no.1 (2006): 23.

<sup>20</sup>A.A.Mbah, *An Investigation Into The Factors Which Determine Students'*, 17.

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regard for the promotion of sensory experiences, creativity and experiment in learners. It is also the responsibility of education to assist students to see, understand and appreciate things. In other words, education should help children to use their natural capabilities for perceiving efficiently - to have eyes that 'see', ears that 'hear', minds that 'think' and to have hands that manipulate. The development of these skills is crucial to children that it should not be left to chance in the society, but entrusted to specially train professional teachers<sup>21</sup>.

However, the Nigerian educational system today still follows the rigid structure of time periods and grade-level progression found in Western education." Where there is little change in the curriculum, it is either one subject is substituted for the other or dropped outright<sup>22</sup>. on the other hand, in the past two decades on the nation's return to democracy and avowed decision in eradicating illiteracy, instead of getting the best from the lean input in the field in budgetary allocations, the educational sector has continued to experience very low funding. As a result, educationists have had the opinion that Nigeria's educational system is witnessing high increase in rate of students' poor academic performance most especially at the secondary school level. Invariably, this affects and militates against the overall standard of education. There is this believe that education is not just decreasing but decreasing at an alarming as well as increasing rate. In south west Nigeria secondary schools, students' academic performance is poor generally going by existing records<sup>23</sup>.

### Dearth of teachers in Nigeria Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Teachers are those who are trained and equipped professionally to guide the act of teaching in the classroom. When teachers are not well-

<sup>21</sup>A.A.Mbah, *An Investigation Into The Factors Which Determine Students'*, 19-20.

<sup>22</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education, 9.

<sup>23</sup>O. B. Adesina "The Effect of National Youth Service Corps Teachers, 3.

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equipped and lack the quality wherewithal of instruction that is expected of them, what they give to pupils/students they teach will be of worse quality and the outcome of such learning will be half-baked and of low value.<sup>24</sup> Historically, teacher shortage is not the exclusive problem in Nigerian educational system. It is a world phenomenon. The UNESCO Report of 1997 indicated that as at 1980, the world with total population of 5.5 billion only had 40 million teachers in its teaching profession which gave the average of one teacher per 112 inhabitants. In 1965, there were 100 secondary school teachers for 150,000 people in Africa<sup>25</sup>. According to Tayo and Bukola it has been observed that the total number of teachers available in Nigerian secondary schools is far below the needed for efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of instructions<sup>26</sup>.

Research indicates that the total number of teachers available in secondary schools in Nigeria is far below required for effective implementation of curriculum content. Specifically, UNESCO's report shows that the total number of teachers available in Nigeria in 2009 was 466,800 and that in 2015, 688,200 teachers were needed. This demonstrates that Nigeria needs to increase the number of its teaching employees by 6.68% yearly to meet the teachers demand as recommended by UNESCO<sup>27</sup>.

Furthermore, the Nigerian school system is increasingly challenged with many complex problems most notably, teacher shortage as there

<sup>24</sup>Y.A. Abubakar & I.M. Akambi, "Addressing the Factors Responsible For Schooling without Learning in Primary and Secondary Schools in Nigeria," *International Journal of Synergy and Research* 7, (2018): 171. Doi: 10.17951 <http://ljsr.Journals.Umcs.Pl>

<sup>25</sup>Tayo Subair & Rachael Bukola Talabi "Teacher Shortage in Nigerian Schools: Causes, Effects and Administrators Coping Strategies" *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences* 2, no. 4, (2015): 32.

<sup>26</sup>Tayo Subair & Rachael Bukola Talabi "Teacher Shortage in Nigerian Schools, 32.

<sup>27</sup>Unesco/Efa *Global Monitoring Report*, Unesco, Paris. (2009),

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is a general outcry that the standards of education are falling and morals flagging. Some blame pupils for this apparent decline in quality of education and moral values. A thoughtful few think that they are due to the nature of changes in all directions. Majority blame the teachers for the woes in our schools. They are not as devoted and dedicated to the cause of education as their predecessors. Teachers as a group blame parents and the children. They also blame government for unattractive condition of service and poor physical facilities in some parts of the educational system. The problem of declining quality of education can be attributed to inadequate number of teachers to teach, inspect and supervise pupils and students. The outcome of lack of adequate teaching, inspection and supervision is seen in the declining quality of Education<sup>28</sup>

The principal of Government College Makurdi in responding to NYSC and Development of education further stressed that, her colleagues have retired. She and others are about to retire and the ever expanding school system requires a corresponding number of adequately trained teachers to fill the void created by teachers who are no more. She emphasized that, if there was no increase in total enrolment of primary and secondary learners, school system must still recruit teachers yearly to replace its losses due to death, retirement, change of profession, marriage of women teacher and other causes<sup>29</sup>.

More so, poor working conditions represent one of the major factors for the high dropout rate among teachers during their first years of

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<sup>28</sup>F. E. Arong & M. A Ogbadu "Major Causes of Declining Quality of Education in Nigeria from Administrative Perspective: A Case Study of Dekina Local Government Area," *Canadian Social Science*6, no. 3 (2010): 184.

<sup>29</sup>Oral interview with Agnes Dookenter, 55+, Female, school Administrator at government college Makurdi on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

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work. Poor working conditions affect teachers' level of satisfaction hence their unwillingness to continue teaching<sup>30</sup>.

In line with Yusuf's observation, a visit to some public and private primary schools in selected local governments of Benue State revealed that majority of schools domiciled in rural areas are short of teachers to teach children<sup>31</sup>. The situation is worrisome as many teachers in the rural areas often seek transfer into the schools that are domiciled in the city or jobs and business endeavours with better remuneration<sup>32</sup>.

A 2007 research in Kebbi indicated that, there was shortage of qualified teaching staff in the available secondary schools in Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State. This is not uncommon in the whole twenty one (21) Local Government Areas of the State. This ugly situation is due to the negligence of the education sector by the state government since the inception of the current administration in the state in 2007<sup>33</sup>.

As a result of inadequate replacement in the already understaffed educational sector, the NYSC has helped to cover to some extent the gap created by the shortage of teachers. The principal GCM stated that using her school as an example, the number of NYSC for the school would have been significant but never be enough despite the fact that

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<sup>30</sup> R.M. Ingersoll, "Turnover among Mathematics and Science Teachers," *The U.S, National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching For the 21st Century*, (2000): 15. <Http://Www.Ed.Gov>

<sup>31</sup> Y.A. Abubakar & I.M. Akambi, "Addressing the Factors Responsible For Schooling without Learning, 171

<sup>32</sup> Oral Interview with Sase Andrew Terfa, age 55+, Male, Principal at Government Secondary School Gboko, Benue state on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

<sup>33</sup> A.J. Ifeanyichukwu & N. Apine, "The Problems and Negative Effects of The Use of National Youths Service Corps (Nysc) Members as Ad-Hoc Teaching Staff in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State," *Iosr Journal of Research & Method In Education*4, Issue 6 (2014): 3. <Www.Iosrjournals.Org>

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she had to reject some who do not have basic requirements for teaching.

Accordingly, the NYSC State Coordinator of Benue State posited that, there is a dire need by principals and proprietors who keep requesting for Corps members to alleviate the problem of teacher shortage in their schools. Therefore, when Corps members are to be posted to their places of primary assignment, the educational sector is given consideration above other sectors. He stressed that 70% of the Corps members are posted to schools where they can render services as it has been observed that other sectors such as ministries underutilize Corps members or limit them to secretariat duties running in contrast with their fields of study thereby making some Corps members redundant at a time when schools are sending formal request for Corps member to be posted to their schools<sup>34</sup>.

The effect of shortage of teachers is not limited to poor quality of instructional materials and poor students' academic performance, but also has a devastating effect on both the schools' administrators and the teaching personnel<sup>35</sup>. However, as the shortage of qualified teachers has continued unabated, Corps members are used because they serve as source of cheap labour especially to state governments and private organizations who do not want to employ permanent staff because of the cost implications. The allowance payable by the federal government of Nigeria to every Corps member is N33,000 per month at present. State governments and private organizations where the Corps members are posted are allowed under the law to pay the Corps members whatever they like depending on their financial strength. This provision has been seriously abused. Some states pay as low as N3,500 per month. The Corps Members are made to do more work with less

<sup>34</sup> Oral Interview with Shicha Joshua Simon, 50+, male, NYSC State Coordinator at NYSC State Secretariat Makurdi, Benue State on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Adesina C. *Declining Quality Education in History of Education in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Educational Publishers Ltd, 1977), 10

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pay<sup>36</sup>. More so, it is notable that some private secondary schools are in the habit of recruiting Corps members every year without any attempt at retaining them as permanent staff<sup>37</sup>.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Corps members have been used across the nation to bridge the gap in supply of teachers. There is no doubt that if we want to raise the standard of education in Nigeria, the recruitment of adequate and qualified teachers are needed. Additionally, training and retraining of teachers in the right quantity and quality is sacrosanct. Also, efforts should be increased with regard to retaining Corps members and ensure their continuous professional development in teaching through capacity building programmes such as workshops and seminars in order to unceasingly update their professional knowledge and skills to ensure effective actualization of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) objectives<sup>38</sup>.

### **The Role of NYSC in the development of Education in Nigeria**

The NYSC has been in the forefront towards the development of primary, secondary and communal education of the Nigerian populace both in rural and urban centres. The NYSC has also remained in the vanguard of the nation's drive to promote self-help initiatives in rural and urban communities through the various development programmes executed by Corps members with active participation of Community members.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> A.J. Ifeanyichukwu & N.Apine "The Problems and Negative Effects of the Use of National Youths Service Corps, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Veronica E. Elemure, *Effectiveness of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme*, 29-31.

<sup>38</sup> Y.A. Abubakar & I.M. Akambi, "Addressing the Factors Responsible For Schooling without Learning, 175

<sup>39</sup> National Youth Service Corps, "Abc" Of Community Development Service, 1.

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Some of the Notable non curricula educational roles of the NYSC Corps members are:

- Sensitization of the public on fundamental human rights
- Public lecture and awareness on fundamental human rights.
- Career guidance and counselling for students
- Awareness campaign on sustainable environmental management and regeneration.
- Making presentations in the mass media to enlighten people on socio-cultural education.
- To contribute to public safety on our roads through sensitization and control of traffic and the Establishment of road safety clubs in schools.
- Awareness campaign on the danger of drug abuse.
- To disseminate information on how to manage disasters through Corps Emergency Vanguards<sup>40</sup>.

The various CDS groups in charge of the various sensitization programs afford the Corps members, through working with the local inhabitants, greater insights into local traditions and customs and general knowledge of the people; motivate local communities towards self-help projects<sup>41</sup>. Other means of information and enlightenment operate independently and have been accessible to the public in one form or the other. The activities of the Corps members aimed at improving knowledge on social issues are put in place to assist these independent agencies of the society to educate the public<sup>42</sup>. NYSC Corps members are put on duty at least once a month with an experienced teacher.

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<sup>40</sup>National Youth Service Corps, "Abc" Of Community Development Service, 5

<sup>41</sup>Oyebamiji, M. A. And Adekola, G. *Fundamentals of Community Development in Nigeria*, (Port Harcourt:University Of Port Harcourt Press, 2008), 101.

<sup>42</sup>Aremu, Fatai Ayinde "National Youth Service Corps Programme and the Quest for National Integration: Issues for Policy Consideration," *Journal of Management and Social Sciences* (2018),

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He/she is expected to write and submit a report of the period under duty<sup>43</sup>.

### The Impact of NYSC on Education in Nigeria

The one year service begins with a three week camp orientation during which the prospective Corps members are formally inducted into the scheme, and exposed to its underlying objectives. Afterwards, the Corps members are deployed to various public and private sector establishments. These establishments are regarded as their areas of primary assignment. They include schools, hospitals, agricultural establishments, government ministries, and various other sectors (both public and private).<sup>44</sup>

The concept of community development is an educational method by NYSC in which the efforts of the Corps members themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of Corps members host communities, to integrate the Corps members into the commercial, social and industrial life of the nation, to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.<sup>45</sup>

The SAED of the NYSC programme that was introduced in 2012 started with 12 different categories of skills offered in this SAED program. These skills areas include Agro-allied, Automobile, Beautification, Construction, Cosmetology, Culture and Tourism, Education, Environment, Film and Photography, Food Processing/Preservation, Information Communication Technology and Power and Energy. The SAED educates and equips Corps members with knowledge for

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<sup>43</sup>Oral interview with Agnes Dookenter, 55+, Female, school Administrator at government college Makurdi on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

<sup>44</sup>A.J. Ifeanyichukwu & N.Apine “The Problems and Negative Effects of the Use of National Youths Service, 1

<sup>45</sup>Onyeozu, A. M. *Understanding Community Development*, (Port Harcourt: Davidstones Publishers Ltd, 2007), 20.

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entrepreneurship and the ability to train other members of the community<sup>46</sup>. Annually, the programme mobilizes and prepares over two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) youths to become employable or start-up their own businesses after completing their mandatory one-year service. The sole objective of these programmes is to encourage the Nigerians generally, and Nigeria youths particularly, to highly involve in skill acquisition for creating jobs.<sup>47</sup>

### **Major Challenges faced by NYSC in the Development of Education in Nigeria**

Firstly, there is currently short supply of Corps members. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national health requirements in safety measures, the state no longer has the capacity of two thousand five hundred Corps members it used to receive previously. The states boast of only twice lesser than those figures. This has created a gap/shortage of Corps members posted to schools for the purpose of teaching thereby resulting to an increase in demand for Corps members by institutions<sup>48</sup>.

Furthermore, change in educational system and curriculum also affects Corps member's contribution to education. Teacher education programme has not been effectively done to take into cognisance the changing nature of the education system in the last few decades. Teacher preparation and university instructional programmes for secondary school teachers-to-be must be relevant to the teaching/learning situation in the secondary schools given the prevailing challenges in the world today<sup>49</sup>. The principal Government College Makurdi, while discussing about the standard of education,

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<sup>46</sup>Debom. M. Tambari and D. I. Taylor, "The Influence of National Youth Service Corps, 147.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid 149.

<sup>48</sup>Oral Interview with Shicha Joshua Simon, 50+, male, NYSC State Coordinator at NYSC State Secretariat Makurdi, Benue State on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

<sup>49</sup>W. O Ibukun and A. Aboluwodi, "Nigeria's National Policy on Education, 11.

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pointed out that change is a constant phenomenon in life but Nigerian government educational policy change is too erratic. The policies are hardly stable. The school system had been 7-5-4 to 6-6-4 to 6-3-3-4. The policy makers remove some subjects totally from the school curriculum like history or merge other subjects into one such as National values, civic education, basic education, basic tech. change is good but the abrupt change inconsistently is drawing the teachers and learners backward. This situation makes it difficult for Corps members to handle subjects that have been merged and require two to four teachers to teach and examine learners. Moderations should be made because changing completely isn't good as consistency makes teachers and learners perform better. Policy makers should look closely at what suits teachers and learners and stop obstructing or confusing both the learner and teachers as we now have.

### Conclusion

From the discus above, it is evident that Corps members have been used across the nation to bridge the gap in supply of teachers. The NYSC scheme has contributed to the development of education through formal and non-formal means. The Corps members have served as teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. However, they are mostly used at the secondary level. The most significant challenge notable in the discus is that of short supply of Corps members. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national health requirements in safety measures, and also change in educational system and curriculum also affects Corps members contribution to education.

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# 3

## **Knowledge Deficit in Nigerian Education and NYSC Scheme: A Nexus<sup>1</sup>**

Onah P. Otumala

### **Introduction**

Education is an all-embracing sector of national development that every other sector relied on for survival and progress. "It is transmitting the cultural heritage and values to the younger generations of the society. It is this inter-generational transmission of cultural heritage that is the primary meaning and function of education."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>PAI Obanya *Education: The Answer to All Societal Problems.* 4

### Knowledge Deficit in Nigerian Education and NYSC Scheme:

This chapter examines the general view of the education sector in Nigeria. This study focuses on the current state of education, attempting to assess and appraise its development stride and deficit in the country. Finally, the study attempts solutions to those educational deficits with critical emphases on the contributions of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme. That is, what and how the NYSC have been doing to resolve or bridging those deficits in the society for a long time now.

#### **The State of Education Sector in Nigeria**

The education sector in Nigeria has evolved through several stages of development to the current level. It started from non-formal learning where children were taught moral instructions, ethical behaviours, and domestic roles for male and female folks, semi-formal apprenticeship scheme in indigenous crafts like blacksmithing, weaving, textile making, pottery making, wood carving, dying of clothes, herbal medicine practice, among others. This actually corresponded with the traditional form of education that is highly influenced by the culture and environment of the people.<sup>2</sup>

The Islamic education in Nigeria could be trace to pre-colonial period. By the fifteen century the ruling Saifawa dynasty of Kanem-Bornu Empire was the first to accept Islam, and followed by Hausa states. The jihad led by Othman Dan Fodio had fought and taken over most of the far North while the Sokoto Caliphate was established in the first half on the 19th century. The Islamic education spread around the Muslim areas quickly with the religion. The main aim of Islamic education is impartation of the knowledge of Islam and the molding of its culture on the life of Muslim children.

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<sup>2</sup>OPOnah “Indigenous Crafts in Igedeland, Central Nigeria 1922-2015: A Study of Continuity and Change” Ph.D. Dissertation University of Jos. 2019

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The second vital aspects of the education sector in Nigeria is the western formal education which product is basically proficiency in numeracy, literacy, critical thinking, communication ability, technical skills towards empowering individuals to put food on their table and building economies.<sup>3</sup> It implies that western formal education prepare people for wage economies in the modernising sectors. This has been the dominant factor propelling and influencing education in Nigeria since the colonial periods. It is a force behind most educational planning and objectives currently. This explains why science is emphasized over humanities by all education stakeholders and policy planners in the country.<sup>4</sup> This perception or view of education is actually narrow and tends to create huge problems and crisis of development in the sector itself, and consequently on all other sectors.

Furthermore, there is a leadership challenge in the country, lacking those who could innovate and pilot visionary quality policies linked to local developmental needs of the country. This is because the leaders and stakeholders in the sector were products of the same system. This occasioned the high premium on the paper qualification (certificates) rather than the practical performance or display of skills.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it is very clear that poor political leadership stagnate the progress of the education sector and the entire system in Nigeria.

### **Knowledge Deficit in Education Sector in Nigeria**

There are numerous areas and issues that education in Nigeria is yet to contend with till present times. Such areas were inadequately handled while others are under pretensions. Generally, western education fails to respond and align appropriately to the yearnings and needs of the

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<sup>3</sup>T. Falola “Education for Self-Employment” O E Tangban and CCC Osakwe (Eds) *perspectives in African Historical Studies: Essays in Honour of Professor Chinedu Nwafor Ubah*. Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna 2013. 656

<sup>4</sup>See National policy on Education

<sup>5</sup>The same issue of qualification caused the fraud in certificate forging, impersonation, and others.

### Knowledge Deficit in Nigerian Education and NYSC Scheme:

Nigerian people even from its inception over a century ago. It could not really agree with the indigenous form of education of the Nigerian people particularly the functionality perspectives.<sup>6</sup>The results from this situation and many other inadequacies of education are spelt out here. Technology-based education is one critical area of education that our education needed intervention urgently. From the colonial education and post-independent policies and attempts to introduce technological and vocational training into the sector has never achieve much result in helping Nigerian youth to acquire practical expertise required to function properly in the society. The school curriculum in Nigeria for several decades have over-emphasized certificates and its marriage with white collar jobs only. What the content of the education curriculum is supposed to contain have been left for the informal sector of our society. They include technical skills in electricity, electrical works, auto mechanical works, shoe production, photography, ICT skills, fashion designing, welding and fabrication, furniture works etc. There were several occasions where local and foreign companies operating in Nigeria would hire foreigners to carry out those highly paid jobs in the country particularly in the oil and gas sector.<sup>7</sup>Undeniably, those employment opportunities are in shortage and lacking thereby unemployed and underemployed youths are becoming social menace everywhere in the country.

In the education sector too the number and quality of Technical Secondary schools where vocational and technical skills are taught to learners at early age have reduced significantly in the last forty years. In the 1980s most states of Nigeria had between 3-6 technical colleges apart from the Federal own. Most of those schools have been closed down out rightly or intentionally starved of funding till extinction.

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<sup>6</sup>See BT Bingel "Traditional Education in Beromland" CC Jacobs (ed.) *Studies of Berom in History and Culture Volume 1*. Jos, BHP 1995. 157

<sup>7</sup>SanusiAbdulraseed 55+, Director, Corps Welfare and Health matters, NYSC Headquarters Abuja. Interviewed on 20/02/2021

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In addition the emergence of the profit-driven private schools in the country did not help but worsen the matter. The proprietors who invest in the education sector massively in recent times never see value in investing their resources in the technical and vocational type of education. At least in the seventies and eighties, there were some private owned technical and vocational institutions which have become unpopular now. Therefore, while this kind of education was dying and disappearing from the scene, normal secondary schools were expanding geometrically. The society had actually viewed technical training with disdain both at secondary and tertiary levels of education for long to an extent that made private investors to scare away from it for fear of low patronage. This scenario is epitomized by the number of applicants seeking admissions into Polytechnics vis-a-vis universities, as well as their job placement in salary earning domain/environment like the civil service. This still re-emphasize the fact of poor orientation which is basically on salary earning. A product of the polytechnics should be oriented on setting up an enterprise than going to earn salary. We must be receptive to changes, reshape our education towards a new mindset, acquire new knowledge and apply such to decision making.<sup>8</sup>

Another deficit in education is the entrepreneurship skills and innovation kind of education. From the colonial period till the present times the curriculum and its implementation was not enough towards the training of entrepreneurial skills. Just like the technical schools discussed above, business schools are gradually disappearing from the scene. The same factors that affected technical education also caused the down turn of business education in the country. Undeniably from 1960s to early 1990s was a golden era when Nigerian education was on a right track but the long years of military rule brought on board people/leaders whose interest was to kill the sector for personal gains.

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<sup>8</sup>T.Falola “ Education for Self-Employment” 657

### Knowledge Deficit in Nigerian Education and NYSC Scheme:

Therefore, we have a National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) located in Benin Edo state to coordinate the activities and examinations of all schools at this level leading to the award of crafts certificates. It is really unfortunate that youths rushed through schools up to tertiary level and are out to ride “Okada” but from the onset would have passed through the technical and business training to become permanently employed, self-reliant and be employer of labour.<sup>9</sup>

The system to create functional education in Nigeria was supposed to start from home where parents and early childhood teachers would detect and discover the potentials of their wards and guide them towards achieving such endowments. The inadequacies of the education sector created the hatred of western education by the people of Southeastern Nigeria. The Igbo generally developed a perception and hatred that western education is not capable of providing enough income quickly and timely to meet up with their needs and social necessity and responsibility of men. Therefore, boys and young men in this part of Nigeria preferred early training in skills, trade and general merchandise through apprenticeship scheme system. In this system the young boy served the master for a specified period while the latter pay with training, tools, or goods during the graduation.<sup>10</sup> They espouse the legacy of traditional education which is built on the functionality of educational attainment over other values of it. This is really not appropriate for our national development as other values of education like communication, critical thinking, literacy, numeracy, decision making, are lagging behind. It has also created female educationally dominated society and had affected quality leadership and maximum contribution to Nigerian development.

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<sup>9</sup>See T. Falola “Education for Self-Employment” 658

<sup>10</sup>KelechiOsuafor 42+, Spare part dealer, Interviewed in Masaka, Karu LGA Nasarawa State on 20/02/2021

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In correlation to this, female gender issues and challenges in education sector particularly in the core North is enormous. The girl child, in some cases, is left uneducated with the cultural myopic conception that she would be married out of the family with the potential benefit of the certificate. This misconception is totally disastrous not only to the girl child or female folk but the entire society. Now the repercussion of this wrong notion of ignorance is hitting the north and entire Nigeria. There are two obvious examples: The early teenage marriage has become phenomenon with its attendant prevalence of Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF) and death is common to only the region.<sup>11</sup> The second result is that the ignorant girls have become very useful tools in the hands of the Boko Haram terrorists as best bomb carriers hidden within the hijab and excellent detonators in public places with heavy casualties. The educational deficit is the greatest currently in the country. The poverty index release by the NBS show this clearly with core North ranking top of the ladder, diseases, childbirth mortality, VVF, polio, hunger etc. Their higher indices go in line with the rate of illiteracy in the country.<sup>12</sup> Indeed when you educate a woman, you educate a nation have being a popular slogan.

In relation to the above, the need to reduce the number of Out-of-School children particularly in the northern states of Nigeria must be emphasized here. Total privatization of education was carried out by past leaders who had no value for education. The cost of education shifted to the learner: The affordability of quality education today is quite challenging. It depends on the cost; it is selective depending on several factors: family background, immediate environment, and social status of the learner.

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<sup>11</sup>Vesico-vaginal Festula:80,000 Nigerian women suffer annually  
[www.bougenmagazine.com](http://www.bougenmagazine.com). Accessed on 13/03/2021

<sup>12</sup>Poverty index National Bureau for Statistics [www.Statistica.com](http://www.Statistica.com) published Sept.4, 2020 accessed 13/03/2021.

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In 2010, the government of President Goodluck Jonathan came up with the Almajiri schools in the north not only to boost enrolment but also as a panacea for ameliorating the burning issue of insecurity in the country. The programme was launched and some structures erected in some states for the kick-off. This programme was very laudable and commendable for Nigerian educational development. It was not received and accepted with joy by the northern elites who were gaining from the reservoir of stack illiterate children and youth as potential terrorists, kidnappers, bandits, killer-herdsmen and all forms of criminality ravaging the country. It died naturally after that government left office. In 2019-2020 when the former Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido was vocal in this matter of educating the Almajiri and other less privileged children in region, he was ousted from power by the northern power system. Today nothing is heard about the Almajiri education any longer. It is like dragging the horse to the river to drink water while it is pulling the owner back.

Lack of morality and value oriented educational system: The twenty-nine year military era of Ironsi to Abdulsalam swept most excellent schools built on moral foundation by the Christian missions across Nigeria. This was carried out under the subterfuge of state governments taken over the ownership and management of these schools. After the takeover of those schools, they changed their names in line with wishes of governors of the states concerned. This was done without utmost faith and sincerity of purpose to develop the schools. Most of the schools were not adequately funded and teachers were not paid well thereby reducing their standard over time. Indeed, from the 1990s when private profit became the motive driving investment in the educational sector moral and value had already been sacrificed for money. In some private schools presently, parents pay teachers and school authorities to allow their children indulge in examination malpractices. The only exception could be some few schools owned by faith-based organizations (Christianity and Islam) in the country.

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Finally, the near absence of teacher training institutions in the country had contributed to the denigration of the teaching profession. It started with the abolishing of such institutions specially designed and mandated to train teachers. There is an undeniable gap of grade II training between the GCE and NCE/B.Ed. Teaching is a craft like other professions which needed special nurture and care for good reward or wages. The teachers whose early education were in conventional secondary schools before attaining NCE/B.Ed. in tertiary education could be compared to a building with faulty foundation and good roofing. The building will not stand the test of time.

### **The Role of NYSC in Bridging the Educational Gaps in Nigeria**

The establishment of the National Youth Service Corps by General Gowon was very crucial not only for the enhancement of the integration of the diverse entities that made up the country but it has become the scheme to complement existing lapses, inadequacies and gaps. A brief history of the scheme and the different panacea it has provided in the education sector are captured here.

One of the outstanding negative impacts of the British colonial rule in Nigeria is not only that it failed to build a united nation-state, but it really created strong pillars of divisions and resentment amongst the diverse ethno-religious and cultural groups that made up the country. This was achieved through different colonial strategies of divide and rule, imposition of some groups against others, withholding education from the core Muslim north, regional autonomy without cohesive approach to governance among others. Even when it was obvious that such religious, ethnic and regional interests were demonstrating towards the end of the colonial rule in the 1950s with huge agitation from the minority groups, the colonial authorities left the imminent crisis and handed over political independence to the Nigerian elites.

Shortly after the independence the political situations of the First Republic characterized by unhealthy rivalries by the regional leaders

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and the nature of politics expanded the scope of ill-feeling and widened the gap of disunity in the country. Undeniably the invitation given to the military by the political elites resulted in the two bloody military coups and the Nigerian Civil War left a social wound on the attempt to build a united country. It further aggravated the discord and doubt among the major ethnic groups in the country.<sup>13</sup> It was this progression of building a strong and united country out of people of diverse background that the NYSC was established by General Yakubu Gowon by Decree Number 24 of 22<sup>nd</sup>May, 1973. The scheme has performed the role of filling the inadequacies of the education sector discussed above through its numerous programmes and projects since inception.

First, prior to the introduction of Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programmes in 2012, there were the Community Development Services (CDS) that were oriented towards the training of Corps members on skills for self-reliance. Some of such areas include farming, fishing, animal husbandry, shoe making, garri processing, cloth weaving, fabrication of machines and other devices.<sup>14</sup> For this purpose among others, the scheme established centers; factories and production sites for practical training in several states of the country (see the table below). One cardinal objective of the CDS was to transfer basic skills to the youths. Thus

...to provide a forum for training youths in the leadership of development initiatives. The process of conceiving and implementing a project involves a long sequence of activities, demanding various level of decision-making. .. Corps members formally acquire practical training in leadership and management.

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<sup>13</sup>GO Odeh “Demilitarizing and Democratizing the Appointment of NYSC Director General: Forging Civil-Military Relations” CCC Osakwe et al (eds.) *War, Society and Leadership in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Brigadier General Shaibu Ibrahim*. Nigeria Defence Academy Kaduna, 2020 23-24

<sup>14</sup>G. Enegwea and G.Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service*.Lagos, Gabumo.1993 59-63

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Participation in Community Development activities thus assists the Corps members in developing their individual leadership talents and encourages them not to shy away from responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, there was a special collaboration of the NYSC/Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) War Against Poverty (WAP) initiative which commenced in 2009. The main target of this collaborated project was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, empower Corps members to be self-employed entrepreneurs, enable women with skills for self-reliance and improve rural production and wealth creation. <sup>16</sup>The youths were well-equipped with training and practical skills in agriculture business including snail farming, bee keeping, fish farming, animal husbandry, grass cutter farming, plantain/banana sucker multiplication and poultry farming. It was an actual business started with training, good business plan, memorandum of understanding (MOU), and a loan of between N150,000 – N250,000 with zero interest rate repayable in 30 months. 2,820 beneficiaries successfully accessed the fund.<sup>17</sup> The hallmark of this collaboration was the facilitation of attendance of advanced entrepreneurial training by seven (7) WAP entrepreneurs at Barry University, Maimi, Florida, USA. The Corps entrepreneurs were advanced loans of between N1.8m and N3.0m by National Economic Reconstruction Funds to expand their enterprises in order to employ more community members. The outstanding achievers include Gunn Ewhoborwho, Ogumade Gbenga Akin, Mary Ofojetu, Aborisade Adetola A, and Edunjobi Sunday<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> G. Enegwea and G. Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years*.63.

<sup>16</sup>*National Youth Service Corps Year Book:40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Edition* 2013. 56

<sup>17</sup>This amount was reviewed upward to #200,000 -#300,000 in 2012. See *National Youth Service Corps Year Book*. 59

<sup>18</sup>*National Youth Service Corps Year Book*.59-61. There were many outstanding youths businesses from the programme.

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One critical attainment of the NYSC/MDGs WAP programme is the replicative and massive multiplier effects it generated on the Nigerian rural employment and food production in the country. This emanates from the fact that it is regenerative plan where the Corps beneficiaries were able to train people massively in their various places of primary assignment and communities where their enterprises are based after the service year. In most cases, they were expected to train at least five youths in the host communities and embrace the Corps CDS into their farm premises for impacting skills on them. Undeniably most of the early beneficiaries surpassed this expectation. For instance, Gunn Ewhoborwho, whose agro-business was poultry farming located in Beyals State was able to train 45 youths within few years, and later expanded to a level that was recognized with an award from the state government, and was recently made the state chairman of Poultry Farmers Association.<sup>19</sup>

In 2012, given the high dearth and shortage of white collar job opportunities in the country, the federal government introduced and directed the scheme to establish Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programmes to resolve the issues of unemployment in the country. These issues were the inadequacies and shortfalls of the western education curriculum. The SAED department was mandated to prepare the youths on the job situation and engage them on core foundation for entrepreneurship and practical skills for self-reliance and employer of labour.

The SAED programme targets young graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who have limited chances of getting employed after graduation for a basic reason. Educational training oriented towards only dependent on salary collecting jobs lacked the capacity for employment creation; that is, technology and entrepreneurship.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> National Youth Service Corps Year Book.59-60

<sup>20</sup> See T. Falola “Education for Self-Employment” 658

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programme focuses on empowering them with entrepreneurial skills and building their capacities in the twelve (12) key areas including Fashion, Agriculture, ICT Education, Power & Energy, Automobiles, Film & Photography, Cosmetology, Food Processing/Preservation, Agro-allied, and much more that would transform these young graduates into sustainable change agents worldwide. The NYSC Ondo State Coordinator, Mrs. Victoria Nnenna Ani:

All the business skills we are engaged in are promising but with your diligence and commitment to the training schedule both here in camp and during the service year, they would turn out to be profitable. She reminded the members of the service Corps that not everyone is born with silver spoon in their mouth and as such those from the humble background should remember the children of whom they are and venture into skills or vocations that will make them economically independent.<sup>21</sup>

The SAED programme also created a platform that will facilitate access of young people to requisite skills and resources necessary for successful entrepreneurship as a means of job creation, improving food security and enhancing national development. The programme planned for the development of a culture of self-reliance among our youth by equipping them with the necessary skills for sustainable job creation towards national development.<sup>22</sup> The practical training started from the 3 weeks orientation camp where professionals in those areas are contracted by the scheme to give Corps members hands-on training in

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<sup>21</sup><https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/03/how-leveraging-on-nysc-can-create-wealth-for-nigerian-graduates-ani/> accessed 21/3/2021.

<sup>22</sup>"SAED" <http://nysclagos.com/saed.php> retrieved 28/09/2017.

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different skills and entrepreneurship.<sup>23</sup> In addition, NYSC had collaborations with many agencies including the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Bank of Industry (BOI), among others that provide the start-up capital in form of loans with low interest rates to the Corps members willing to further the acquired career.

For instance, the garment factories set up to assist the scheme in producing uniforms in large quantities used by Corps members for the one year national service had provided platform for them to be trained in the factories. As a result, some of these Corps members become professionals in the act of tailoring and designing as they further pursue the career.<sup>24</sup> The NYSC bakery and the NYSC water factory were added to the ventures and served as an avenue for Corps members to learn from the businesses that are run in the ventures. They engage in learning in the areas of production, manufacturing, marketing and general entrepreneurship.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, what the school curriculum failed to provide has been given to the Corps members from the camp to the post-service year with less cost in terms of time and resources.

**Table 3.1: Examples of NYSC Enterprises/ training centers and their locations in Nigeria**

S/N	Production/training center	Location
1	Shoe-making factory	Benin, Edo State
2	Fish ponds	Ogun state
3	NYSC maize storage factory	Ogun state
4	NYSC Oil palm plantation	Iwok, AkwaIbom
5	NYSC Rice farm	Niger state

<sup>23</sup>Starting my own small business participant's Workbook. Department of NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development. ii

<sup>24</sup> G. Enegwea and G. Umoden, *NYSC...* 165

<sup>25</sup>Musa Ibrahim Abdu, 47, NYSC Official (Zonal Coordinator, Katsina), NYSC Zonal Office Funtua, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

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6	NYSC community-based Health centre	Calabar
7	NYSC Garment factory	Mgbakwu, Anambra State
8	NYSC Garment factory	Minna Niger state
9	NYSC bakery	Kubwa, FCT
10	NYSC water factory	Kubwa, FCT

The NYSC scheme has also become a solution provider to knowledge gaps created by the curriculum in numerous ways, touching lives at grassroots level through education development groups. These includes: mass literacy, adult education, that enhance the education standard of host community, career guidance and counselling for students, campaign against illiteracy-girl-child education, extra-moral class for adults, organizing of in-school program, promotion of culture and tourism. All these are carried out by the different CDS groups of the scheme.

For instance, the Students of Government Girls Secondary School Kakuri Kaduna were part of a sensitization program by Corps members' on the importance of the Girl-Child Education. The girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age.<sup>26</sup> This is the age before one becomes a young adult. During this period the child is capable of being shaped, built and developed to the desirable personality and character that is generally acceptable in the society. The child would have the knowledge that is generally acceptable in the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him or her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically. It is a process through which individuals are made functional members of their

<sup>26</sup>Proshareng Intelligent Investing, The value of GIRL-Child education in Nigeria, Retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 <https://www.proshareng.com/news/Education-Knowledge/The-Value-of-Girl-Child-Education-in-Nig>

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society. Through the various engagements and programmes, NYSC have been able to educate (means to train the mind, character and abilities of individuals) people in the society, particularly the girl child to become valuable.

The Corps members have greatly affected the aspect of entrepreneurship among host communities. Entrepreneurship is complicated and multidisciplinary with roots in economics, psychological, sociology, skill acquisition and management. It is the bedrock of development aspiration of most developed nations. The Scheme is aimed at uniting and improving skills of the youths. The Corps members use the knowledge gained from NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneur Development to improve the life of their host communities through awareness and sensitization on skills acquisition and the reality that only about 10% of the Nigerian workforce has a wage, around 38% work in agriculture and 52% are self-employed. However, in the current situation of the country, one cannot depend on livelihood from experience gained within the four corners of the school classroom. There is need to acquire skill in entrepreneurship, business innovations as part of active means and source of living. The students were engaged in skill acquisition training in different aspects of entrepreneurship which includes; production of liquid soap, shoes, bags, beads making, catering services etc, as a dependable means of earning a living and productivity, NYSC is contributing to the growth and development of the country thereby filling the lapses of Nigerian education system in the society.

Agriculture is another important sector of NYSC. The Agro allied of the NYSC CDS group established different agricultural ventures and farm house equipped with modern implements to promote better food production and security. Corp members train themselves and their host communities in new farming techniques in many areas like pig keeping, poultry farming, snail, palm plantations, cashew and orange orchards.

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In terms of the general shortage of teachers in the country, NYSC has provided the best teaching manpower required in the educational sector in Nigeria. In the rural areas where there is a huge gap of teaching staff in secondary and primary schools, Corps members have offered their services.

### Conclusion

The issue of knowledge deficit has been a major dilemma begging for needful intervention over the years. The establishment of NYSC in 1973 and the institution of one of its major cardinal programmes which is the community development service in 1982 have tried to cover these areas by extending its resourcefulness on the area of education and also closing the gaps of knowledge deficit in the country. This paper traces the state of education sector in Nigeria. The paper also examined the nature of knowledge deficit in the country and mechanisms put in place to reduce the impact of knowledge deficit in the country. This study found out that the NYSC through its SAED and other educational programmes has been able to make positive impact on the nation.

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Knowledge on Community Development Service and its Impact...

# 4

## **Knowledge on Community Development Service and its Impact on National Development**

Ayodele Christian

### **Introduction**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme was created in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the economy after the Nigerian Civil War with a view to proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of National Unity. It was introduced by the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon in 1973 who was the then military head of state as part of his "Three R" post civil war policy of Re-construction, Rehabilitation, and Re-integration specifically to unite the country's

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different regions, in order to promote peace, love and tolerance among the various ethnic groups after a devastating civil war that threaten the unity of the country by almost dividing the country into two different sovereign states.

The scheme encourage the posting of graduates to a different region or state than theirs after undergoing para-military training orientation for a mandatory/compulsory one year service to their host communities in different fields before obtaining a Certificate of National Service which became the only key for every tertiary institution graduate to secure a job, most especially HND and Degree holders all over the country. The scheme's mandate is to raise a class of patriotic, morally and physically disciplined Nigerian youths. Throughout the duration of the program, corps members live among and within their host communities facilitating unity, integration and represent a group in one of the Community Development Service (CDS) together with the people to execute a project for the development of the community<sup>1</sup>.

It is compulsory for the corps members to belong to a Community Development Service (CDS) group. The Community Development Service (CDS) is a component of NYSC through which the Service Corps Members work with the local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programmes which impact positively on the socio-economic development of the host communities. This paper examines contributions of Community Development Service (CDS) to national integration and their relevance to community development, and also the impact of NYSC CDS on national integration.

The study adopted descriptive and analytical framework to arrive at conclusion that NYSC does not only empower the youths as one of its objectives, but has also been impacting in the socio-economic

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<sup>1</sup>"ABC" of Community Development Service" NYSC, NDHQ Abuja, October 2014.

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development of various communities through its CDS component thereby bringing about integration. Thus, the study maintained that CDS programme of NYSC is highly relevant in community development and national integrations. The study therefore recommends that Nigerian government and NYSC officials should retain and empower the component and also device more ways of encouraging Service Corps Members to engage in more CDS projects.

The scheme's mandate is to raise a class of patriotic, morally and physically disciplined Nigerian youths. Throughout the duration of the program, corps members live among and within their host communities facilitating unity, integration and represent a group in one of the Community Development Service (CDS) together with the people to execute a project for the development of the community<sup>2</sup>.

It is worthy of note, from its inception in 1973, the National Youth Service Corps has contributed immensely in the social, political and economic transformation of the nation. In recent times, the scheme has been in the vanguard of the nation's drive to correct the imbalance in our rural-urban development through the various community development programs executed by corps members. These programs have revolutionized our communities in the areas of education, health care delivery, agriculture, communication, infrastructure, technology, economic empowerment, poverty eradication, social services and above all national consciousness and socio-cultural regeneration<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> O. Adedayo, Nigeria: NYSC - Trudging On, 37 Years After. Daily Independent, 18 July, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Chiagozie (April 9th, 2012). "NYSC Corps Member Builds 40 Bed Hostel in Niger School". Accessed from Information Nigeria:  
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### Idea behind NYSC CDS (Objectives)

As one of the cardinal programs of the NYSC, Community Development Service was envisaged among other benefits to:

1. Impact and improve positively on the rural community life.
2. Expose corps members to diverse traditions and customs of the host communities
3. Provide a forum for corps members to experiment with ideas and translate them into concrete achievements thereby relying less on foreign technology and encouraging the use of local raw materials in the execution of projects as well as on-the-job training and experience for corps members.
4. Harness the enormous talents and skills of corps members into an effective machinery of change in our rural communities.
5. Develop the spirit of entrepreneurship in the corps members.
6. Explore the challenges which rural development poses and inculcate in the Nigerian Youth the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism and creativity.
7. Instil in corps members the tradition of dignity of labour and productivity.
8. Complement the activities of government at all levels in the stride towards national development.
9. Providing complementary service in our National development activities, by ensuring that our under-privileged population learned basic techniques for self-help through the appropriate technology concept being promoted by NYSC<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>“ABC” OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE” NYSC, NDHQ Abuja, October 2014.

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### **Categorization of CDS**

NYSC CDS is categorized into two main categories of:

1. Group Community Development Service (Group CDS)
2. Personal/Individual Community Development Service (Personal/Individual CDS)

### **Group Community Development Service (Group CDS)**

Corps members are expected to use one day in a week for group CDS activities. They are not expected to attend duties in their places of Primary assignment on CDS days. Such days are dedicated to the execution of projects and programs that will improve the living conditions of their host communities. However, such days vary with different states across the federation.

### **Various CDS Groups in NYSC Scheme and Functions**

#### **Corps Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS) Group**

Purpose:

- Provide free legal services to the less privileged and indigent prison inmates (Victims of denials and violation of rights)
- Sensitized the public on fundamental human rights

Activities:

- Advocacy
- Visit to Correctional Centres
- Legal service to inmate and indigenes of host community
- Public lecture and awareness on fundamental human rights

#### **SPORTS CDS Group**

Purpose:

- Creates avenue for recreation and healthy rivalry among corps members and the community.

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- Arousing the consciousness of living healthy and purposeful lifestyles through participation in one form of physical activity or the other.
- Identify talents among Corps members

Activities:

- Participation in Sports competitions
- Identifying and Training members of the Community
- Organizing Sports Competitions

## **Environmental Protection & Sanitation Group (NEMA/NESREA vanguard)**

Purpose:

- To promote and sustain healthy environment
- To create awareness on sustainable environment, management and regeneration

Functions:

- Tree planting
- Drainage Control
- Erosion Control
- Sanitation
- Aforestation
- Land Scaping

## **Education Development Group (Mass Literacy, Adult Education, Extra Murals ICT)**

Purpose:

- Enhance the Education Standard of the host community.
- Career guidance and counseling for students

Activities:

- Campaign against Illiteracy
- Organizing Extra-mural classes for Adults
- Organizing of in-school programs

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### **Cultural & Tourism CDS Group (Band, Dance, Drama & Tourism)**

Purpose:

- Promoting arts and Culture
- Dissemination of vital socio-economic and political problems and prospects

Activities:

- Identifying talents
- Setting up of the schemes theatre groups

### **Road Safety Club (RSC) CDS Group**

Purpose:

- To contribute to public safety on our roads

Activities:

- Sensitization and control of traffic
- Rendering first aid to accident victims
- Establishment of road safety clubs in school.

### **Editorial/Publicity CDS Group**

Purpose:

- Compliment the activities of the NYSC PRO in disseminating Information to the Community

Activities:

- Making presentation on mass media to enlighten people on socio-cultural education

### **Disaster Management Group (NEMA)**

Purpose:

- To create awareness on disaster management
- To disseminate information on how to manage disasters through Corps Emergency Vanguards

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- Public enlightenment on disaster management and control through the emergency Vanguards
- Liaison with NEMA on how to assist during emergencies
- Formation of emergency vanguard club in schools

## Medical & Health Services CDS Group (Red Cross, Breast without Spot, Polio Plus etc.)

Purpose:

- Promotion and provision of Medical Services

Activities:

- Health outreach
- First Aid administration
- Establishment of Community based clinic
- Setting up of clinic for the NYSC Secretariat

## Service Delivery CDS Group (Attitudinal Change, Re- Branding)

Purpose:

- Sensitization on Service delivery and good work ethics.

Activities:

- Training
- Sensitization
- Group discussions on value re-orientation

## Drug Free & Quality Control CDS Group (NDLEA, NAFDAC, SON)

Purpose:

- Eradication of fake and adulterated foods and drugs
- Create awareness on danger of drug abuse
- Campaign and Sensitization
- Establishment of drug free clubs in Schools
- Ensuring linkages with the host Communities

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### **Charity Services & Gender Group**

Purpose:

- To improve the living standard of the down trodden
- Charity outreaches to the public
- Mobilize funds and other resources for less privileged
- Visits of orphanages & prisons
- Donation of materials to homes

### **Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) CDS Group**

Purpose:

- To create awareness and actualize the 8 goals of MDGs

Activities:

- Advocacy and Mentoring of the host community

### **Agro-Allied CDS Group**

Purpose:

- Support agro allied activities in host communities
- To promote better food production and security

Activities:

- Demonstration farms/Extension Services
- Establishment of Farmers Cooperative Societies
- Advocacy
- Teaching of new farming techniques to communities

### **Anti-Corruption CDS Group (EFCC & ICPC)**

Purpose:

- To help in eradicating corruption through Campaign

Activities

- Sensitization
- Creation of awareness in schools and organizations
- Establish Anti Corruption Corps members in schools

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### **Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS Group**

Purpose:

- To train and mentor Students
- To mobilize and strengthen community based responses on HIV/AIDS prevention

Activities:

- Sensitization and Campaign<sup>5</sup>

However, some of these groups might not be found in some states, reason being that two to three CDS group could be merged together if their functions are interchangeable. For example, Disaster Management CDS Group (NEMA vanguard) is related to Environmental Protection and Sanitation CDS Group (NESREA vanguard). Thus in a state like Ebonyi state, these two groups as well as other environmental allies are merged together to form a mega environmental CDS group.

### **Needs Assessment of CDS Project/Programme NYSC**

Corps Members who wish to embark on projects are expected to observe the challenges faced by the benefiting community before engaging in that. Such challenges may include inadequate medical facilities, good water, educational institutions and many other social amenities or the need to educate the community on a particular menace, activity or issue. Other reasons may include the prevalence of nonskilled or unemployed youths, high rate of illiteracy or drug abuse, among others. Apart from observation, other ways of identifying these include discussions with the community members ranging from community leaders, youths, traders, community associations, etc. Such projects should therefore be expected to improve the socio-economic development of the benefiting community.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>“Abc” Of Community Development Service” NYSC, NDHQ Abuja, October 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Media (June 25 th, 2014). “Francis Okoye – Extraordinary Corper Delivers 2.5Million in CDS Projects during his 1 Year Service”.

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### **Funding and Execution of CDS Project/Programme**

Before a Corps Member executes a project or programme, he/she must have gotten an approval from the State Coordinator of the State he/she is serving through his Zonal Inspector and Local Government Inspector. This will only be granted if the Corps Member meets all the requirements and is ready to obey the laid down regulations. The management of NYSC has made it very clear that on no account should any Corps Member fund CDS project from his/her personal money as doing so would nullify the viability of the project<sup>7</sup>. Funding of CDS project therefore is a shared responsibility of the community, government and stakeholders who are beneficiaries of such projects. Funds for project execution should be sourced through corporate or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), philanthropists, government agencies, public spirited individuals in the community, political office holders or representatives, etc. There should be a comprehensive analysis of income and expenditure of funds and materials received with receipt attached for the purpose of accountability. Mobilization of resources should not be done in isolation but in conjunction with community members and other relevant stakeholders. Feedback is necessary for project sponsors<sup>8</sup> .The execution proper can be done by either the Corps Member alone or in collaboration with either the sponsors agents or community members. Such projects will be commissioned by NYSC management before a Corps Member passed out.

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<http://www.konknaijamedia.com/francis-okoyeextraordinary-corper-elivers-2-5-million-in-cds-projects-during-his-1-year-service/>

<sup>7</sup> Konk Naija Media (June 25 th, 2014). “Francis Okoye – Extraordinary Corper Delivers 2.5Million in CDS Projects during his 1 Year Service”.

<http://www.konknaijamedia.com/francis-okoyeextraordinary-corper-elivers-2-5-million-in-cds-projects-during-his-1-year-service/>

<sup>8</sup> Konk Naija Media (June 25 th, 2014). “Francis Okoye – Extraordinary Corper Delivers 2.5Million in CDS Projects during his 1 Year Service”.

<http://www.konknaijamedia.com/francis-okoyeextraordinary-corper-elivers-2-5-million-in-cds-projects-during-his-1-year-service/>

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### **Relevance of NYSC-CDS to Community Development**

Projects and programmes initiated, developed or executed by Corps Members has resulted in socioeconomic development in various communities through establishment of schools, building of libraries, construction of water projects, public toilets, power sources, etc. Sensitizations, campaigns and public enlightenments were undertaken in various communities on issues like corruption, road safety, health safety, environmental hazards, management techniques, entrepreneurial skills, etc. The youth Corps Members have with the trainings, seminars and workshops they had in and outside camp, been equipped with the mental and academic capacity to sensitize, inform, educate and execute projects and programmes to other Nigerians in their community of service. Amos (observed that with the CDS projects like EFCC and ICPC through which Corps Members carry out sensitization workshops, Nigerians are made better aware of the evils of corruption and can fight it to a grand halt<sup>9</sup> .

Through this approach, Corps Members stem corruption by identifying its dangers before taking the fight to the society. In the aspect of community help, Abdulazeez testified that Corps Members attached to NYSC Road Safety Group of Kwara State does public enlightenments in motor parks, traffic control exercises at selected junctions, visits to traffic victims in hospitals, etc<sup>10</sup>. By way of promoting culture and tourism activities, Ajayi testified that the Culture and Tourism CDS Group of NYSC Kwara State had in 2015 executed a cultural programme

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<sup>9</sup> Amos, V. (September 3rd, 2015). "Role of the National Youth Service Corps on National Development". Accessed from The Ink Newspaper Online: <http://theinknewspaper.blogspot.co.ke/2015/09/role-of-national-youth-service-corps.html?m=1>

<sup>10</sup> Abdulazeez, S.T. (2016). "Importance of National Youth Service".Kwara Kopa Magazine. 2015 Batch A. NYSC Kwara: Press and Public Relations Unit.

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titled “Clean the Polluted Land” which had in attendance various community leaders, Corps Members and NYSC officials<sup>11</sup>.

In the act of giving back to the society, a Corps Member, Mr. Aladefa Moradeyo with state code number KW/15A/1626 donated a set of school uniforms to 100 pupils of Gaa Ayelabaowo Primary School, Oko-olowo, Ilorin, Kwara State on 7th March, 2016 (Kwara Kopa Magazine, 2016)<sup>12</sup>. Konk Naija Media reported that Francis Okoye with state code number KW/12B/0069 delivers 2.5million Naira in CDS projects in Offa, Kwara State on the construction of a borehole and a billboard, donated 2000 writing materials to six primary schools, one hundred treated mosquito nets to 100 families, one hundred pairs of school sandals to five selected primary schools, one hundred West African Examination Council (WAEC) recommended novels (Blind Trust) and one hundred pens to one hundred<sup>13</sup>.

SS1 students, organised quiz competition, train less privileged on entrepreneurial skills including baking of cakes, chin-chin, egg roll, among others. Sir-Kenayo (2016) observed that Corps Members at Ota, Ogun State embarked on a sensitization and cleaning exercise titled “Operation Keep Ota Clean” in collaboration with Ogun State Environmental Protection Agency on the need of keeping environment clean. The exercise experienced a good turn-out with Corps Members picking all the dirt and keeping drainages clean. The topic they sensitized people on were; Global Warming; Effect of Illegal Dumping of Refuse; Air and Water Pollution; Health and Hygiene; and Recycling of

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<sup>11</sup> Abdulazeez, S.T. (2016). “Importance of National Youth Service”....

<sup>12</sup> Abdulazeez, S.T. (2016). “Importance of National Youth Service”....

<sup>13</sup> Konk Naija Media (June 25 th, 2014). “Francis Okoye – Extraordinary Corper Delivers 2.5Million in CDS Projects during his 1 Year Service”.

<http://www.konknaijamedia.com/francis-okoyeextraordinary-corper-elivers-2-5-million-in-cds-projects-during-his-1-year-service>

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Waste<sup>14</sup>. Adeniji Amos Oluwagbenga with state code number EK/14B/2540 was reported to have distributed 5,000 exercise books to students of Baptist High School, Amoye Grammar School, AUD Primary School and St.

Louis Secondary School on 12th May, 22nd May, 26th May and 10th June, 2015 respectively, at Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State (Dowex, 2015). The Nation gathered on 18th March, 2016 that Okeke Stanley, Corps Member, built a bore hole and a well-stocked library at the Community Secondary school, Nkomoro, Ezza North, Ebonyi State. Vanguard, on 28th June, 2012 captured the efforts of four Corps Members – Otto Oronom Harmony, Oyelaja Olusola Olayenu, Emuveyan Tejiri and Amaeze Ugochukwu who served Lagos State in 2011/2012. Otto donated hundreds of mosquito nets to hundreds of families in Makoko, 500 novel and books to under-privileged children, established Millennium Development Clubs in two (2) secondary schools and built rehabilitation home for ex-sex workers.

Emuveyan's work include a construction of bore hole for Taiwo Street - Idiabara, renovation of a classroom into a modern library for students of Golden Secondary School, donated 50 mosquito nets to different families on World Malaria Day, trained over 600 people in five different communities on the then MDGs. In 2013, Corps Member Olusina Oluyemi Ololalde with state code number ZM/12B/0063 was reported by Saturday Tribune to have built a school in Garbadu village of Talatu-Mafara, Zamfara State, despite the prevailing insecurity in the state (Superclo, 2013). Information Nigeria further gathered that in an interview with Daily Trust, a Corps Member, Ime Anwana, was confirmed to have built a block of 40-bed hostel for Government Girls' Secondary School, Kafin Koro, Paikoro, Niger State in 2012.

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<sup>14</sup> Sir-Kenayo (2016). "Ogun Corpers: Operation Keep Ota Clean CDS Projects in Pictures". Accessed from <http://www.sirkenayo.com/ogun-corpers-operation-keep-ota-clean-cds-projects-in-pictures/>

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Anwana was reported to have had an accident which caused her multiple fractures, but was later able to complete the project. NYSC Rivers compiled a set of audited personal CDS projects/programmes in their bi-annual Rivers Kopa Magazine to include, Nnamani Deborah with state code number RV/15A/0826 marked a Zebra Crossing at GTC area, Trans-Amadi in Port Harcourt, Rivers State and also organized sensitization and demonstration seminar on the use of the pedestrian crossing for the students in the community. In another school, Community Secondary School, Mogho, Gokana, Rivers State, Nwanaeto Chidebere with state code number RV/15A/1308 converted an abandoned classroom blocks to Information and Communication Technology centre and installed computers, furnished the centre with tables and chairs. Mbuk David Effanga with state code number RV/15A/0950 constructed a volleyball pitch to improve sporting activities at Community Secondary School, Obelle-Emohua, Rivers State. He also organized inter-school football tournament for students in Ebele-Alimini, Rumuji and Obelle communities<sup>15</sup>.

### Conclusion

National integration and unity in a country is different from the kind of oneness that comes from racial and cultural similarity. However, it depicts unity in diversity. National integration mechanisms in Nigeria include, among others, Federal unity schools, the federal character principle, relocation of the federal capital territory to Abuja considered to be the center of the country, revenue sharing formula/fiscal federalism and the NYSC programme. The Federal Character Principle initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a policy framework to achieve fair and effective representation of the different federating units of the country in positions of power, status and influence. The

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<sup>15</sup> Areyaka, L. (June 28th, 2012). "NYSC Lagos State Honours Award: A Tale of Four Corps Members". Accessed from Vanguard: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/06/nysc-lagos-statehonours-award-a-tale-of-four-corps-members/>

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principle was given the legal back up as it was enshrined in 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with the goal to accommodate the diverse ethno-religious and geographical shades in the decision-making, socio-political and economic apparatuses of the state.

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Sir-Kenayo (2016). "Ogun Corpers: Operation Keep Ota Clean CDS Projects in Pictures". Accessed from <http://www.sirkenayo.com/ogun-corpers-operation-keep-ota-clean-cds-projects-in-pictures/>

Superclo (September 13th, 2013). "Corper Honoured in Zamfara for Building School – Gets Chieftaincy Title, Political Rights" Accessed from Corper: <http://www.corpr.ng/corper-honoured-in-zamfara-for-building-school-gets-chieftaincy-title-political-rights/>

NYSC Act and the Establishment of "Teaching for Nigeria"

# 5

## **NYSC Act and the Establishment of "Teaching for Nigeria"**

Akaa Ukile Esther

### **Introduction**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) act established a scheme referred to as "the Service Corps.<sup>1</sup> The aim of its establishment was to provide young graduates not above the age of thirty (30) years from tertiary institutions to be deployed to states other than their states of origin to undergo a one year compulsory service to the nation. Oriakhogba and Ifenemigho state that:

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<sup>1</sup> The National Youth Service Corps Act , Cap N-84, 16th June, 1993.

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The service Corps is a government initiative that was established under Decree No. 24 of 1973, promulgated by the Military regime of General Yakubu Gowon (Rtd). The Decree was repealed and later replaced by Decree 51 of 16th June 1993. It is saved by section 315(5) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which recognises it as an existing law and gives it the same effect as any other provision of the Constitution. It is therefore important to note that the establishment of the scheme over the years has, to a large extent, achieved its major objective of fostering unity among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter shall look at the background to Nigerian education system since 1969, showing the dearth in the system that justifies NYSC intervention. The second part discusses the establishment of teaching for Nigeria. Part three focuses on the impact of teaching since the establishment and part four discusses in details the challenges of implementing teaching for Nigeria and lastly we shall outline the prospects of teaching for Nigeria.

### **Conceptual clarifications**

For the purpose of explaining issues on the subject matter, it is important to clarify concepts that are relevant to this study. Thus, the following concepts shall be clarified for a better understanding of this chapter.

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<sup>2</sup> D. O. Oriakhogba and A. Ifenemigho, Review of the National Youth Service Corps Act: An Agenda for Reform ; Ajayi Crowther University of Law journal , 1

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### **National Youth Service Corps Act**

An Act to establish the National Youth Service Corps specifies its objectives and the conditions of service for Corps members under the NYSC scheme. The NYSC Act is arranged in sections according to the objectives of the scheme. The scheme when it was established was known as the National Youth Service Corps but in this Act, it is referred to as "the service Corps".<sup>3</sup>The service Corps was established to encourage the development of common ties among the Nigerian youths. It was also to promote national unity as well as develop the Nigerian youth and Nigeria into a great and dynamic economy.

### **Concept of Teaching:**

Teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning.<sup>4</sup> This activity is carried out by a teacher. The role of a teacher is generally categorised into traditional role which is teacher centered and modern role where it is student based.

Presently, there has been a change from the traditional role to the modern role in teaching. This is because learning increases when the teacher builds on the previous experience of the student. However, learning differed as each individual has his or her way of assimilation of knowledge. For instance, we have individuals who learn fast while others are slow learners. Thus, individual attention of the teacher may be required in this regard because effective learning is to a great extent based on experiences. Direct learning experiences are student centered and participation in problem solving. While indirect experience is content oriented, carefully designed and organised by the teacher.

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<sup>3</sup> National Youth Service Corps Act , (1993 No 51) N 84- 1.

<sup>4</sup> .H Sequeira , Introduction to Concepts of teaching and learning, National Institute of Technology , Karnataka , Surathkal , India, uploaded on 24th September, 2017 , accessed on 8th March ,2021 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272620585>.

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### **Background to Nigerian education system since 1960**

The western-type of education was introduced in Nigeria by the British missionaries in the 1840s.<sup>5</sup> The Anglican and Methodist Church Missionary societies started establishing schools in the mid-1800s. Thus, the educational system in Nigeria before 1960 was controlled by the Europeans.<sup>6</sup> The Europeans introduced this formal education and it made a quality impact on Nigerian citizens even though there were some forms of racial discrimination between the blacks and the Europeans who introduced the system in the country. The population of enrollees at that time was manageable due to the fact that only few people were interested in acquiring western education. The schools especially in the southern part of the country had a good number of people enrolled into it while in the North; only a few were in school. This was largely due to lack of awareness on the part of parents who refused to release their children to acquire the western knowledge. Thus, the educational system at that period was very sound coupled with the commitment on the part of those who introduced the system into Nigeria. However, during the colonial years, the British government did not care much to promote education. The schools were established and managed by Christian Missionaries. The British colonial government only funded a few schools. The policy of the British government was only to give grant to mission schools rather than expand the system.

Agreeing with this, Akinlua noted that “The colonial education which was inherited by Nigeria was criticised for being too theoretical to be able to make meaningful impact on the life of Nigerians.”<sup>7</sup> This is

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<sup>5</sup>Elizabeth Uwelo, 51, Teacher, Interviewed in Lafia , Lafia LGA , on 02- 03 - 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Uwelo, 51, Teacher, Interviewed in Lafia...

<sup>7</sup> A. Akinlua, , Driving Curriculum Content and practice in Higher Education in Nigeria towards Relevance , in W.O Ibukun and A. Aboluwoyi , Nigeria's National Policy on Education and the University Curriculum in History : implication for

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because subjects that were taught in the schools during colonial period reflected the taste of the colonial education officials. They built the school curricula around the existing colonial values. Learners were taught to speak or mimic their teachers in subject like English Language in order to show competency.

Woolman was also forced to comment on the issue of this sort in his remark about African education. According to him; African school systems today still follow the rigid structure of the colonial periods and grade-level progression found in Western education. Where there was little change in the curriculum was either one subject was substituted for the other or dropped outright. This is the case with the study of History which has almost lost its place to Social studies in school curriculum.<sup>8</sup> However, from 1960s to 1970s, the standard of education was sound in Nigeria.

Oral evidence of Elizabeth Uwelo who had her education during this period revealed that:

The educational structures in Nigeria in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were sound because people that were imparting knowledge at that time were qualified and dedicated to teaching. Education was mandatory and parents were asked to send their wards to schools compulsorily. Also the introduction of Christianity as a form of religion in Nigeria played a vital role to the success of education in the olden days. For instance when Christianity came, it opened the eyes of people

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Nation Building, Journal of Education and Practice Vol 1 No 2 ( 2010) 9. Retrieved online on 09/ 03/ 2021 [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org))

<sup>8</sup> D .C Woolman, Educational reconstruction and post-colonial curriculum development, in W.O Ibukun and A. Aboluwoye , Nigeria's National Policy on Education and the University Curriculum in History : implication for Nation Building, Journal of Education and Practice Vol 1 No 2 ( 2010) 9. Retrieved online on 09/ 03/ 2021 [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)).

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who began to see reason or reasons why they should send their children to school. In addition, people who introduced religion in the country already had their children enrolled in schools and were reaping the benefits. Therefore, people began to see the importance of education and began to change their attitude towards education. Although, the case was different in the Northern part of the country as the people did not accept Christianity and were not willing to send their children to school.<sup>9</sup>

In the early 1980s, Nigeria had a lot of Indians and Ghanaians who were engaged as teachers in Nigeria. Then, there were teachers employed to teach all subjects and the system was good. The decline in the educational system of the country started in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Nigeria decided to use indigenous teachers. The foreigners who were teaching in the country at that time left and the process became indigenous all-comers affairs. This led to the decline in the quality of education. The late 1980s saw a sharp fall due to lack of commitment and low level of training on the part of the indigenous teachers. Apart from that, there was no commitment on the part of the government, parents and even the students.<sup>10</sup>This is because before the 1980s, education was free but when tuition fee was introduced, some parents could no longer afford school fees for their wards while others did it out of ignorance especially for the girl-child education. The girl child education was treated with levity on misconception that it does not worth investing on her training before given out for marriage.

The policy makers too started failing in their roles. The standard of education started declining in such a way that in 1990s, teachers were owed their salaries for several months across the country. Thus, the

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<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Uwelo, 51, Teacher, Interviewed in Lafia , Lafia LGA , on 02- 03 - 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Uwelo, 51, Teacher, Interviewed...

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struggle by teachers for their welfare brought about trends of spontaneous strikes which further crippled the educational systems. Universities and tertiary institutions also embarked on strikes in order to fight for their rights. This situation created a vacuum in the educational needs of the people and the society. This contributed greatly to the fallen standard of education in the country. Only few private and mission schools maintained the standard for education. The establishment of NYSC scheme has helped in improving the education system.

In Nasarawa State there are schools that have shortfall of teachers especially for particular subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Economics among others. The scheme since establishment, has posted a great number of Corps members to help out in teaching. There are some Corps members that were trained in the universities as professional teachers while others that do not have the teaching qualification were trained on basic teaching methods during the Orientation Course

On the issue of complementary roles played by Corps members posted to schools, Principal Government Science School, Lafia , Nasarawa State, Saidu Usman Baba, said :

Corp members help in the area of teaching basically where you have short fall of teaching staff so they make for that especially in the area of science subjects. Also they carry out some Community Development projects. But most of them were not trained as educationalists even though some of them graduated from institutions where they read education but there are very few. So when they are posted to schools, the management organise in-house training to help them learn the rudiments of teaching, how to go about their lessons,

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schemes of work, mark registers and so on and gradually they build into the system.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Establishment of "Teaching for Nigeria"**

A critical historical analysis of the educational policies in Nigeria that promote and regulate education in the country reveals certain aspects which showed that the system passed through three significant phases, before amalgamation, pre-independence and post-independence eras. The pre-colonial Nigeria had various structures operated in various societies. In the northern part of Nigeria the Islamic religious belief was deeply rooted and educational orientation based on the Quran.<sup>12</sup> The southern part of the country on the other hand, had its own traditional form of education based on the indigenous culture and traditions. This was the scenario in 1842 when the Christian missionaries entered the south and introduced western education.

Hauwa asserted that thus: The aim of education as given by the missionaries were just to enable recipients to learn to read the Bible in English and the local languages, gardening and agriculture as well as train local schoolmasters, catechists and clergymen.<sup>13</sup> Even though the missionaries' major aim of establishing schools was to propagate Christianity, they left a great legacy in their educational works and development. During colonial period in Nigeria, the British used codes and ordinances which became guidelines for education in the country and served as the basis for educational policies, laws and techniques in the educational system.

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<sup>11</sup> Saidu Usman Baba, 56, Principal Government Science School, Lafia, Interviewed on 08/ 03/2021

<sup>12</sup> Abdullahi Suleiman, 70, retired civil servant, Interviewed in Lafia LGA , on 07/ 03/ 2021.

<sup>13</sup> H. Imam , Educational policy in Nigeria from the colonial era to the post-Independence period, Italian Journal of Sociology of education, 1, 2012,182 - 190

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The National Curriculum Conference, a seminar of experts drawn from a wide range of interest groups within Nigeria, was convened in 1973.<sup>14</sup> The seminar deliberated on what a national policy on education for an independent and sovereign Nigeria should be. The outcome of the seminar was a draft document which; after due comments was received from the states and other interest groups, led to the final document. The National Policy on Education was first published in 1977. The revised edition of the policy on education enunciates the guidelines, objectives, standards, structures, strategies and management for achieving the national education goals in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> This policy serves as an instrument for national development and change which can be achieved through teaching and learning processes. It makes education compulsory and a right for every Nigerian citizen to attain education irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic affiliations among others. Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society.<sup>16</sup> Among other goals of education in Nigeria is to develop an individual into a morally sound , patriotic and effective citizen, total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world which is achievable through adequate implementation by government at all levels.

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<sup>14</sup> T.K Akinwamide , Harnessing the language Diversity through the National Youth Service Corps ( NYSC) Programme in Multilingual Nigeria : Synergising our Separation , International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and education ( IJHSSE) vol 6 , Issue 1, January 2019 , 75- 80.

<sup>15</sup> National Policy on Education in Nigeria, Lagos: Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council ( NERDC) publishers, 6 the edition, 2013, 1 .

<sup>16</sup> National Policy on Education in Nigeria, Lagos...

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### **Impact of "Teaching for Nigeria" since Establishment**

Umeh states that education is one of the most important sources of opportunity in any society.<sup>17</sup>It gives an individual the ability to read and write and access to wide body of knowledge. The impact of education is the product and quality of its implementation in a particular society. In contemporary period, education must respond to a number of challenges and needs that society faces the on a daily basis. Regardless of the level of development of society, education should be one of the most important social activities. This is because quality education is the main driving force of any given society. Unfortunately, the goal of teaching in Nigeria has not recorded remarkable impacts. The government which should recognise and invest much in education is not doing so. However, there is no doubt that there develop changes in the educational Systems since its establishment in Nigeria. This is because there is competition for economic, military, and other forms of domination which has led to continuous analysis and re-evaluation of educational systems and the adoption of specific strategies for improvement.

The introduction of teaching in Nigeria has greatly transformed individuals and has allowed them to effectively participate in social progress. This is because education is a key factor in social development and social change which, in turn, brings about collective transformation of individuals.<sup>18</sup> The impact can be seen in professional, technical, social, moral aspects among others.

Also, the evolving knowledge that redefines the society, skills and competences needed in working are developed through teaching and learning processes. But the relevance of learning environments and teaching methods should be critically evaluated. The role of teacher

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<sup>17</sup> J.c Umeh, Trade Disputes settlement procedure in O. O Okpeh, B.J Audu and Shuaibu Ibrahim ( eds) Labour Unionism , Leadership and Development in Nigeria, Kaduna , Nigeria Defence Academy publishers , 2020 : 185.

<sup>18</sup> Abel Daniel, 52 , Civil Servant, Interviewed in Lafia on 10/ 03/ 2021.

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education is crucial; the skills and competences of a new generation of teachers are largely dependent on the content, approach and practices of the teacher education program they attend to. Teacher education should thus be leading the way towards 21st century education.

The government on the other hand has failed in its role of developing the educational sector by not prioritising the educational needs of the society. This can be seen in the area of budget allocation. It is only a small percentage of budgetary allocation that goes to the country's educational needs. This has impacted negatively on teaching and learning in the country. The government prioritised other sectors and left education down. These activities have constituted a negative impact on the educational system of the country.

### **Challenges of Implementing "Teaching for Nigeria"**

Education in Nigeria has encountered different kinds of challenges which have resulted to decline in the standard of education in the country. One of the major challenges militating against the implementation of teaching in Nigeria is poor funding. This unfortunate situation is as a result of lack of political commitment on the part of government at the level of funding in educational sector amidst rising demands and cost of education. The fund government allocates to the educational sector is incapable of addressing the educational needs of citizens. Despite the UNESCO's recommendations of allocation of 26% of a nation's national income to the sector, Nigerian government have not implemented this.<sup>19</sup> Government gives less concern to issues of funding in all levels of education. This has in no small measure affected the teaching to the standard of the National education policy in schools across the nation.

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<sup>19</sup> T.K Akinwamide , Harnessing the language of Diversity through the National Youths Service Corps ( NYSC) Programme in Multilingual Nigeria: Synergising Our Separation a International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and education ( IJHSSE) vol 6 , Issue 1 , January ,2019 , 75- 80.

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Secondly, lack of qualified and experienced teachers to implement teaching in schools is another challenge. Given the obvious importance of teachers, there is inadequate supply of qualified and experienced teachers who have career development that would enable them to impart knowledge on the learners. There are reported cases of increase in the rate of absentee and ineffective teachers in schools. Most teachers lacked capacities to conform to the modern methods of teaching and that affects the child's productivity.<sup>20</sup> The conditions in primary schools are worse especially when there are lesser teachers to the number of classes they handled. Sometimes teaching is left in the hands of Corps members posted to teach in school. Some teachers in Nigeria today are those without the knowledge of the subject matter, skills, zeal and commitment to teach neither are they ready for in-service training. The situation affect primary schools more unlike the secondary schools where teachers teach based on their area of specialisation, primary school teachers teach all subjects. Thus, the situation has caused a drastic decline in the standard of education in the country.

Another challenge hindering the effective teaching is lack of school infrastructures both in the rural and urban areas. The degree of infrastructural decay in Nigerian schools is an eyesore that should be the priority of government at all levels. The sorry state of school building has become potential death traps for both teachers and learners. In some rural schools, classes are being held under trees during the dry season and when it is raining season, pupils are crowded into the few dilapidated classrooms available to them.<sup>21</sup> Poor Infrastructure in schools includes lack of good buildings, classrooms, playgrounds, libraries, laboratories and other educational equipment.

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<sup>20</sup> Terkaa Ucha, 40+, Chairman, Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Interviewed in Makurdi 08/03/2021.

<sup>21</sup> Terkaa Ucha, 40+, Chairman, Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Interviewed in Makurdi 25/02/2021.

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This has affected the implementation of curriculum to meet the vision of Nigerian school. The absence of these infrastructures in most cases has seriously constrained the teaching and learning objectives of the curriculum. These infrastructures constitute the learning environments in schools. Where there is inadequate infrastructure, learning is affected. High quality infrastructure facilitates better instruction, improves student outcomes, and reduces dropout rates.<sup>22</sup> When schools are in good condition and attractive, it encourages better attendance and concentration of students.

Lack of motivation of teachers is another serious challenge that affects teachers' effectiveness and efficiency in the schools. On teachers' motivation, Ihebom and Uko asserted that many teachers hide their identities in public, unlike other professionals who are happy to be seen as specialists in their fields. Also many teachers want to quit the teaching job as quickly as possible for more recognised and more rewarding careers. Most teachers are faced with a motivation crisis which has far brought negative implications on learners. Secondary school teachers experience a lot of challenges that affect learner performance through dissatisfaction. As the teacher is the centre of instruction, his satisfaction guarantee high academic performance.<sup>23</sup> Generally, the condition of service as regards welfare of teachers in Nigeria is poor. In some states of the federation, teachers are not paid for months or years and are not promoted as at when due. Typically in Benue State, teachers have not been promoted for a very long time.<sup>24</sup> In this situation, one cannot get the best out of such teachers because they are not motivated to impact positively on the learners. Also low remuneration causes teachers demotivation. Teachers, like their

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<sup>22</sup>B. Ihebom and J. O Uko , Challenges and Prospects of secondary Education in Niger , International Journal of Scientific Research in Education, September 2020 670- 688).

<sup>23</sup>B. Ihebom and J. O Uko , Challenges and Prospects...

<sup>24</sup>Terkaa Ucha, 40+, Chairman, Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Interviewed in Makurdi 25/02/2021.

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counterparts in other professions, want to enjoy their rewards on earth and not in heaven as they are made to understand. In the case of Corps members who are posted to schools to teach, they serve as source of cheap labour especially to state governments and private organisations who do not want to employ permanent staff because of the cost of their salaries. The allowances payable by the government to Corps members does not meet the needs of the Corps members, thus they are not motivated to teach. State governments and private organisations where the Corps members are posted are supposed to pay the Corps members some stipends depending on their financial strength.<sup>25</sup> This provision has been seriously abused. While some states pay, others do not pay Corps members their monthly stipend. The Corps Members are made to do more work with less pay. This exploitation has dragged on for years and has affected the implementation of teaching in Nigeria.

Another challenge is lack of instructional materials. The basic teaching tools that are expected for effective teaching and learning are not available both on the side of the learners and teachers. Nigeria makes policies and enacts laws with nobody to implement or executes the laws.<sup>26</sup> They includes curriculum modules, textbooks, continuous assessment booklets and introductory technology materials are inadequate in schools.

Eya, explaining what instructional materials mean, said: Instructional materials are all forms of information carriers which can be used to record, store, preserve, transmit, concretise or retrieve information for

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<sup>25</sup> A.J Ifeanyichukwu and N. Apine, The Problems and Negative Effects of the Use of National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) Members as Ad-hoc Teaching Staff in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State, IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR- JRME, Vol 4 , Issue 6 very 1 ( Nov - Dec 2014) 01- 05, [www.iorsjournal.org](http://www.iorsjournal.org).

<sup>26</sup> Terkaa Ucha, 40+, Chairman, Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Interviewed in Makurdi 25/02/2021.

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the purpose of teaching and learning.<sup>27</sup> For learning to take place effectively, there is need for the teacher to prepare pupils' senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching through the application of instructional materials. However, it is pathetic to note that the instructional materials required for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian schools are grossly inadequate. This has affected the implementation of policies or acts designed to improve the quality of education in the country. Even in situations where instructional materials are available, there is the problem of ineffective curriculum implementation such as the proper use of the scheme of work set out to be taught for the term and session. This has affected teaching and learning system adversely. Most times, both private and public schools make the bulk use of Corps members who come and go after the period of National Service.

Finally the politicisation of education is one major challenge that has affected the implementation of teaching in Nigeria. This can be seen in cases of appointments of heads in the ministries of education at both state and federal government levels. The posting of teachers to juicy schools with high enrolment, good accommodation facilities and other social amenities is another area to consider. Government instead of going to the rural areas to set up schools, rather focus attention on urban centres, denying the grassroots and communities the comfort of good classrooms, accommodation and school structures.<sup>28</sup> This affects students' comfort to concentrate on what is being taught. Meanwhile, some government officials influence school buildings where goats and sheep will occupy due to low population or no body to attend. The politicisation of education also has led to abandoning of educational

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<sup>27</sup> P. Eya, Role of instructional materials in improving qualitative education in Nigeria in Bartholomew Ihebom and Jarius Ochege Uko , Challenges and Prospects of secondary Education in Niger , International Journal of Scientific Research in Education, September 2020 670- 688.

<sup>28</sup> Terkaa Ucha, 40+, Chairman, Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Interviewed in Makurdi 25/02/2021.

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projects half way, thereby making the school compound to become theatres for perpetuating all forms of social vices or hide outs for hoodlums. All these anomalies constitute a serious hindrance to effective implementation of teaching in the country.

### **Prospects of "Teaching for Nigeria"**

For government to make effective implementation of teaching in Nigeria and make the profession lucrative, effective and attractive, the following should be considered.

- Government and the private sector should allocate more financial resources to schools.
- Government and private school owners should employ qualified teachers with educational background or qualification; more so, the NYSC scheme should also deploy only Corps members with educational qualifications to schools to teach.
- More attention should be given to school infrastructure. Government and school management bodies should regularly maintain school facilities and replace those that are worn out.
- Teachers should be motivated through their remuneration and other incentives that will encourage them to be productive.
- Government should maintain UNESCO bench mark of 35 students per teacher to avoid overcrowded classrooms.
- Teachers' area of specialisation should be considered before posting of teachers to schools. They should be engaged more in carrying out training for improvement as well as given opportunity to enhance their skills.

### **Conclusion**

In general, emphasis should be on the ways to effectively implement teaching in schools to guarantee academic prosperity, productivity, competency and efficiency in order to improve the academic standard of Nigerian institutions of learning.

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To achieve this, Education in Nigeria should not be allowed for government alone to manage but private sector and other non-governmental Organisations (NGO) should be fully incorporated into the educational system. There should be adequate provision of funds by government at all levels for proper management of educational institutions in the country. Also dilapidated facilities should be properly renovated and instructional materials should be properly maintained to meet the need of individuals.

Finally, there is need for an amendment of the NYSC Act to improve the number of teachers in schools. A legislation to amend the NYSC Act to allow the Scheme to establish a "Teaching for Nigeria" pathway which will allow for the identification, recruitment and deployment of willing, capable and promising young Nigerians to serve as teachers in underserved areas during their service year and for a number of years after.

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# 6

## **Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps on the Knowledge of Social Issues in their Host Communities**

Rufai Aliyu

### **Introduction**

One of the bedrocks of the development of every nation is education. Illiteracy is a major developmental challenge, which means that only a literate nation can make greater strides towards development. The federal government of Nigeria has taken great steps to improve the levels of literacy in the nation through the educational programmes, institutions, and the mass media. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme is one of the ways that the federal government has

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brought education to the communities of the 36 states of the federation plus the FCT, Abuja. This is why most of the Corps members are sent to the secondary schools in these communities for their primary assignment. The educational institutions are one of the major establishments in the country that have utilised the services of Corps members over the years. This is supported by the fact that a lot of community development activities have been carried out in schools. The Corps members have played crucial roles in the education of their host community members. "The impact of these young Nigerians is well documented and is particularly felt in educational and health institutions across the country where professionals are inadequate."<sup>1</sup> Oyebamiji and Adekola noted that:<sup>2</sup> illiteracy is one of the lead causes of poverty in the nation. The News writer described poverty as being exhibited through the low level of income and resources for sustaining livelihood; lack of nutrition; illiteracy; and low access to other basic services; increasing ill-health resulting in deaths; homelessness; unsafe surroundings, and social discrimination.<sup>3</sup> These are some of the social issues that affect the society and are hindrances to the wellbeing of the nation's citizens. These issues are being worsened by the members of the society that ignore their profound influence on daily living. The NYSC scheme was established in 1973 under the administration of General Yakubu Gowon. Abbas<sup>4</sup> explained that the NYSC scheme was created to rebuild Nigeria after the civil war. The scheme was established by decree No. 24 on the 22nd of May 1973. The NYSC scheme was put in place in an effort to bring attention to the social

<sup>1</sup>F. Abbas, NYSC: Service or Servitude. <http://thenationonlineng.net/nysc-service-or-servitude/> Retrieved on the 18th of January 2016.

<sup>2</sup>M.A Oyebamiji, and G. Adekola, Fundamentals of Community Development in Nigeria. University of Port Harcourt Press, Port Harcourt. 2008

<sup>3</sup> The Newswriter, Causes of Poverty in Nigeria <http://www.thenewswriterng.com/?p=12145> Retrieved on the 18th of January 2016.

<sup>4</sup>F. Abbas, NYSC: Service or Servitude. <http://thenationonlineng.net/nysc-service-or-servitude/> Retrieved on the 18th of January 2016.

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issues of the country and provide solutions for them. As noted in the NYSC Handbook, the fundamental aim of the scheme is to inspire the youths of Nigeria to selflessly serve the communities of the nation and express the spirit of unity and brotherhood, regardless of culture and social position.

This chapter examines the influence of the activities of the scheme on the knowledge of social issues in host communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States. To achieve this, the paper will determine the extent to which these activities have improved the knowledge of the community members on social issues.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Social Issues**

The term social issues refer to the various topics and problems that are connected with the society and the people in it. Genuine development cannot occur if these issues are ignored. Social issues also encompass the educative aspects of the community development activities of Corps members. Social issues include child healthcare and disease prevention, malnutrition, poverty alleviation, women and youth empowerment, mass literacy/adult literacy, patriotism, charity work for social welfare, as well as social vices – cultism, truancy, bribery and corruption, kidnapping, murder, armed robbery etc. There are various means through which the knowledge of community members on social issues can be improved. These include the construction of billboards and signposts for public enlightenment, the mass media (radio, television, and newspapers), the internet/social media, as well as organised workshops, seminars, and events. The Corps members have used such means over the years to educate the public on social issues.

**Youth Service:** Youth service refers to a non-military, intensive engagement of young people in an organised activity that contributes to the local, national, or world community. Youth service is widely

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recognised and valued by the society, with minimal compensation or in some cases, no compensation to the server. Youth service gives opportunity for youth development, youth voice and reflection. This may take the form of a youth programmes where young people are recruited, offered leadership opportunities, participate in activities that improve the community, and are trained and mentored. The most common age group defined as 'youth' is 15-30 years of age, and in other parlance, 15-40 years of age. The United Nations defines youth as 15-24 years of age. The duration of most youths in service for either their community or their nation depends on the settings they find themselves in. Some communities regard long-range youth service as being from six months to two years of service; however, this time range can vary with each country's national youth service policy.<sup>5</sup>

**Knowledge:** Knowledge is often defined as a belief that is true and justified. This definition has led to its measurement by methods that rely solely on the correctness of answers. A correct or incorrect answer is interpreted to mean simply that a person knows or does not know something. Such methods of measurement have serious deficiencies that can be alleviated by expanding the definition of knowledge to include the test-taker's certainty. The person's certainty about the answers on a test captures important, but now neglected, dimensions of knowledge.

Historical roots of certainty are essential component of knowledge; a computer analysis of a person's answers and self-assessment certainty responses provides multidimensional scores about a person's knowledge. All these are considered as determinants for measuring Knowledge.

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<sup>5</sup>"Youth Service" National Youth Commission. Retrieved 4/26/09.

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### **Community Development**

The United Nations defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems."<sup>6</sup> It is a broad concept, applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens, and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. Community development is also understood as a professional discipline, and is defined by the International Association for Community Development as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings".<sup>7</sup>

Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. These skills are often created through the formation of social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger social institutions.

**Illiteracy:** Illiteracy is the inability to read or write, or the actual or perceived state of being uneducated or insufficiently educated. Social judgment is so powerfully built into the term illiteracy that scholars now generally use more neutral terms, such as non-literate (for societies and individuals for whom literacy is not a relevant issue) and pre-literate (for societies and conditions before literacy emerged or was encountered and adopted). Formerly, the term illiterate was used to describe someone without book learning or a

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<sup>6</sup>"Community Development"

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_development). Accessed 21/3/21

<sup>7</sup>

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liberal education (especially in classical latin and greek), even though such a person could read in a vernacular language or handle accounts and correspondence. However, the word also carried the connotation of ‘unpolished’, ‘ignorant’, or ‘inferior’, as in ‘the disadvantage of an illiterate education’.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Community Development Service (CDS) Programme**

The Community Development Service (CDS) is one of the cardinal programmes of the NYSC scheme. It is through the CDS that the Corps members of NYSC undertake developmental activities during their one year of national service to improve their host communities in one way or the other. It is one of the requirements of the NYSC Corps members to participate in Community Development Service as part of their contribution to developing the country. Onyeozu<sup>9</sup> defined the concept of community development as an educational method based on the definition adopted by the United Nations. Community Development is defined as “an educational method by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.” One of the objectives of Community Development as given by Anyanwu<sup>10</sup> is “to inculcate among the members of a community a sense of citizenship and spirit of civic consciousness.” This sense of citizenship and civic consciousness occurs when the people are aware of the social issues affecting them and how to bring about the necessary improvement.

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<sup>8</sup>“Illiteracy” <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/education/education-terms-and-concepts/illiteracy>, Accessed 21/3/21.

<sup>9</sup>A.M. Onyeozu, Understanding Community Development. Davidstones Publishers Ltd, Port Harcourt: 2007, P.20

<sup>10</sup>A.M. Onyeozu, Understanding Community Development...

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The Community Development Service (CDS) which is a component of the scheme and a year-round affair avails Corps members with the opportunity to work with the local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programme which impact positively on the socio-economic development of the host communities.<sup>11</sup> Each Corps member is assigned to a particular CDS group as his/her Group CDS; this is compulsory, while Personal CDS project/programme is optional for interested Corps members. Group CDS is to be attended once in a week. The Corps members are formed into groups and also placed for various purposes and aims. Corps members are expected to use one day in a week for this category of CDS and are not expected to attend duties in their Places of Primary Assignment on such days.

There is also the personal CDS. This CDS activity is where individual Corps members can execute project/programme in their host communities based on the needs they intend to solve within a community. Corps members are encouraged in addition to the group CDS to look out for areas where they could make individual impact in the community. It could be construction projects like building of toilets, bridges, classrooms, or other project such as establishment of libraries, extra moral classes, charity work, vocational training for empowerment of unemployed youths, and many more. Where a project/programme requires financial support, Corps members are encouraged to source fund from their host community and other organisations after getting approval from the management of NYSC. The third is the collaborative CDS. The scheme partners with National and Non-Governmental organisations and other establishments to implement development programmes. The Scheme signs MOU with the partners, clearly stating

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<sup>11</sup>National Youth Service Corps. *Objectives of the Scheme*. Retrieved from NYSC:  
<http://www.nysc.gov.ng/objectives.php>

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each partner's roles/responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> Corps members are usually involved as Volunteers on this programme. Collaborators in this type of CDS include Road Safety Group (Federal Road Safety Corps), Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS Group, Anti-Corruption (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission & Independent Corrupt Practices and others related offences Commission) Group, Service Delivery Group (Attitudinal Change, Re-Branding), Sustainable Development Goals, Medical and Health Services Group (Red Cross, Breast Without Spot, Polio Plus.), Drug Free and Quality Control Group (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control) and Corps Legal Aid Scheme Group) Legal Council of Nigeria and Ministries of Justice.

### **Impact of Corps Members on Knowledge of Social Issues**

Based on the finding obtained from the field, the activities of Corps members are significantly related to the improvement of the knowledge of community members on social issues. These activities include public enlightenment/training, social activities and establishment of centers for schools, medical outreach, and humanitarian activities among others. These activities do directly contribute to the improvement of the knowledge of community members on social issues. This could be due to the fact that there are other available means through which the community members can improve their knowledge of social issues e.g. the mass media (radio, television, and newspapers), the internet, workshops, and events organised by private organisations or other governmental organisations. Over the years, these other organisations have

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<sup>12</sup>A. Abdullahi& L. Cheri, "Analysis of the Implementation of Community Development Service Projects of National Youth Service Corps: Channels and Hindrances".*Ilorin Journal of Administration and Development*, Vol. 2 (2) December, 2016

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constructed billboards and signposts to enlighten the public. These other means of information and enlightenment operate independently and have been accessible to the public in one form or the other.<sup>13</sup>

The activities of the Corps members aimed at improving knowledge on social issues are put in place to assist these independent agencies of the society to educate the public. The NYSC as organisation, like every other organisation constantly uses the abovementioned forms of media to disseminate information to the public. According to Olutola<sup>14</sup> the determination of what project should be undertaken for which local community has been a virtual prerogative of Corps members and the NYSC field staff in each state. Apparently, the Corps members are the initiators of development in their host communities. As long as the community members look at a typical NYSC project and refer to it as a Corps member's project, true ownership has not been taken. It is also possible that the community members could show interest in the educative activities of Corps members without any real intention of using what they have learnt on a long term basis. This study also indicate that whether the Corps members carry out their activities or not, the community members will always find other independent means to educate themselves on social issues or other issues of interest. The sporting events organised in schools by the Corps members, have been used to improve knowledge on social issues by

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<sup>13</sup>A. Olutola, Effectiveness of the NYSC-Sponsored Community Projects in Nigeria. Illorin Journal of Education, University of Illorin, Kwara State.  
<http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/journals/education/ije/feb1981/effectiveness%20of%20the%20nysc%20sponsored%20community%20projects%20in%20nigeria.pdf> retrieved on February 24th, 2014.

<sup>14</sup>Daily Trust (2011) NYSC and Its Challenges.  
[http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=20103:nysc-and-itschallenges&catid=17:editorial&Itemid=9](http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20103:nysc-and-itschallenges&catid=17:editorial&Itemid=9) retrieved on the 16th of March 2012: 1

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targeting the behaviour, enthusiasm, and enlightenment of the youths.<sup>15</sup>

When the construction/renovation works of Corps members are not adequately maintained by the community members, this improvement can be affected, because of the low level of utilization. These works include game courts (volleyball, basketball, and badminton), classroom blocks, signposts, billboards, computer literacy centres, laboratories, etc. This study implies that the activities of Corps members are significant enough to result in a greater change in the improvement of knowledge of social issues. Although the educative needs and the empowerment needs of the community members are catered for by the Corps members, the fact still remains that when the people are the recipients of development instead of the initiators, the influence will be low even when efforts are made to sustain it.<sup>16</sup>

It is recommended that the Corps members should even focus more on awakening the people to take the first steps in their own development. The social issue of healthcare and increased life expectancy can be catered for through increased and improved medical outreach activities by Corps members. Moreover, the youths in the communities should take a more active role in developing themselves in terms of education and utilise the expertise and experience gained from their various institutions. Finally, it is apparent that the daily education of the public on the social issues that affect them promotes life expectancy, unity, and peace.

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<sup>15</sup> M.A Oyebamiji, and G. Adekola, *Fundamentals of Community Development in Nigeria*. University of Port Harcourt Press, Port Harcourt. 2008

<sup>16</sup> M.A Oyebamiji, and G. Adekola, *Fundamentals of Community Development in Nigeria...*

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### **Conclusion**

This study has revealed that the activities of the NYSC Corps members have influenced positively on the youths of their host communities especially in the area of provision of knowledge on social issues. The study also found out that these activities embarked on by the NYSC has brought about the reduction on various seemingly social vices which has hitherto plagued the communities and mostly caused by the youths. The chapter conceptualised the terms knowledge, illiteracy, social issues, youth service and community development. The study also examines the NYSC community development service and its impact on provision of knowledge on social issues in their host communities.

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# 7

## **The Effect of National Youth Service Corps Teachers` Input on Students` Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Nigeria**

Rufai Aliyu

### **Introduction**

Nigeria among other nations globally is now paying attention to her youths. Recent socio-political problems of militancy from the southern Nigeria and Boko Haram of the northern part of the country that led to bombing of strategic religious, economic and political edifices in the country has also claimed many lives beyond 1st of January, 2012. These

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events are threats to national unity.<sup>1</sup> National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as a scheme and the institution that administers it was launched in 1973 to serve as a veritable tool for the promotion of national unity. Subsequently, the program was launched and has since been strengthened and focused on so that it can achieve greater results in its implementation policy. The supervisory responsibility has remained with the Minister of Youth and Sports Development while the Nigerian youths who were drafted to NYSC programme are expected to be in-tune with the objectives and theme. They are also to be re-tuned to specifically participate in community development activities during the service year. This ensures that NYSC participation includes challenges and leadership roles expected by jobs available after completion of service.

### The Concept of Youth

**Youth:** The way a nation defines its youth is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist in the country. In Nigeria, persons between ages 18 to 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, are youths. This category represents the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally, and in other respects.

### Youth Profile

The 1991 Population Census puts Nigeria's population at 88.9 million and at a growth rate of 2.8% per annum, the country's projected population was around 115 million in the year 2000. However, the Country's population is adjudged to be predominantly young, going by the statistical data which followed.<sup>2</sup> For instance, six out of every ten Nigerians are under 25 years of age and the total population of those between the ages of 15 and 34 was about 30 million in 1991;

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<sup>1</sup>B.A. Odufowokan, Practicum in Classroom Organization and Educational Management, Bosun Publishers Ltd, Ogun-State, Nigeria. 2006.

<sup>2</sup>FGN, Social Development Policy for Nigeria. (1989). Lagos.

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equivalent to one of every three Nigerians; and of these, 14 million (47%) were males while 16 million (53%) were females (about 38 million), with the male/female ratio almost one to one. The 1991 Census indicates that the total population of those defined as youth in the National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan is 22.5 million, or one out of every four Nigerians was estimated to be around 28 million in 2000. Subsequently, this represents over 70% of all youths and adolescents of the ages 15-34.<sup>3</sup>

Indisputably, Forty-four percent (44%) of these are males while fifty-six percent (56%) are females. About 17 million of these, or sixty-one (61%), live in the rural areas, while 11 million (or 39%) live in the urban areas which is defined as settlements with a population of over 20,000. Of these who live in the rural areas, 62% are females while 38% are males. In the urban areas, the gender distribution is fifty-fifty. National Youth Policy Plan and Strategic Plan of Action (2001) however summed-up youths` problem as being a vulnerable group with peculiar but un-met needs and aspirations.<sup>4</sup>

Basically, a majority of the youth faces problems, the highlights of which include the following:

- Inadequate parental care;
- Non-availability of suitable sports and recreational facilities;
- Moral decadence in the society;
- Lack of appropriate role models;
- Religious fanaticism;
- Cult activities;
- Political manipulation of youth organizations;
- Unemployment and under-employment;
- Poor education;
- Breakdown of family values; and

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<sup>3</sup>FGN, Social Development Policy for Nigeria. (1989). Lagos.

<sup>4</sup>FGN, Social Development Policy for Nigeria. (1989). Lagos.

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- Indiscipline.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the National Youth Policy Plan and Strategic Plan of Action (2001) added mounting health and social welfare to the problems of the youths. For example, 43% and 53% of youths are sexually active. Surprisingly, most lack adequate information and services to promote and protect their reproductive health. There is also the rapid rate of increase of sexually transmitted diseases (STDS), HIV and AIDS. Youths are the most vulnerable to infection and to inadequate care and treatment. Indisputably, quite a good number of the youth are afflicted by all kinds of disabilities. The 1991 census data indicates that one of every three disabled persons is a young person. These range from the deaf, dumb, deaf and dumb, the blind and the crippled to the mentally disordered. As such, the existing rehabilitation and vocational training centers for the disabled are grossly inadequate and ill-equipped.<sup>6</sup>

Equally important is the level of formal education available to the youths. Approximately 33% of all the youths have no formal education. Many of these youths without formal education are vulnerable to unemployment and underemployment as well as to socio-economic exploitations and deprivation. About 50% of all those in the age category 15 to 34 years are not gainfully employed.<sup>7</sup> Most of those with some knowledge of gainful employment are involved in informal sector, low-level income activities e.g. street hawking of wares and commodities, either for their parents and/or relatives, or for other traders from whom they earn their meager commission or remuneration. Consequently, they are the pool from which youth labor is exploited and they are susceptible to crime, delinquency, and other vices. Hence, the range, extent and magnitude of the problems which confront the Nigerian youth require a committed and determined effort

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<sup>5</sup>FGN, Social Development Policy for Nigeria. (1989). Lagos.

<sup>6</sup>FGN, Social Development Policy for Nigeria. (1989). Lagos.

<sup>7</sup>National Population Commission, (1991), Population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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on all part of the stakeholders in order to help them achieve their potentiality and make them appropriate partners in the task of national development. All these problems need to be urgently addressed so that they can be adequately empowered and enabled to play active roles as participants in the shaping of their own destiny as well as in the building and development of the Nigerian nation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Issues Impinging on the Nigerian Youth**

It is the responsibility of the government and other stakeholders to constantly identify and address the needs and problems of the youth with the full participation of the youths themselves. They need to be mobilised, engaged, enlightened, conscientised, re-oriented, trained and involved.<sup>9</sup> Essentially, In spite of attempts by successive regimes to improve their lot, the condition of the Nigerian youth still leaves a lot to be desired. A lot more needs to be done to empower them, re-energise them and get them seriously involved with the task of nation building and socio-economic development. Relatively, past attempts at addressing the problems of the youth were characterised by much rhetoric but little terms of concrete action. Even the little that was being done lacked focus such that the result was marginal, if not counterproductive. Equally important and of note is the nature of the socio-political and economic environment which had in the country imposed serious constraints in terms of meeting the needs and aspirations of the youth, indeed and historically, it can be said that

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<sup>8</sup>FGN, National Youth Development Policy (1999), Programs and Implementation Strategies. (Draft).

<sup>9</sup>E. Williams, G. Persaud, and T. Turner, In Linda, K, Lemaster (Ed), International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP), (George Washington University: Washington, DC, 2008)

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Nigerian youths have suffered more neglect than encouragement, and purposeful involvement by the government.<sup>10</sup>

Contemporarily, they suffer from different kinds of socio-economic deprivations and afflictions, which have been intensified during the prolonged military rule and acute economic crisis. Thus, Government's efforts, when made, have generally tended to be too little or too late. The institutional framework geared towards planning and implementation mechanisms of public policy on youth have been very weak, inefficient and ineffective, such that they hardly ever facilitated the actualisation of desired policy goals.<sup>11</sup> Youth and Education in a developing country like Nigeria, Federal, State, Local government and members of the public – stakeholders have been given high priority. The main reason is that education is one instrument of change with which a country can achieve greatness socially, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. In other words every nation strives hard to get maximum output from the minimum input. Essentially, agitation started in education two decades ago on the increasing rate of poor academic performance of students. However, in this millennium, getting the best from the lean input in the field of education has witnessed many innovations due to initiation and execution of many educational programs embarked upon by the Federal government of Nigeria.<sup>12</sup>

For over two decades now, many people are of the opinion that Nigeria's educational system is witnessing high increase in rate of

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<sup>10</sup>E. Williams, G. Persaud, and T. Turner, In Linda, K. Lemaster (Ed), International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP), (George Washington University: Washington, DC, 2008

<sup>11</sup>N. Otono, Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background, Oxford University Press Reports of the Zonal Youth Summits, 2000.

<sup>12</sup>B.A. Odufowokan, School Plant Planning as Correlate of Students' "Academic Performance in South West Nigerian Secondary Schools", *International Journal of Business Administration*, Vol 2, No 2, 2006, Pg. 41-47. doi: 10. 5430/ ijba v2n2 p41, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v2n2p41>. May 2006.

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students' poor academic performance most especially at the secondary school level, invariably; this affects and militates against overall standard of education. There is this believe that education is not just decreasing but decreasing at an alarming rate. In south west Nigeria secondary schools, students' academic performance is poor generally going by existing records. There was persistent mass failure of students in the senior certificate examination [SSCE] conducted by the West African Examination Council {WAEC}.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, Ajayi and Yusuf<sup>14</sup>, asserted that the observed poor academic performance of the secondary school students in southwestern Nigeria may not be unconnected with seemingly poor school plant planning and teaching staff in the schools. Supporting these findings, Duncanson and Achilles<sup>15</sup> affirmed that teachers and the physical environment {plant space} are two major tools that can bring about new outcomes. They quoted Summer who submitted that unintentionally and non-verbally, teachers expose their educational philosophy in the way they use space.

Despite the huge investment on education by all tiers of Nigerian government, poor academic achievement in public examinations, particularly the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) now referred to as Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) has been an issue of major concern to parents, educators, school administrators, social scientists, government officials and the entire stakeholders in Nigerian education. In actual fact, poor academic achievement affects the nation socially, economically, politically,

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<sup>13</sup>B.A. Odufowokan, School Plant Planning as Correlate of Students...

<sup>14</sup>I.A. Ajayi, Unit cost of Secondary Education and Students` Academic Achievement in Ondo State (1991-1995). PhD Thesis, Ibadan: University of Ibadan. 1999.

<sup>15</sup>E. Duncanson, and C. Achilles, Education, In Linda K, Lemasters {Ed} the *Journal of the International Society for Educational Planning {ISEP}* George Washington University, Washington D. C. 2008

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scientifically and technologically. As academic failures amount to `drop-outs` in education industry and therefore constitute wastage to the nation's economy.<sup>16</sup>

Federal government with other tiers of government have made frantic efforts at investigating into this cankerworm that has eating deeply into the Nigeria's education system, this has taken different forms – ranging from political debate to sampling of individual's opinions, setting-up of various level of panels and education summit and conferences to mention just a few. Nonetheless, some researchers have cited some possible causes of the problems. Akinboye<sup>17</sup> attributes the causes of this failure to teachers less commitment to work, little or lack of parental influence on their children, constant changes to educational policies by the government in power and the inconsistencies among states with particular reference to the educational issues and problems. Barr,<sup>18</sup> in contributing to qualities and characteristics of a good teacher itemised eleven of such qualities as follows:-

- Resourcefulness, originality, creativeness, initiative, versatility, imagination, adventurousness, progressiveness.
- Intelligence, foresightedness, judgment, intellectual acuity, understanding, mental ability, intellectual capability, common sense.
- Emotional stability, poise, self-control, steadfastness, sobriety, reserve, dignity, non-neuroticism, emotional maturity,

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<sup>16</sup>E. Duncanson, and C. Achilles, Education

<sup>17</sup>Akinboye (1982), Simple Research Methods for Dissertations, Project Research Papers. Less Shyraden, Ibadan.

Analytical Report at the National Level Abuja (1998)

<sup>18</sup>A.S. Barr, Phi Delta Kappan, Vol, 39, NO 6. "Characteristics of Successful Teachers" March

Commonwealth Secretariat (1996), Formulating and Implementing National Youth Policies. A Common Wealth, Handbook. London

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adjustment, constancy, loyalty, easy-going realism in facing life, not-exitable, stable integrated character.

- Considerateness, appreciativeness, kindness, friendliness courteousness, sympathy, tact, good naturedness, helpfulness, patience, politeness, thoughtfulness, tolerance.
- Buoyancy, optimism, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, carefreeness, vivaciousness, alertness, animation, idealism, articulateness, expensiveness, wit.
- Objectivity, fairness, impartiality, open-mindedness, freedom from prejudice, sense of evidence.
- Drive, physical vigor, energy, perseverance, ambition, industry, endurance, motivation, purposefulness, speediness, zealousness, quickness.
- Dominance, self-confidence, forcefulness, decisiveness, courageousness, independence, intensiveness to social approval, self-sufficiency, determination, thick-skinnedness, self-reliance, self-assertiveness.
- Attractiveness, dress, physique, freedom from physical defects, personal magnetism, neatness, cleanliness, positive personal charm, appearance.
- Refinement, good taste, modesty, morality, conventionality, culture, polish, well-readiness.
- Cooperativeness, friendliness, easy-goingness, geniality, generosity, adaptability, flexibility, responsiveness, truthfulness, warm-heartedness, unselfishness, charitableness.

Corroborating the assertion above is Babatunde<sup>19</sup> who extended teacher's less commitment to work to the Primary School Teachers whom he said ` were the first to receive the students to a well laid

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<sup>19</sup>S. O. Babatunde, Mass Failure in Public Schools Examination. Technology Oriented Solution. A Paper delivered at the National Conference on Mass Failure in Public Examinations 21st – 25th April, 2008.  
University of Ibadan.

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foundation.' He added that it is the carryover of primary school's failure that resurfaced in the secondary schools. He reported further that the education witnessed during the political era was characterised by mass education system. As a result, inculcated wrong values into the children's education adding wrong educational aims and objectives; there was wrong approaches to teaching and learning process, all culminated to improper education.

Invariably, these wrong and improper education will lead to student's poor academic achievement which in turn breed thuggery, lack of self-discipline and self-respect, corruption, impetus to explore, lack of sense of values and inordinate ambition to make up for the loss in education. Asserting this fact is Okoye<sup>20</sup> who blamed the situation upon poor motivation of students. All of these have shown different moves, concerns and reasons for our secondary school students' poor academic performance.

Emphatically, teachers have had tremendous impact on moral and disposition to duties and subsequently these affect their effectiveness and productivity. Accordingly, Wiles<sup>21</sup>observed that good interpersonal relationships, emotional adjustment and morale are contagious in any community like educational setting. Hence, the provision of good and educationally qualified teachers, school instructional plant by the ministry of education and its agencies and subsequent supervision by the principals and teachers of schools will help provide good, efficient and conducive teaching and learning environment for both students and teachers which also provide needed respects, dignity for teachers and self-realisation and security for students in the long-run.

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<sup>20</sup>S. O. Babatunde, Mass Failure in Public Schools Examination. Technology Oriented Solution. A Paper delivered at the National Conference on Mass Failure in Public Examinations 21st – 25th April, 2008.  
University of Ibadan.

<sup>21</sup>A.P. Wiles, "Supervision for Better Schools", Prentice Hall Inc, New Jersey. 2013

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Consentingly, the objectives of education and that of the school in particular will not be achieved if there is unqualified school staff in place. Students and teachers do not enjoy teaching and learning respectively, while the expected supervision and monitoring from the principal is hindered, irrespective of the leadership style he possesses. Corroborating the above, Odufowokan<sup>22</sup> affirms education's capital intensive nature to diverse curriculum design, teachers, students, textbooks, teaching resources, and infrastructural facilities of which sound teaching staff is related. This is a fact that the huge investment and expenses in education will be justified only if the stated goals and objectives are achieved in the long-run.

### **Impact of National Youth Service Corps Teachers` Input on Students` Academic Performance In Secondary Schools In Nigeria**

Studies have shown that the above characteristic of a qualified teacher who has the quality of good teaching are mostly found among the graduate youth Corps members, mostly those who are sent to impart their skills on secondary school students nationwide. It is on record that Corps members sent to secondary schools are in most communities the pioneers of educative initiatives which include the opening of educative clubs among the students associations. For instance the fire safety clubs, hygiene clubs among others. But most importantly, their imprints on the student's academic output are remarkable.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the youth Corps members have undergone series of trainings in the university specifically those with bias in educational courses in the university and they turn out to be good or even excellent

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<sup>22</sup>B.A. Odufowokan, School Plant Planning as Correlate of Students` "Academic Performance in South West Nigerian Secondary Schools", International Journal of Business Administration, Vol 2, No 2, 2006, Pg. 41-47. doi: 10. 5430/ ijba v2n2 p41, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v2n2p41>. May 2006.

<sup>23</sup>Abubakar Yunus, 45+, NYSC official, Interviewed at the NYSC SECRETARIAT Gwadangwaji Kebbi State. 15/03/2021.

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tutors. It has been recorded that over 80 percent of youth Corps members who served in various states of the federation are mostly posted to secondary schools to carry out their primary responsibility of serving their fatherland through the gainful impact of knowledge on students of these schools especially those in the final years of the secondary schools, about leaving for tertiary level of education i.e the university.<sup>24</sup>

### Conclusion

The study revealed that the level of National Youth Corps teachers' input in secondary schools in Nigeria is high. This high level might be connected with the adage which says that two good heads are better than one. They are young and vibrant teachers who just graduated from the universities and are ready to make impact in their host communities. These apart, thorough supervision, control and monitoring of the Corps members directly by their respective cooperating teachers, vice-principals and principals of schools they are posted to, as well as various educational services unit at the local government will sustain this high level of influence.

There is no doubt that the relatively high level of their influence in secondary schools enhanced better teaching and learning process and also facilitates better academic performance. Supporting this, Ajayi<sup>25</sup> writes that academic performance of students is greatly enhanced when teachers put in their best and requirements into teaching and learning process. He believes that the level of academic performance is directly connected with the level of other factors such as motivation of teachers through regular payment of salaries, in-service training and student's commitment to their study.

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<sup>24</sup> Abubakar Ishaq, 40+ Civil Servant, Interviewed at Barnawa Kaduna 01/03/2021.

<sup>25</sup>I.A. Ajayi, Unit cost of Secondary Education and Students' Academic Achievement in Ondo State (1991-1995). (PhD Thesis, Ibadan: University of Ibadan). 1999.

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Also, the NYSC Corps member's work habit, general ability, resourcefulness, personal qualities and mental stability constantly maintained and enhance teaching and learning, thereby creating better students' academic achievement.

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# 8

## NYSC and the Girl Child Education

Esther Ukile Akaa

### Introduction

The major focus of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) is to promote gender equality and empowerment through the education of women who will in turn educate their children, take care of their families and to also provide for their children. It has also been on how the society can address the major challenges confronting the girl-child in the family and to uplift her to a greater level. Thus, the education of the girl-child should be the concern of both families, individuals, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government at all levels. Unfortunately, the challenges of the girl-child seem to have taken

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another twist as she is faced with various forms of gender based Violence with rape topping the chart,<sup>1</sup> although several efforts have been made to scale down some of these forms of violence committed against women, including the enactment of laws with stiff punishment for perpetrators of such acts. In Nigeria, there have been several legislations enacted against perpetrators of rape but the implementation of such laws has become a major challenge. However, it is on record that, in 1995 at the World Conference of Women in Beijing, China, a declaration platform for an action that created the blueprint for advancing the rights of not only women but girls in general was unanimously adopted.

It is against this background that this paper shall attempt to discuss the analysis of the challenges confronting the girl -child in attaining education in Nigeria. We shall discuss various contributions of Individuals, NGOs and government at all levels towards the education of the girl- child. We shall then discuss of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC ) scheme in Nigeria and analyze the impacts of the scheme in promoting the girl -child education .The last segment of the paper would be an analysis of the prospects of the NYSC Scheme in promoting the girl – child education in Nigeria and the way forward.

### **Conceptual clarification**

In every discussion, there is the need to identify and analyse some basic concepts on the subject matter. In this paper some important concepts such as girl-child, education and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) shall be clarified in order to enlighten us more on the clear understanding of the article.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Para-Mallam, Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria: A Comparative Review of Violence Affecting Women and Girls in Selected States. (2018).  
10.13140/RG.2.2.34832.10249.

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**Girl – Child**

A girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years.<sup>2</sup>This refers to the age before the child becomes an adult .The development that occurs within this age covers from early childhood between ages 0-5 years. This is mostly the period the child attends the crèche and nursery school. The child then proceeds to primary school between 6-12 years and secondary school at the ages of 12- 18 years.<sup>3</sup> However, at 18, the child is at puberty stage and under the care and protection of parents or guardians. At this stage of the child's infancy, childhood and late adolescence, it is crucial for a girl-child to be protected and given proper attention. It is a stage where her personality and character are built and thus adequate attention should be given in order to build her behaviours physically, mentally, socially, spiritually and emotionally. The stage prepares her to the next, which is the adult age.

On December 19, 2011, United Nation General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 declared on October 11 as the international Day of the Girl child to recognise girls' right and the unique challenges girls face around the world<sup>4</sup>. This resolution focuses on the need to address the challenges of young girls and promote them through empowerment and provision of their basic human skills for survival. The most important rights of adolescent girls are the right to safe education and healthcare not only during the early stage of their lives but also as they grow into mature women. Girls have the potentials to change the world both as girls of today and as tomorrow's workers, mothers,

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<sup>2</sup> G. Offorma , Girl-Child Education in Africa , Keynote Address presented at the federation of University womwne of Africa ,16<sup>th</sup> – 19 July ,2019 , held in Lagos , PDF , retrieved at researchgate.neton Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> Feb , 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> International Day of the Girl Child , retrieved on [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), Tuesday ,9<sup>th</sup> February , 2021.

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entrepreneurs mentors, household heads and political leaders.<sup>5</sup> To achieve this, there is need for mentorship as she is dependent on the significant others at this formative stage, those who the child would model her behaviour through observation and imitation of their life styles.

### **Education**

Education is the process of providing avenue to an inexperienced person to help him/ her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically<sup>6</sup>. This means the process of acquiring adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that affect an individual. The national Policy on education in Nigeria was launched in 1977<sup>7</sup>. This policy on education is aimed at shaping individuals towards self realization for the development of the nation. Thus to achieve its aim of social, cultural, economic, scientific, political and technological development, the policy in 1985 broaden its horizon to include free primary education for pupils among other provisions. Until 1984, the structure of education was 6 years of primary school, 5 to 7 years of post primary schools (secondary and teacher training college) and 4 to 6 years of tertiary education (college of education, polytechnic, college of Technology and university education. From 1985, the structure of the Nigerian education was classified into the pre-primary or kindergarten education (2 to 3 years) for the children of ages 3 to 5 years. The primary school became 6 years for children of ages 6 to 11 years and the post primary education was divided into 3 two halves , (3 year of junior secondary school and 3 years of senior secondary school ) as well 4 to 6 years for tertiary education level . This is called the 6 – 3- 3- 4 system, However , the regime of former

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<sup>5</sup> International Day of the Girl Child , 2021.

<sup>6</sup> G.Offorma , Girl –Child Education in Africa,1.

<sup>7</sup> L.A Amaghonyeodiwe and T.S Osinubi . The Nigeria Educational system and Returns to Education , international journal of Applied Econometrics and quantitative studies , vol, 3-1, EAAEDS , 2006.

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president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, launched a new educational scheme known as the Universal Basic Education Scheme which was aimed at eradicating illiteracy.

### **Background to the Girl Child Education in Nigeria**

Education has been the backbone of development in most countries of the world. Quality education propels both the economic, political and social emancipation of a nation. Thus the provision of quality education should be a nation's priority in order to promote quality sustenance so as to enable the educational system to be well developed and effective. In Nigeria, there are challenges confronting the educational system especially the girl-child education in the country. In societies where culture, religion, poverty, among others, impair the education of a girl child, it becomes difficult for such a child to attain quality education.

Ugbem and IKwuba stated that: Culture relegated women to the background where they cannot be active participants in issues that concern their lives<sup>8</sup>. This has implication on the educational attainment of the girl child as certain culture in Nigeria limits her from enrolling into school.

Zaigi also asserted that: In Nigeria, women are not given adequate attention in the area of education except in recent times, parents did not send their daughters to school. Instead, it was mainly male children that were sent to school<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the girl child is being discriminated due to cultural practices. A significant number of them do not go to school since they are obliged to abandon their studies to help their mothers

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<sup>8</sup> Comfort Erika Ugbem and Agnes Abganugo IKwuba, "Cultural views of womanhood in Igede Society of North Central Nigeria in Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh and Elijah Ikpanor( eds), in Themes on women Studies in Africa :Perspectives from Nigeria, Donafrlique Publishers , 2015, 314.

<sup>9</sup> Zaigi Ngharen Amin, Violence Against Women in Nigeria , in Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh and Elijah Ikpanor( eds), in Themes on women Studies in Africa :Perspectives from Nigeria, Donafrlique Publishers , 2015, 375

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with household chores. Others are employed as house girls or house helpers in urban agglomerations where they serve as babysitters<sup>10</sup>. This exposes the girl-child to all forms of Gender Based Violence including indecent assault, sexual harassment and psychological violence, among others. This is to the fact that most Nigerian cultural practices see women as wives and so should not be educated. It is common to hear people saying things like "women's education ends in the kitchen"<sup>11</sup>. It is therefore important to state that such backward cultures have served as an impediment to the attainment of the girl child education in Nigeria.

According to oral account, the challenges of the girl -child are overwhelming<sup>12</sup>. It is the girl child that bears the burden of house chores so much that she lack the ability to go to school and even complete her education. Her right living as a child in terms of growing up is affected because most times rather than being in school, she is saddled with house chores and responsibilities that are even above her. Sometimes she is used as child slave and labour and when it the time for who should drop out of school, it is the girl child especially when there is no one to care for them in the family. She ends up getting married before she is 18 in some communities<sup>13</sup>. This means that with her withdrawal from school, she begins to face sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and sexual molestation by family members or relatives. The girl-child is deeply affected by the patriarchal nature of the African society which believes in the supremacy of men and boys; a

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<sup>10</sup> Emeka Daniel Oruonye , The challenges of Girl - Child Education to attainment of the milenium Development Goals in Taraba State , Nigeria, Taraba State University Journal of Arts and Social Sciences Vol . 2 ( 1) September 2021, 239-249.

<sup>11</sup> Zaigi Ngharen Amin, Violence Against Women in Nigeria, 374 – 375.

<sup>12</sup> Nkechi Illochi , Omekedo, 40 + Manager, Women Rights , ActionAid Nigeria , interviewed in Abuja on 25/ 02/ 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Nkechi Illochi Omekedo, 40+,Manager, Women Rights , ActionAid Nigeria , intervieweed in Abuja on 25/ 02/ 2021.

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society where a woman can only think but cannot be heard. The girl-child living in the same society with such a cultural background faces a lot of difficulties<sup>14</sup>.

The girl-child is also faced with the challenge of religion and beliefs system. Religious myths and interpretations are used in the justification why the girl-child should not be educated. Often times the children are given away to old men perhaps older than their grandparents.<sup>15</sup> This act is mostly based on religious reasons including Ignorance, Poverty and inhumanity. Children who are denied education and forced into marriage because of cultural or religious reasons would live the rest of their lives below potential<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the girl child is being discriminated due to religious and cultural practices which may limit her potentiality of becoming great in the society.

### **Background to Contribution towards Girl-Child Education**

Education has always played an important role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the society. Hence there exist a high positive correlation between the level of educational attainment and the economic standards of community life<sup>17</sup>. In Nigeria, governments at all levels have continued to design programmes of development particularly on educational policies. Although most of the aim and objectives of these policies are not met successfully. Also, experiences have shown that very large number of children especially girls do not acquire basic education and even those who got admitted in previous years drop-out after continuing for few years. However, previous governments have continued to implement programmes to encourage

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<sup>14</sup> Nkechi Illochi Omekedo, 40+ Manager, Women Rights , ActionAid Nigeria , interviewed in Abuja on 25/ 02/ 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Zaigi Ngharen Amin, Violence Against Women in Nigeria, 375.

<sup>16</sup> Zaigi Ngharen Amin, Violence Against Women in Nigeria, 377

<sup>17</sup> B.S Yadav and Humayun Masood , Socio Economic profile of child Labour , Agree Publishers , New Delhi , 2008, 102.

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education especially the girl - child due to series of advocacies on the girl- child development.

At the federal government level, literacy programmes have been given priority they deserve. This can be seen in the quality of teachers with qualified teaching certificates, relevant teaching programmes, adequate learning materials and facilities to encourage the teaching of learning at the federal government level. Nasasaiah posits that, If we truly believe in lifelong learning, and if we seriously believe in redressing the balance of learning in our societies, then, we should seek to develop in every country an open and enabling system of education, breaking with past concepts of education as something which happens to people between the ages of six and twenty and which only the privileged few were to access. Synergy has to be created between formal and non - formal education programmes<sup>18</sup>. This means that the efforts of government in designing educational programmes or policies should include all types of learning whether they take place in school or at home. The federal government has developed capacities of teachers as measures aimed at increasing efficiency of education at all levels. As part of its effort, special federal government schools as well as unity schools are established for girls across the states and curriculums are designed to meet the educational needs of girls to encourage and promote the girl-child education.

Also various state governments are complementing the efforts of the federal government to improve the education of a girl- child. In an oral Interview with the Benue State Commissioner for Education, Prof. Dennis Ityavyar, he maintained that the attitude of parents and guardians towards the education of the girl - child has improved greatly<sup>19</sup>. The establishment of quite a number of government girls

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<sup>18</sup> M . Lakshmi Nasasaiah , Child Labour and Education , Discovery Publishing House , New Delhi , 2009, 24

<sup>19</sup> Dennis Ityavyar, 50 +, interviewed in Makurdi, Makurdi LGA, 21 / 02 / 2021

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schools, renovation and the provision of learning materials in the state are efforts geared towards promoting the girl-child education. The state has special schools for girls. Government Girls Secondary School Makurdi, recently renovated, has qualified teachers. The government also plans to build hostels so that there will be a boarding school in Gwer Local Government Area of Benue State instead of a day school. Another school is the Government Model Girls Secondary School in Aliade, Gwer Local Government Area which is also well renovated. The governor of Benue state, Samuel Ortom, has also built a fence around girl's schools in the state to secure the girls and protect them from Insecurity<sup>20</sup>. In terms of quality of teaching, the schools have qualified teachers and students from all parts of Northern Nigeria are admitted into the schools on exchange programme. The state has also supplied the schools with new chairs and tables for the comfort of the girls. Apart from the efforts made, the state government has embarked on sensitisation visits and campaign to encourage parents to allow their children to register into the schools.

The missionaries on their part established several schools, which are for girls across the various states of the federation. In Benue State, such schools include; St Winifred Girls Secondary School, Ihugh , Queen of the Rosary secondary school, Gboko, and Divine Love Girls Secondary School, Katsina Ala<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the efforts towards educating the girl child have yielded much results in the state. However, effort must be made to take the education of the girl-child to rural area where there are challenges of early marriage. Government must provide succour by encouraging some people to live in such areas. Government must also provide scholarships to the students to encourage their performances and improve their access to education.

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<sup>20</sup> Dennis Ityavyar interviewed in Makurdi LGA 21/ 02/ 2021

<sup>21</sup> Dennis Ityavyar , interviewed in Makurdi LGA on 24/ 02 / 2021

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The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are not left out on the issue of girl-child education. Most of them have identified and recognised the challenges of the girl-child in Nigeria and are working towards breaking barriers to girl-child education. An example of such Organisations is Action Aid Nigeria, an organisation that works with poor and excluded communities to promote the rights of people living in Poverty and to promote women in leadership positions.

The organisation has done extensive work on the girl Child education. There are many projects that have been initiated in the past by Action Aid Nigeria and some are still ongoing in ensuring that girls stay in school. They include, Commonwealth Education Fund, Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania, Enhancing Girls Basic Education in Kebbi, Promoting Girls Enrolment and Retention in School, AccessPro and Breaking Barriers Project<sup>22</sup>. The current project which is the breaking barriers project is aimed at ensuring that girls stay in school and concentrate and it is being implemented in Sokoto and Lagos states to promote girl - child education.

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Action Aid Nigeria provided transistor radios to school children so that they can learn through it on how to protect themselves from the virus. There was alot of tension and the possibility of girls dropping out of school or getting pregnant during COVID-19 pandemic. The transistor Radio was provided so that they can learn during the COVID-19 period. Also within the women's rights programme, there are our development partners that are working on specialised form of learning where girls stay in school to study and acquire knowledge. They provide economic empowerment to mothers to make sure that they pay their school fees and provide trainings in school clubs, targeting girls and teaching them on how to

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<sup>22</sup> Nkechi Illochi Omekedo,40+ Manger , Women's Rights , ActionAid Nigeria,  
Interviewed in Abuja on 26/ 02/ 2021

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maintain hygiene, providing hygiene services such as toilets, water, reading tables and books to girls in school to encourage them.

### **NYSC and the Girl- Child Education in Nigeria**

The Nigeria child's right Act recognises the rights of children, restores their confidence and self-esteem and improves their status<sup>23</sup>. The national legislature on its part passed the Child Rights Act to help protect the rights of both male and female children. However the law appears to have differing levels of acceptance and implementation among Nigerian states<sup>24</sup>. The law had little true effect on child's rights across Nigeria due to lack of implementation among other states. The challenge is that, despite the passage of the Child Rights Act in 2003, there is no provision by the federal government to truly enforce the act in order to truly protect children especially the girl-child against abusive conditions such as early marriage , female mutilation , harmful traditional practices which affect the girl- child both psychological and health wise. The challenge in the implementation of the Act has become a thing of concern for many NGOs. Some cultural and religious beliefs practised particularly in the Northern part of the country do not recognise the rights of women<sup>25</sup>. Most of these communities do not train the girl- child because they believe that training her is a waste of time since she will one day get married.

However, in Nasarawa state, stakeholders and educationalists have created awareness among the people to enable them understand the importance of training a girl child. The establishment of the NYSC Scheme has in no small measure contributed to the education of the girl-child and attention she has since begun to receive. There are efforts

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<sup>23</sup> Nigeria Child's right [www.lawyale.edu/ rcw/jurisdictions/ afw/](http://www.lawyale.edu/ rcw/jurisdictions/ afw/) retrieved on 28/02/ 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Nigeria Child's right [www.lawyale.edu/ rcw/jurisdictions/ afw/](http://www.lawyale.edu/ rcw/jurisdictions/ afw/) retrieved on 28/02/ 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel Tsebe, Chairman, House Committee on Womens Affairs, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, interviewed in Lafia, on 27/ 02/ 2021.

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made by NYSC to educate the public on the need to send the girl-child to school.

In Nasarawa state, there are no standing laws yet that seek to protect the educational right of the girl-child but there are agitations to make their education compulsory<sup>26</sup>. The state government started free education during the first civilian governor of the state, Abdullahi Adamu, and the action has since been replicated by his successors<sup>27</sup>. The essence is to encourage parents who find it difficult to send their girl children to school and gain knowledge free of charge.

### **The Impact of NYSC in Promoting Girl -child Education in Nigeria**

The NYSC programme over the years has impacted positively on communities through regular and effective distribution of skilled manpower, steady breaking of social and cultural barriers as well as the building of friendly bridges across ethno-linguistic boundaries. The programme has promoted values, skills and patriotism among youths. The NYSC programme has helped in the educational development of the country, especially from Junior secondary to tertiary levels<sup>28</sup>. The scheme is promoting the girl- child education through sensitisation programmes and campaign often organised by members of the scheme in collaboration with NGOs. This is achieved through the various community development programmes of the scheme. The traditional community development programme which was introduced in 1976/1977 service year has helped a lot in the promotion of learning,

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<sup>26</sup> Samuel Tsebe, Chairman, House Committee on womens Affairs, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, interviewed in Lafia, on 27/ 02/ 2021

<sup>27</sup> Samuel Tsebe, Chairman, House Committee on womens Affairs, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, interviewed in Lafia, on 27/ 02/ 2021

<sup>28</sup> A.A Aba , Nigerian Politics 1999- 2009; Images from Chinua Achebe's Mirror, in Okafor Chuwuemka , Ani Johnmark K - The National Youth Service Corps Programme and Growing Security Threats in Nigeria, Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review, Africa's Development watch, 152.

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tourism, healthcare and agricultural development<sup>29</sup>. Corps Members are grouped into different Community Development Services (CDS) to look out for areas where they could make individual impact in the community. In this regard, CDS groups are formed to promote the education of the girl-child. Also, the construction of projects like building of toilets, bridges and classrooms for schools to encourage teaching and learning are done by CDS groups. Others include the establishment of libraries, extramural classes, charity work, vocational training for empowerment of unemployed youths, among others. Sometimes the projects may require huge financial support and Corps Members take the responsibility of sourcing for funds from other organisations after getting approval from the management of NYSC. Examples of CDS groups that promote the fundamental human rights of individuals include, Corps Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS) which carries out sensitisation of the public on fundamental human rights of citizens. They also hold public lectures and create awareness on fundamental human rights including awareness on education of the girl-child.

Secondly the Education Development Group (Mass literacy, Adult Education, Extra Murals, ICT) enhances the education standard of the host community. This also include career guidance and Counselling for students as well as campaign against illiteracy. These campaigns and awareness creation has changed the negative attitude of parents or guardians towards the education of the girl-child. Many parents are beginning to realise the importance of girl-child education<sup>30</sup>. Also guidance and counselling section by corps members deployed to schools assisted in career choices of students, especially girls, thereby helping in improving the education of the girl -child.

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<sup>29</sup> Okafor Chuwuemka and Ani Johnmark K - The National Youth Service Corps, 152.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Tsavande , 55 , Principal , Government Girls College , Makurdi, Interviewed in Makurdi on 22/ 02 / 2021

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Another impact can be seen in the area of awards of female corp members who performed exceedingly during service years. This act by both the federal and state governments as well as corporate Organisations have encouraged parents who hitherto had negative attitude towards the education of the girl-child to change their attitudes<sup>31</sup>. The awards are won by best group or personal CDS project that impacts on the lives of citizens of the community where the project is implemented. This has a way of encouraging people to do more especially in the education of their wards.

### **The Prospects of NYSC in the Promotion of Girl-Child Education in Nigeria**

For NYSC to effectively promote the girl- child education, there must be collaboration between government at all levels and the private sector for sustainability of the NYSC Programmes that seek to promote girl Child education. This is because the programme is just for a year and sustaining the initiatives of the scheme becomes key for desired results. Thus the collaboration between various stakeholders such as government at all levels, communities, International Organisations and NGOs should be the primary focus of the scheme<sup>32</sup>. This collaboration would help in establishing a strong mechanism that will serve as a follow-up to projects implemented by the scheme. To this end, NYSC should consistently work with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to raise awareness, provide timely and credible feedback on project initiated by the scheme. There should also be a workable framework for educating, orientating and indoctrinating Nigerians towards attitudes, values and culture which project the right of the girl Child to education. Also the domestication of NYSC projects with Organisations that are closer to the projects area will in no small measure promote

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<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Tsavande, 55, Principal, Government Girls College , Makurdi, Interviewed in Makurdi on 22/02/2021

<sup>32</sup> Anicetus Atakpu, 39, Human right activist , interviewed in Lafia LGA, on 26/ 02/ 2021

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girl-child education. This will encourage easy grassroots implementation of projects and record successes.

The NYSC, Government and school management bodies should also regularly maintain school facilities, such as school libraries , girls safe spaces , classroom blocks provided by CDS groups for the purpose of promoting the girl- child education and education for all. This can be done through collaboration with the state ministry of Education and other educational boards such as the State Universal Basic Education( SUBEB) and local educational authorities.

Furthermore, the NYSC Scheme should work in synergy with both traditional and religious institutions in ensuring that the aspects of Culture and religious myths and interpretations that are used in the justification why the girl-child should not be educated are eliminated. This is because cultural and religious interpretations serve as impediments to the education of the girl child, thus the need for awareness creation in churches, mosques and in communities across the states of the federation.

The scheme should also work with the media as a tool in promoting girl-child education. The media are agents of social change which can be used in creating awareness about girl-child education and drawing government's attention to the need for them to prioritise the educational needs of the girl child<sup>33</sup>. It therefore recommended that the NYSC should work in collaboration with the media on the need to make laws that will prohibit early marriage and promote girl Child education. The media reports issues of gender based violence and infringement on the fundamental human rights of individuals, especially the girl-child<sup>34</sup>. Thus, the NYSC Scheme should work hand in hand with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigeria

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<sup>33</sup> Isaac Ukpoju , Journalist , Interviewed in Lafia LGA, on 27/ 02/ 2021

<sup>34</sup>Ibid

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Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and endeavour to pay serious attention to campaigns that will promote girl-child education.

#### **Conclusion**

To eradicate and correct some of these challenges facing the education of the girl in Nigeria, the federal and state government, policy makers in education, International Organisations, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders must work in synergy with the NYSC Scheme in order for the girl-child to be given her rights. There must be special consideration that must be given to Nigeria educational institutions in order to achieve the stated goals of education in national policy on education. Government at all levels should be provided the less privileged in the society with materials such as uniform curriculum, adequate school equipments and facilities for comprehension to enable them send their girl children to school. The federal government, state and non-governmental organisations should see education as the way forward for societal growth and development. Thus, they should always be ready to renovate dilapidated facilities and refurbish broken roof of schools. The school programmes should meet the needs of the children and also prepare them to be a useful citizen in the society. Also education in Nigeria should not be allowed for government alone to manage but private sectors and other non-governmental bodies like NGOs should be incorporated. At all levels of government, there should be adequate funding for proper management of educational institutions in Nigeria. Finally, the NYSC scheme must ensure sustainability of their programmes aimed at promoting the girl-child education in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

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NYSC DG, Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim



Former DG, NYSC Brig Gen Olawumi presents NYSC News Magazine to  
Gen Yakubu Gowon



Former NYSC DG, Gen Kazaure presents NYSC News magazine to  
Ekiti State Governor Ayodele Fayose



Former NYSC DG, Brig Gen NT Okore-affiah addresses Corps members



Former NYSC DG, Brig Gen Yusuf Bomoi welcoming a guest to the Commissioning of the NYSC Directorate Headquarters Complex in Maitama



Former NYSC DG, Brig Gen MI Tsiga commissioning a project by a Corps Member.



Corps Member teaching in a Classroom



The Corp members of SDG on Sensitization Programme  
on Corruption.



The Anti-Corruption Group (ACG) during its sensitization program for the Junior Secondary School Students, Oke-fia, Oshogbo, Osun State.



Corps Member demonstrating to Students in Class.



NYSC Community Development Service Project Lagos



Corps member CDS Sensitizing students on Choosing a Career



Corps member on Sensitization and Advocacy for Sexual Abstinence and Knowing HIV status to students of Ijero High School, Ekiti State.



Corps member Sensitizing Students and Teachers on Human Trafficking



Corps Members Sensitizing Students on Health,  
Skill Acquisition & Personal Hygiene in Edo State.



NYSC Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) CDS Group in Skill Acquisition  
Programme for Secondary School Students in Zing LGA, Taraba State.

National Youth Service Corps and Adult Education in Nigeria

# 9

## National Youth Service Corps and Adult Education in Nigeria

Usman Mohammed Musa  
and  
Mahmud Dauda

### Introduction

One of the bedrocks and backbone of the development of every nation is its youths and education. Development in heterogeneous nation like Nigeria cannot be achieved if there is no education and national integration. Nigeria is a country blessed with human and material resource. Its human conglomeration of different ethnic groups saw the need for unity and peaceful coexistence that can be achieve through

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youth service and literacy promotion among various communities in Nigeria. The NYSC scheme was established by Decree No.24 of 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1973 as a response by the Federal Military Government under General Yakubu Gowon to obviate the pressing issues of national unity and developmental challenges in place in the post-civil war era. The scheme consists of four cardinal programmes: Mobilization; Orientation; Primary Assignment and Community Development Service; and Winding up Activities/Passing-Out-Parade. The scheme is made compulsory and involves the country's graduates particularly the first degree and HND holders. When duly mobilized for the program, they are deployed to any NYSC Orientation Camp in any part of the country and in most cases outside their state of origin and state of study to be trained for three weeks (21 days). From the orientation camps, they are posted to their place of primary assignment to work for the remaining part of the service year which will end with a Passing out Parade (POP).<sup>1</sup> Notably, such graduates are youths not above the age of 30 years and are universally known as "Corps Member" while a group of them are called "Corps Members". The scheme and actions associated with it are aimed at fostering unity and development by helping youths to appreciate several other ethnic groups in the country. They are to mix, interact and learn from other socio-cultural backgrounds. The NYSC scheme is one of the ways education can reach every community in the country, which is why most corps members are posted to secondary schools for their primary assignment.<sup>2</sup>

Educational institutions have utilized the services of NYSC to achieve their educational objectives, prominent among which is the adult

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<sup>1</sup>O. Chukwuemeka and A. K. Johnmarry, "The National Youth Service Corps Programme", 152.

<sup>2</sup>M. A. Oyebamiji and I. E. Umofia, "Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on the Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States", *International Journal of Education and Evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, (2016), 29.

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education programmes like civic education, community education and community development, all being executed mostly by the NYSC. In addition, NYSC has remained a strong national agency in integrating the people and building the nation's unity, cultural diversities and development. It is against this background, that this chapter evaluates the NYSC and adult education in Nigeria within the context of its history and how NYSC delivers adult education. It analyzes the way and manner NYSC delivers adult education. It examines the relationship of NYSC and adult education to national integration and national development. It finally assesses the pressing challenges confronting NYSC and adult education in the pursuit of national integration and development.

### ***Adult Education***

The history of adult education according to Usman and Alhassan is a hit-and miss story – starting off with strong rhetoric, promises and expectation and concluding with limited success, and even neglect and disappointment in too many cases.<sup>3</sup> The origin could be traced to the period of British colonization. The British government had no clearly defined policy on education for Nigeria before 1925. At early stage, British colonial administrators with the support of Christian missionaries managed all education activities. According to Fafunwa cited in Nnazor, the British in an attempt to promote education in their West African colonies set up the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission in 1922 with the aim of the need of a policy on adult education and community education.<sup>4</sup> The commission's recommendation for the

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<sup>3</sup> M. H. Usman and A. I'm Alhassan, "Adult Education Trends in Nigeria, Challenges and Prospects" (Paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Usman Danfodiyo University), Sokoto, 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, 1.

<sup>4</sup> R. Nnazor, "Adult Education in Nigeria: The Consequence of Neglect and Agenda for Action", *International Education Journal*, Vol.6, No.4, (2005), 531, accessed 25/02/2021, <http://iej.cjb.net/1443-2475>.

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development and institution of a policy on adult education represented the first key formal acknowledgement of the need to develop adult education alongside youth education or schooling. The commission stressed the education of the entire community if education was to result in meaningful development. To educate the children at school while the adult population remained largely illiterate and uneducated amounted to a grossly inadequate utilization of education in development.

Following the Phelps-Stokes report, Fafunwa in Nnazor stressed that the British colonial government issued its first education policy for Nigeria in 1925 which concentrated mainly on school education and missed the development of adult education. However, in 1951, the Central Board of Education endorsed a policy on adult education with the aim to organize remedial primary education for adults which included basic adult literacy and craft-making, and stressing the importance of women's participation in adult education. Following the policy, adult literacy classes sprung up in many parts of Nigeria. There was considerable enthusiasm for adult literacy among the people and the governments of the three regions of Nigeria: East, West, and North. The enthusiasm was particularly strong from 1950 to 1956, but the free primary education schemes initiated from 1955 and 1957 resulted in the waning of the enthusiasm and in drastic decline in government support for adult literacy. The enormous cost of free primary education left little resources for adult literacy. Thus, the first somewhat serious attempt at adult education lost steam or even collapsed.<sup>5</sup>

In 1959, the new Commission known as Ashby Commission was appointed to determine Nigeria's needs for post-secondary education over the next twenty years (1960-1980). In reviewing such, the commission recommended further expansion since progress had been made in the primary and secondary education. The commission still

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<sup>5</sup> Nnazor, "Adult Education in Nigeria", 531

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paid little attention to the development of adult education even though it flashes in some communities supported by regional government or voluntary agencies.

With the independence of Nigeria in 1960 there have been several National Development Plans articulating the country's development priorities and strategies. None of the plans provided a comprehensive framework and impetus for the development of adult education. The Nigerian National Policy on Education was adopted in 1977 and modified in 1981. The policy provides for equal access to education, including continuing and further education, and commits to the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of lifelong learning.<sup>6</sup> Beyond the articulation of desired outcomes, nothing much has been achieved in terms of significant development of adult education. There has hardly been a sustainable, virile, and coherently comprehensive set of programs demonstrating government's commitment to adult education as a strategic priority in Nigeria's development.

However, with the establishment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in 1990 charged to monitor and coordinate adult education programs as well as to conduct research related to the development of adult and non-formal education in the country, adult education programs continued to operate mainly as disparate, piecemeal activities that are not integrated into a coherent, purposeful strategy in pursuit of a national development vision. Many government sponsored adult education activities have been chronically anaemic due to inadequate funding, and lackadaisically implemented owing largely to a historical lack of passion and vision for adult education as both a strategic goal and an instrument for national development. Adult education curricula are hardly forward-looking or responsive to the strategic needs of the

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<sup>6</sup> Nnazor, 531.

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economy or to the personal, social and political development needs of the vast majority of Nigerian adults. Frameworks for organizing and delivering programs are hardly innovative or forward-looking.<sup>7</sup> To Omolewa, the constraints of funding, lack of continuing policy, problem of gender and language as well as the inadequacy of physical and instructional facilities in government-owned adult education training center's is indicative of the neglect and marginal status of adult education.<sup>8</sup>

It should be noted that Adult Education has no acceptable connotation but according to the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1976 (UNESCO) as presented in Adekola, adult education is defined as "the entire body of organized process whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, college and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development".<sup>9</sup> It further articulates Adult Education in its International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) V documents of 2009 as cited in Usman and Alhassan as "the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, where by people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong

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<sup>7</sup> Nnazor, 532.

<sup>8</sup> M. A. Omolewa, "Setting the Tone of Adult Education and Continuing Education in Africa" in A. Ndabawa et al., (eds.), *The State of Adult and Continuing Education in Africa*, (Windhoek: Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Namibia, 2000), 15.

<sup>9</sup> G. Adekola, "Establishing a Link Between Adult Education and Community Development for Improved Teaching, Learning and Practice of Concepts", *Global Journal of Educational Research*, Vol.11, No.1, (2012), 66, accessed 25/02/2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjedr.v11i1.9>.

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develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society".<sup>10</sup>

In line with this world view, the Nigeria National Policy on Education (NNPE) is set out to achieve five national goals as stated in the National Policy on Education by Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004 as cited in Adekola and Nwogu. These goals are to achieve:

- (a) A free and democratic society;
- (b) A just and egalitarian society;
- (c) a united, strong and self reliant nation;
- (d) A great and dynamic society
- (e) A land of full opportunities for all citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Towards achieving these national goals, the National Policy on Education in 2004 as cited in Adekola and Nwogu recognizes the place of adult education and in its Section Six states the goals of adult education as:

- i. To provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education;
- ii. To provide functional and remedial education for those young people who did not complete secondary education;
- iii. To provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.

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<sup>10</sup> M. H. Usman and A. U. Alhassan, "Adult Education Trends in Nigeria, Challenges and Prospects" (Paper Presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Usman Danfodiyo University), Sokoto, 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, 4.

<sup>11</sup> G. Adekola and G. A. Nwogu, "Challenges of Community Development in an Emerging Democracy: Implications for Adult and Non-Formal Education", *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 3, No. 6, June (2015), 461.

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- iv. To provide in-service, on the job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.
- v. To give the adult, education for public enlightenment.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, these goals as stated above, are the main purpose of adult education in Nigeria. It should be noted that Adult Education revolves around three programmes namely: Civic Education, Community Education and Community Development which is also part of the cardinal programmes of the NYSC scheme. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme and Adult Education programmes no doubt have recorded a momentous role in promoting national integration, unity and rapid development through their operations.

### **NYSC in the Delivery of Adult Education in Communities**

As observed earlier, adult education in relation to NYSC deliver its civic education, community education and community development programmes which details are as follows:

In the area of Civic Education, the NYSC corps members who are mostly posted to secondary schools in different communities use civic education as a critical and effective empowerment tool for promoting citizens participation in democratic and development purposes. Civic education according to Adebola and Agusiobo is defined as a process of educating citizens of their rights, duties and responsibilities to empower and motivate them to what areas of the political and governance processes they can effectively participate in, what they can do to influence political outcomes and thereby improve the quality of governance at all levels.<sup>13</sup> The teaching of such will drive the citizen's consciousness, harmony and responsibilities to every other individual

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<sup>12</sup>Adekola and Nwogu, "Challenges of Community Development in Emerging Democracy", 461

<sup>13</sup> Adebola and Agusiobo, "The Role of NYSC", 77.

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irrespective of language, religion or political affiliation. Furthermore, the NYSC in delivery of civic education has guided individuals on how to have a peaceful conflict resolution method, as it display how individuals should communicate effectively and come to conclusion in a peaceful manner when conflicts occur.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, civic education should be made a prime concern in order to have an conscious and effective individuals in the society.

The delivery of community education is another way NYSC teaches adult education. According to Ani, addressed in Adebola and Agusiobo, community education entails a supporting relationship and sharing of facilities between a community school, as well as a community involvement in the management of the community schools.<sup>15</sup> The NYSC with its human resource capacity has continued to deliver community education in almost every community in Nigeria through its ability to provide vocational or skill acquisition training, entrepreneurship education for the aim of reducing unemployment through self employment and generating self income through their training and augmentation of their skill and abilities. The scheme also engages in health management campaigns to reduce health problems in order to have a productive life. The NYSC in the 2011 elections has proved to the youths and host communities its willingness to contribute their selfless service to national growth without any form of fear by encouraging the individuals to also do the same.

Lastly, the NYSC through its cardinal programme of Community Development Service (CDS) project is being used as means to educate adults in their host communities by focusing on developmental projects that will benefit the people. The Corps members collaborate with adult

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<sup>14</sup> R. Kapur, “Role of Adult Education in National Development”, *ResearchGate*, September (2019), 7, accessed 26/02/2021,  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335738715>.

<sup>15</sup> Adebola and Agusiobo, “Role of NYSC”, 78.

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educators by organizing the people of the communities and their leaders on the need to identify and gather resources for the execution of projects that will be of benefits.<sup>16</sup> Such project includes infrastructures like building or renovation of classrooms, clinics or public toilets, construction of bridges, building of boreholes and roads. The NYSC uses this to integrate the people in place of development by forming a formidable force towards such community development without waiting for the government. However, these Corps members in the delivery of adult education engage in social work to encourage the communities by improving the wellbeing of the people. Such works include provision of tuition classes free of cost to individuals, donation of various useful items like books, bags, clothing, etc., and seasonal environmental sanitation which practice have educated and encouraged the individuals to participate in such activities that will bring about livelihood opportunities, personality development and community progress. Hence, the government should endeavor to effectively support the worthy initiatives of the NYSC in the delivery of such adult education programmes which will reduce their cost on community development and increase literacy, awareness and development in the country.

### **NYSC, Adult Education and National Integration**

National integration as opined by Shona and cited in Ayinde is the consciousness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. That is to say people have to take into cognizance the fact that they are one, irrespective of their differences in caste, religion, region or even language.<sup>17</sup> The NYSC, which is aimed at developing common ties among the Nigerian youths and promoting national unity and

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<sup>16</sup> Adebola and Agusiobo, "Role of NYSC", 78.

<sup>17</sup> A. F. Ayinde, "National Youth Service Corps Programme and the Quest for National Integration: Issues for Policy Consideration", *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, Vol.7, No.1, (2018), 281.

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integration on one hand, with adult education on the other hand, has been successful to some extent in achieving and promoting national integration despite some challenges generally associated with every scheme. However, the deployment of Corps members to places outside their domicile in order to interact with other people from different socio-economic and ethno-religious backgrounds has helped to integrate or bring together the youths of Nigeria as well as the adults through their knowledge of adult education and bridging the ethnic and religious divisions in the nation. It also helps in providing exposure to other ethnic groups as it give a practical lesson on how to relate, interface and socialize with persons of diverse affiliations as people united under one nation which is positive step towards building a stronger nation.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the scheme has aided social integration by providing opportunities for cross cultural interaction that has led to inter-marriages which is vital to national integration as it helps to reduce inter-ethnic stereotypes and suspicions that were in existence after the Nigerian Civil War.<sup>19</sup> That is to say, some Corps members who have served outside their ethnic background have one way or the other associated with persons or even married from outside their own cultural background or geo-political setting due to social interaction as a result of the youth service, while adult education has promoted and acknowledged such practice of cultural diffusion which foster unity and development in their various communities.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Campbell, December 7, 2017 (7:00 am), post on “The National Youth Service Corps: A Bridge to Nationalism in Nigeria”, from Africa in Transition, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS BLOG, February 27, 2021, <https://www.vfr.org/blog/national-youth-service-corps-bridge-nationalism-nigeria>.

<sup>19</sup> J. Campbell, December 7, 2017 (7:00 am), posts on “The National Youth Service Corps: A Bridge to Nationalism in Nigeria”.

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NYSC members in collaboration with adult education programmes have organized and promoted sporting activities in their various schools and communities which have been used to improve knowledge of social issues by targeting the behavior, enthusiasm and enlightenments of the youths on the need for a peaceful coexistence and cooperation in the nation.<sup>20</sup> Both programmes also provide employment buffer by offering employment to recently graduated youths who are sometimes retained in their places of deployment without regards to their ethnic/religious settings. This aides economic integration and creates a sense of unity among the diverse groups.<sup>21</sup> In addition, NYSC in the quest for national integration has fostered a sense of patriotism among Nigerian youths by participating and obeying the clarion call to serve the fatherland in any part of the country they are posted.

### **NYSC, Adult Education and National Development**

The role and connection of NYSC and Adult Education to national development is multidimensional as it serves as a foundation for progress in human and infrastructural development. This can be seen and understood through the intricate existing relationships between the economic, socio-cultural and political determining factors of Nigerian development.

The economic role of the NYSC and Adult Education to national development can be seen in its contribution to human capital formation or development projects. NYSC and Adult Education according to Jinna and Maikano have enhanced labor productivity by yielding high rates in investment through equipping recipients with essential literacy and numeracy skills which has helped to improve the people's standard of

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<sup>20</sup>Oyebamiji and Umofia, "Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on the Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States", 32.

<sup>21</sup>J. Campbell, December 7, 2017 (7:00 am), post on "The National Youth Service Corps: A Bridge to Nationalism in Nigeria".

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living and productivity by reducing sickness, mortality rates and increase life expectancy through formal education and training that will provide a population climate suitable for investment.<sup>22</sup> However, the NYSC through its community development services on one hand and adult education on the other hand has also been instrumental to the familiarization of the active population of Nigeria with Information Communication Technology (ICT) which is positive tool for the smooth integration and development of the economy in a global perspective. This is owing to the fact that digitalization has made the world to move to knowledge based economic structures and information societies such as networks of individuals, firms and countries are linked electronically in inter-dependent and interactive relationship.<sup>23</sup>

NYSC and Adult Education also play major role in social development of the nation. The participation of the youths and poor people have helped to increase growth by reducing poverty through vocational education, entrepreneurship development and skills acquisition training or programmes,<sup>24</sup> which enables individual to recognize and develop their skills to be independently self employed in their respective skills as little or no capital is required in the training. This has helped to promote a stable community and safe environment. In addition, NYSC and adult education programmes have helped to train Nigerian population in benefitting from basic health care services/facilities, including sexual and reproductive health services through public awareness/campaigns and sensitization of the people against diseases

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<sup>22</sup> Y. J. Jinna and P. N. Maikano, "The Role of Adult Education in National Development", *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Science*, Vol. 32, (2014), 37, accessed 26/02/2021, doi:10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS. 32.35.

<sup>23</sup> Jinna and Maikano, "The Role of Adult Education", 37.

<sup>24</sup> A. P. Obinna et al., "Community Involvement in the National Youth Service Corps Community Development Service Projects in Abia State, Nigeria", *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol.23, No.4, October (2019), 66, accessed 24/02/2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v23i4.8>.

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that can devastate people such as HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), among other health problems. This is often carried out by Corps members who are posted to secondary schools and trained as Anti HIV/AIDS vanguards. This enables the masses to take advantages of such programmes to improve their health and personality.

The NYSC programme and adult education have improved the living condition of people through promoting civic and social engagement particularly among the adults belonging to deprived, marginalized and economically weaker section of the society. With the assistance of NYSC, individuals are able to bring about changes in their attitudes and behavioral traits as well as communicate with others in a polite and decent manner by putting into practice values, norms and principles in implementation of tasks and activities. Hence, interaction, communication and socialization with others have developed the enrichment of people's life against seclusion and promote social development in the nation.

However, Corps members in collaboration with some adult education centers execute infrastructural projects as part of their community development service to the nation. This developmental project includes projects like construction of classrooms, bridges, bus stops, status and symbols among others as seen in many host communities of the country. Other contributions of NYSC and adult education through its community development services includes the clearing and draining of drainages/culverts, sinking of ordinary dug out wells for easy access of water, assistance of the less privileged in the society, organization of extra mural classes, adult literacy campaign, among others.<sup>25</sup>This self service or help has in no small way contributed in improving the way of

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<sup>25</sup>A. A. Idike and E. O. Innocent, "Role of Youths in Nation-Building", *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, Vol.9, No.5, November (2015), 60, accessed 24/02/2021, [www.arabianjbmr.com/JPDS\\_index.php](http://www.arabianjbmr.com/JPDS_index.php)

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life and living standard of their communities as well as the development of the nation's infrastructure. Moreover, besides seasonal works, the scheme has also helped to turn out large tonnage of food items and feed the nation through the hectares of farm land were some members served in some states of the federation. Notable are the Rice Mill in Enugu and Sokoto States, Feed Mill in Lagos State and Garri Processing Factory in Kwara State.<sup>26</sup> This has not only developed the nation but also become a model to other countries.

Politically, NYSC which has a strong link/connection to adult education plays a very significant role in strengthening democratic values. According to Seya, cited in Obasi, adult education has informed and educated people of their rights and responsibilities by making them to actively participate in decision making at local, national and global levels of democracy. The absence of such knowledge can constitute abuse of human rights and social injustice which can pave way to violent conflicts or become a stumbling block to economic, social and political development of the nation.<sup>27</sup> This is achieved through the teaching of civic education by Corp members posted to a community which is part of the adult education programmes; the inability of the individual to have rights in decision making can cause underdevelopment. The political dimension of both NYSC and adult education is geared towards awareness among individuals to know their rights and duties as they become able to render effective contributions towards the welfare of their communities. Furthermore, the community development service of both NYSC and adult education has helped councillors to serve and be accountable to their communities as Corps members and adult educators engage in

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<sup>26</sup>P. Udende and A. A. Salahu, "National Youth Service Corps Scheme and the Quest for National Unity and Development: A Public Relations Perspective", *ResearchGate*, January (2012), 10-11, accessed 24/02/2021, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293976288>.

<sup>27</sup> S. Obasi, "Adult Education in Nigeria: A Discipline in Search of Scope and Direction?", *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol.5, No.11, (2014), 28

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community projects and improve service delivery which in turn make the councillors to carry out such public service or civic duty in order to protect their reputation.<sup>28</sup> The community development programme has also helped to raise people's expectation of all aspects of the quality of life which revolve around learning to give and expecting more community life through sustained community development support to groups, networks and participatory democracy movements. In addition, NYSC and adult education have promoted national development by contributing to cultural change within organizations or communities through influencing how colleagues and partners engage with people or communities. These practitioners have also promoted change within statutory agencies and partnerships by demonstrating effective ways of engaging in trusted, honest and open dialogue with communities.<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, NYSC and adult education are powerful tools for favouring inclusive development by ensuring and promoting peace, security, stability and national unity in a democratic nation. Such peace and stability are seen in their prevention of political disorders and civil unrest through political education, public enlightenment campaign, policy advocacy and participation of Corps members in electoral processes in order to have a neutral and smooth process.<sup>30</sup> They have also helped to build bridges of understanding across ethnic/political groups, affiliation and religious divide. The sustainability of democracy and good governance can only be achieved in a peaceful, secured and stable environment. Absence of such will compromise social, political and economic progress. Thus, it is apparent from the forgoing that NYSC and adult education are indispensable vectors that have

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<sup>28</sup>G. Adekola and G. A. Nwogu, "Challenges of Community Development in an Emerging Democracy: Implications for Adult and Non-Formal Education", *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol.3, No.6, June (2015), 460.

<sup>29</sup>Adekola and Nwogu, "Challenges of Community Development", 459.

<sup>30</sup>Jinna and Maikano, "The Role of Adult Education", 37.

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contributed to national development. There is virtually no aspect of the economic, social and political life that has not witnessed meaningful progress from NYSC and adult education in Nigeria. In fact, it has given room for literacy and entry point into labor market rather than roaming the street unemployed and ignorant of opportunities that exist in other parts of the country.

### **Challenges of NYSC and Adult Education to National Integration and Development in Nigeria**

Despite the invaluable gains reaped from NYSC and adult education to national integration and development, there are potential challenges faced by both Corps members and adult educators among which includes:

Lack of resources particularly in rural communities which has affected policy making and developmental projects<sup>31</sup> - This problem has impacted adversely on community development projects conceived by either Corps members or adult educators due to lack of finance, while some projects were abandoned due to such inadequacy. This has led to declining interest of either Corps members or adult educators in community development services. This as a result makes it difficult to achieve the objective of rapid development in the country. Other resources include inadequate welfare, leaders and volunteers to support rural causes and initiatives.

The inadequate materials needed to supervise and monitor adult education agendas have become an obstacle to achieving the objectives of both scheme. Monitoring which is vital ingredient for successful implementation of adult education should be integrated into the programme action plan.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Adekola and Nwogu, "Challenges of Community Development", 463.

<sup>32</sup> Usman and Alhassan, "Adult Education Trends in Nigeria, Challenges and Prospects", 10.

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Insecurity constitutes a major threat to adult education programmes. Corps members posted to less secured areas find it difficult to execute and serve their fatherland without fear or tension of being attacked, extorted, intimidated or harassed by hoodlums, kidnappers, insurgents or bandits.<sup>33</sup>

Inaccessibility is another challenge as some citizens find it difficult to either serve or enrol into adult education. Individuals should have the opportunity to develop themselves throughout their life without regards to their age. This will help them acquire knowledge, interact with other people who can pilot their life transition by improving their quality of life and develop their potentials to the nation.<sup>34</sup>

Other daunting challenges of both NYSC and adult education in Nigeria include lack of access to information by the local communities; low level research in the field of practitioner; inadequate and unsustainable cooperation or support among the population; limited sports and recreation facilities that can promote integration; cultural and religious intolerance; geographical factor among others. All the challenges threaten the objective of NYSC and adult education in the quest for national integration and development, if not addressed.

### Conclusion

In the light of the above discourse, having traced the history of NYSC to the events of the late 1960's and the negligence of the government towards adult education since its inception, it can also be seen that the NYSC and adult education have rendered invaluable support to the integration and development of the nation, particularly in the aspect of community development service. As highlighted, both had executed

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<sup>33</sup> Ayinde, "National Youth Service Corps Programme", 286.

<sup>34</sup> Usman and A. U. Alhassan, "Adult Education Trends in Nigeria, Challenges and Prospects", 10.

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projects ranging from infrastructural to human development projects that benefit not only the people, communities but the nation as a whole. Without doubt, it has given room for literacy and entry point into labour market rather than roaming the street unemployed and ignorant of opportunities that exist in other parts of the country. Despite its key role in the discernible quest for national integration and development, it is also confronted with the challenges of lack of resources, insecurity among others that, if not addressed, will hamper the landmark achievement of NYSC in adult education for National Development.

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Abdussalam, Aisha Ajoke

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**NYSC and Education in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the  
Role of National Youth Service Corps Teachers in  
Education Delivery in Schools in Kaduna State**

Abdussalam, Aisha Ajoke

**Introduction**

The quest for sustainable development and national integration has become a common phenomenon in Nigeria and the world over. Policies and programmes have been formulated for the attainment of development in all spheres of human endeavour. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 with the aim of achieving even development, peaceful coexistence and national unity. The Scheme targeted the youth which account for a significant number of

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the entire population in Nigeria. Also, governments and policymakers in Africa and Nigeria, to be specific, need to provide opportunities for the continent's more than 200 million youths in order to make available a conducive environment and a decent avenue for better living and economic advancement.

Every year, young fresh Nigerian graduates are deployed to various parts of the country to serve their father land for a period of one year. Majority of them are sent to primary and secondary schools. One of the bedrocks of development in any nation is education. Illiteracy is a major developmental challenge, which means that only a literate nation can make greater strides towards development<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, education holds strong in fashioning an individual into an agent of change and a promoter of societal values, growth and development. Education is also seen as a weapon used in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and competence necessary for survival<sup>2</sup>.

The National Youth Service Corps Scheme is one of the machineries of the federal government in ensuring that education gets to every community in the 36 states of the federation. This accounts for the reason majority of the Corps members of NYSC are deployed to schools for their one-year service to fatherland. Hence, educational institutions account for the biggest employer of Corps members in the country over the years. This is supported by the fact that a lot of community development activities have been carried out in schools. NYSC Corps members are a major player in the educational sector of the host

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<sup>1</sup>Morufu. A. Oyebamiji and InemesitEssietUmofia, "Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on the Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and AkwaBom States" *International Journal of Education and Evaluation* 2, no.1 (2016):29.

<sup>2</sup>C.GeorgeEkpo, and Is'haqA.Bello, "Education: an effective and efficient tool for conflict management" *African Journal of Allied Education* no. 1 (2011): 59.

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communities<sup>3</sup>. Education in Nigeria is aimed at producing an upright individual who can translate knowledge acquired into actions that will benefit the society. An educated Nigerian should have self confidence, respect and honour for his country and also be well equipped to face the challenges of the society and the world. The responsibility of producing such individual in the society lies on the teachers<sup>4</sup>. It is the role of the teacher to impact knowledge, give instructions and inculcate appropriate skills for academic excellence. National Youth Service Corps members are posted to schools to serve as role models to the children and inculcate morals and discipline for the task ahead. They bridge the manpower shortfall in most schools across the country.

In Kaduna state, majority of the Corps members are posted to schools for their primary assignment and to also impact meaningfully on the young minds and the educational sector as a whole. This is in the quest to achieve the pronouncement in the National Policy on Education that education is an essential instrument in the attainment of excellence, national integration and development. The presence of young teachers who just graduated from the university is believed to have significant influence on the academic performance of students in secondary schools.

This study will examine the Role of NYSC teachers in Education delivery in schools in Kaduna State. The study is divided into five sections. The first part is the introduction already discussed. The second part is the conceptual clarification of key concepts while the third section shall appraise the National Youth service Corps and its objectives and Education in Nigeria. The role of NYSC Teachers' in

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<sup>3</sup> Morufu. A. Oyebamiji and Inemesit Essiet Umofia, "Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on the Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States", 29.

<sup>4</sup> Abigail Osuafor, "Standard of education in Nigeria: the Role of Teachers"  
[Www.Academia.Edu/21672409/Standard\\_Of\\_Education\\_In\\_Nigeria\\_The\\_Role\\_Of\\_Teachers, 3](http://Www.Academia.Edu/21672409/Standard_Of_Education_In_Nigeria_The_Role_Of_Teachers, 3)

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Education delivery in Kaduna State will be assessed in the fourth section of the study. The fifth section will be on conclusion and recommendations.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This is necessitated on the desire to avoid ambiguity and misconstruing the meaning of some key concepts in relation to this study. This is to make the study more concise.

### **The Concept of Youth**

Globally, youths are seen as a formidable force to reckon with in the society. They are a critical segment of the entire population exhuming strength and dynamism which are essential ingredients in the engineering of development. According to the Nigerian government, youths are ambitious, energetic and promising. From the age of 15 years, a Nigerian youth is legally allowed to work. They are considered vulnerable in society because of the rapid pace of change they are experiencing at this time in their lives<sup>5</sup>. The youth are an essential instrument of change, peaceful coexistence, social mobilization, growth and development. Youths according to the NYSC are Nigerian graduates from universities and polytechnics recognized by the Regulatory commission on tertiary institutions in the country and the world at large. They are mobilized, deployed to states other than their states of origin, orientated and posted to place of primary assignment for a period of one year to provide services and engage in community development programmes. The maximum age requirement for a Corps member to be posted for service is thirty (30) years while graduates above that age will be exempted from the one year service.

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<sup>5</sup>Chimamkpa Williams Uzoma, Micheal Olusegun Falade, Ramon Bello  
“Background Paper on the Nigerian Youth”, *The Centre for Public Policy Alternative*, (2016): 2.

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### Teaching

Teaching is an art and craft involving teachers who are part of an ad-hoc decision making about the management of their classroom for the implementation of government educational policies. Such decisions may include:

- (i) the selection of the types of materials to use for instruction,
- (ii) the stating of behavioural or instructional objectives,
- (iii) the selection of instructional strategies,
- (iv) the selection of appropriate evaluation practices and techniques,
- (v) the selection of students and teachers activities<sup>6</sup>.

Teaching involves use of multi-dimensional instrument in learning, imparting knowledge and improving the academic performance of students/pupils. It has to do with the systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills and techniques to students. It also involves the sharing of knowledge in the process of developing the individual.<sup>7</sup> Teaching is an important aspect of the educational system; it is an instrument of imparting knowledge and morals in order to secure the future of a nation.

### Youth in Nigeria

The youth of a nation are the future and trustees of its prosperity; they are its greatest investment that determines the country's growth and development. The degree of enthusiasm, volatility and responsibility has significant impact on the country's advancement. Nigerian youth constitute the most active and productive sub-sector of Nigerian population, committed to socioeconomic and community development.

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<sup>6</sup>Samuel G.Ibe-Basssey, "Educational Technology: The teaching-learning process & the falling standard of education in Nigeria". 35th Inaugural Lecture series of the University of Uyo. Nigeria. 11-28.

<sup>7</sup>Paul B.Ozano, "Enhancing the Teaching Profession in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective", *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies2*, no.5 (2015): 51.

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If correctly guided and mobilized, the society will be better.<sup>8</sup> It was observed from the available data that the average Nigerian youth is willing and ready to serve in any part of the country as long as his or her security as well as job placement is assured.<sup>9</sup>

The National Youth Policy broadly targets all young people in Nigeria between the ages of 15 and 29 years, while recognising that youth are not a homogeneous group in terms of needs and circumstances. Therefore, the policy aims to provide a basis for interventions to appropriately address the specific and special needs of each of several identified target groups. In this regard, this policy categorises the target population into three groups: low-risk youth, especially vulnerable youth, and most-at-risk youth<sup>10</sup>. Shortly after Nigeria gained independence, the government initiated series of programs aimed at promoting youth development by shaping their character and behavior, as well as promoting competitive spirit and national integration. Notable among these programs is the formation of youth clubs in secondary and tertiary institutions with the aim of encouraging sporting activities and instilling discipline. The federal government established the National Youth Service Corps in 1973 with the aim of promoting national integration and exposing graduates of tertiary institutions to leadership roles and community development before joining the job market. To further solidify existing programs and actions, the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sport Development was created. State governments were also encouraged to follow suit in the development of creativity and ambition of the Nigerian youths. The

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<sup>8</sup>Njoku Raymond and Isigwe Paulinus Obinna, “The Nigerian Youth and National Development: A Prescriptive Exploration”, *Journal of Public Administration and Social Welfare Research* 4 no. 1 (2019): 4.

<sup>9</sup>Leke Abraham Oluwalogbon, “The Future of Nigeria’s National Youth Service Corps Programme: Any Hope for National Integration?”(2019): 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Youth and Sports development, “National Policy on Youth;Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development” (2019): 9

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first youth policy in Nigeria was enacted in 2006 with a subsequent review in the year 2009 and its main goal is to provide an appropriate framework that will promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political wellbeing of all young men and women in order to enhance their participation in the overall development process and improve their quality of life<sup>11</sup>.

The development of youth in Nigeria is an agenda that cuts across all sectors of the economy. The implementation of policies and programmes aimed at providing opportunities to the youths and improving the standard of living involves all key stakeholders in the economy, the government, civil societies, the private sector, international development agencies and the youth themselves.

### Youth and Development in Nigeria

The role played by youth in the growth and development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. The policy vision of National Policy on Youth in Nigeria is to ensure that youths are given equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations, irrespective of their background and living in a safe and secure environment. This will optimise their contributions to National Development of the country. In other words, even within the context of a particular culture, socio-economic and political space, the meaning of who can be considered a youth can be based on the philosophical foundations of social science fields of studies, its usage and the related specificities<sup>12</sup>. The concept of a youth is described as a group of young individuals who are on the verge of becoming matured adults. The youth constitute the most active individuals in the Nigerian society. They are viewed as effective machinery used in social mobilization and change. This is part of the

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<sup>11</sup>Chimamkpa Williams Uzoma et al, "Background Paper on the Nigerian Youth", 14.

<sup>12</sup> Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, E., & Ireland, E, *Researching Young people's lives*, (London: Sage 2009): 10.

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reason the then military regime of General Gowon concluded that the morals and values of national unity be inculcated in the minds of Nigerian citizens through the introduction of the NYSC Scheme which targeted the most volatile population, the youths. The Nigerian youth are faced with series of issues that make them vulnerable, leading to serious developmental challenges which includes unemployment, poverty and inequality. The youth population if not carefully checked and managed due to its large number, enthusiasm, volatility and active spirit, can pose a serious challenge to the growth of a nation. There is therefore the need to pay close attention to the development of youth in the society in order to enhance socio economic development and advancement.

### **Education in Nigeria**

Education is a tool instrumental to the attainment of national development and social change. Therefore, the quality of education of any nation will determine the rate of development of her citizens and the change that will occur. Education is viewed as the process by which an individual is assisted in physical, mental, moral, spiritual and emotional development through the provision of suitable environment and impacting of knowledge skills and attitudes that will be of use personally and to the society at large<sup>13</sup>.

Nigeria has witnessed series of Educational systems in its quest for standard educational delivery. Shortly after independence, there were reports of shortcomings in the educational system due to its dependence on the British educational system. The British educational system did not properly capture the unique needs and aspirations of Nigerian society. As a result of this lacuna, series of curriculum conferences were organized with the aim of establishing a system that

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<sup>13</sup> William E. Ekpiken and Aniefiok O. Ede, "The Role of Teacher Education and Nigerian Teachers in National Development: The Way Forward", *Higher Education of Social Science* 7 no. 1 (2014):140. DOI:10.3968/5349

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can accommodate the needs and aspirations of the Nigerian child and also improving the standard of education. The National policy on Education centered on inculcating self-realization, individual and national efficiency, and national unity. The policy seeks to achieve social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological development. In 1985, the objectives of the policy were broadened to include free primary education among others. Over the years, this policy has undergone periodic review to accommodate changes and diversity of Nigeria. The goals of education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education 2004 are:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity,
- The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society,
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
- The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. The goals stated above will make no meaning if they are not translated into action by teachers through classroom instruction<sup>14</sup>. Education is an integral instrument in the quest for socio economic growth and development. Against this assertion, the National policy on education is a reflection of the sentiments of the government and citizenry in the pursuit of national unity, nation building, consciousness and development.

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<sup>14</sup> Abigail Osuofor, "Standard of Education in Nigeria: The Role of Teachers", [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu). 2-3.

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### **Education in Kaduna State**

Education in Kaduna State retains top priority for the government, and several efforts have been made to carry out meaningful reforms in the sector. There have been major reforms by the State Government towards the improvement of education quality in the state. The education system has experienced an increase in private sector participation in the provision of educational services in the state and this, with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme, has led to an increase in demand for education.

The Kaduna State Policy on Education underlines the pivotal role of quality education at all levels of education in the state. This policy identifies government's priority areas in the quest for standard education and overall development of the state. The priority areas were categorized into eight thematic areas as follows:

- Quality, Accessible and Equitable Early Child Care Development and Basic Education;
- Accessible, Quality and Equitable Secondary Education;
- Accessible, Equitable and quality Non-Formal Education;
- Quality, Equitable and accessible Science, Technical and Vocational education;
- Quality, Accessible and Equitable higher education;
- Quality Teacher Education (Primary and Secondary);
- Quality Teacher Recruitment, Deployment, Development and Management; and
- Accessible and quality education infrastructure, funding and management<sup>15</sup>.

The Kaduna State government is concerned with improvement in the access to and quality of education at every developmental stage in a child's life. The Early Child Care Development, basic, secondary, adult

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<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, "Kaduna State Education Policy", Kaduna State Government, 6-7.

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and non-formal and tertiary educations are all areas of concern to the government. The aspiration to train children both males and females, special needs inclusive, is to ensure self-reliance, moral uprightness, discipline and tolerance which are the utmost priority of the government of Kaduna State.

### **NYSC and Education system in Kaduna State: An Appraisal**

The NYSC Scheme is one of the initiatives created by the Nigerian government as a compulsory exercise for all university graduates to reduce the antagonistic spirits, bias and ethnic contentions among diverse ethnic groups. Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the partners of today, but also the greatest investment for a country's development. They are acknowledged as an essential resource with great prospect for the advancement of the country. The youth of a nation are deemed as valued possession because without them, the future of the nation is bleak. Education on the other hand is an instrument of change with which a country can achieve greatness socially, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. Every nation strives to achieve development and technological advancement. The educational system in Nigeria has witnessed series of reforms since independence in the bid to improve academic performance and excellence.

Kaduna State aims for better positioning in the quest for National growth and development and to achieve this, education is an indispensable tool. The educational system needs to be adequately equipped to meet the needs, demands and challenges of the labour market. To achieve this, Kaduna State intends to effectively coordinate the different key players and stakeholders in the Education Sector, and clearly identify their roles and responsibilities<sup>16</sup>. More Corps members

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, "Kaduna State Education Policy", Kaduna State Government,

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are posted to schools for their one year service in comparison to other sectors in Nigeria. They serve as ad-hoc teaching staff providing necessary manpower and skilled services in the schools.

#### **The Role of NYSC teachers in Education Delivery in Schools in Kaduna State**

Youths in Nigeria occupy a strategic position in the attainment of developmental goals and objectives. Administrations have ensured that policy frameworks are formulated to enhance a suitable environment for the realization of productive potentials and maximization of creativity. The National Youths Policy recognizes that the youths are a key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the whole country. This portrays a government that is ready to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth as well as seek a solution to their problems. Thus, the policies and programmes were formulated to address issues affecting young people by including broad-based strategies that would provide the youth meaningful opportunities to realize their potential<sup>17</sup>.

The national policy on youth recognizes the need to promote the presence and participation of youths in education delivery in the country. The presence of youths through the NYSC platform will further strengthen the culture of volunteerism and also improve the academic performance of students. Studies on the role played by the NYSC Scheme have viewed it from the aspect of youth labour mobility and ethno-religious accord, promotion of peaceful coexistence and the canons of dedication to national service, spirit of citizenship, partisanship, and sustainable development<sup>18</sup>. Every year, Corps members are deployed to various parts of Nigeria for their national

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<sup>17</sup>Ministry of Youth and Sports development, “National Policy on Youth;Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development”10.

<sup>18</sup>Kareem Bika and Abraham Ehiorobo, “Assessing The Impact of National Youth Service Corps Scheme on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria”, 110.

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service year. These are vibrant young men and women from every field of endeavour. Majority of them are deployed to secondary schools in the bid to motivate the young ones and further boost their academic performance.

Investigations revealed that Corps members were used to run the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which the government had to embark upon in 1976. At the inception of the programme, the UPE was understaffed, thereby necessitating drawing from the NYSC pool to make the programme operational. Even till date a large percentage of the Corps members are deployed to the teaching profession to make up for the short fall in the number of teachers<sup>19</sup>. Corps members are usually used to bridge the gap created by skilled manpower shortage in schools across the country.

The Role of NYSC teachers in Education delivery in Kaduna State is to teach. It is accepted in several quarters that teaching has a paramount place in education and the development of human resource in particular. The quality of teaching and learning determines the quality of the future of any nation. Quality education for the youths will produce a generation armed with the necessary tools for attaining greater heights. It can be attested to the fact that the right teacher who truly cares about his/her profession can definitely have a productive effect on his/her learners'.<sup>20</sup> Teachers are significant contributors to the development of any nation in the aspect of manpower training and supply to various sectors of the economy. They ensure that the children in their care are imbued with good morals, discipline and integrity.

Teachers are looked upon as the foundation builders of the nation and standard bearer of the national conscience. They are seen as the real

<sup>19</sup>Leke Abraham OLUWALOGBON, "The Future of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps Programme: Any Hope for National Integration?", 7

<sup>20</sup> Victor TaiwoOluwayemi, "Assessment of Attitude of Corps Members to Teaching in Sokoto Metropolis". [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu), (2016): 24.

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agents that operate the educational system to ensure that people gain socio-political, economic, cultural and technological awareness<sup>21</sup>. Kaduna state has 4,260 public primary schools and 541 secondary schools; there have been major constraints in improving the learning outcomes<sup>22</sup>. There is also rising concern on the quality of education, the lack of teachers and the poor quality of teachers in the state. This explains the reason why 80% of Corps members are posted to schools with emphasis on schools in the rural area to fill shortage in manpower. Corps members are mainly sent to schools to serve as agents of change and role models to the young ones. As youths themselves, it is believed that the Corps members will be better positioned to impact meaningfully and also render community development services to the host communities. Similarly, a study carried out in Kalgo local government of Kebbi state revealed that the presence of NYSC adhoc teaching staff in secondary schools has greatly impacted on the performance in the school and also bridged the gap of insufficient skilled manpower.

To effectively discharge their functions in the schools, studies conducted on attitude of Corps members to teaching in Sokoto metropolis revealed that Corps members should be given the subjects in which they are competent to teach in their various places of primary assignment. By extension, teachers should be specialists in their areas of domains as this will help in effective delivery and smooth attainment of the educational goals as stipulated in the National Policy on Education<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> William E. Ekpiken and Aniefiok O. Ede, "The Role of Teacher Education and Nigerian Teachers In National Development: The Way Forward", 140.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, "Kaduna State Education Policy", 6.

<sup>23</sup> Victor TaiwoOluwayemi, "Assessment of Attitude of Corps Members to Teaching in Sokoto Metropolis", 24

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The role played by NYSC teachers in Educational delivery in Kaduna state is quite significant and of great importance to the children in the State. The NYSC programme has helped in the educational development of the country, especially from junior secondary to tertiary levels<sup>24</sup>. The use of Corps members in the art of teaching has contributed immensely to the growth of the educational sector and standard of education especially in the rural communities of Kaduna State.

### **Challenges faced by the NYSC Scheme in the Educational system**

The objectives of the NYSC are laudable and targeted at youth empowerment/enlightenment and national development. However, the implementation of the educational programme by the Scheme is faced with some challenges, including the following.

#### **Lack of Stability in the Implementation of Educational Curriculum**

One major challenge faced is the lack of stability in the implementation of educational curriculum. Regular changes in the educational curriculum make it difficult for the corps members to adapt to the changes therein, given the short duration of their service (one year).

#### **Language Barrier and Inadequate Knowledge of the Culture and Traditions of the Host Communities**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society with over than two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language culture and tradition. It is the norm for Corp members to be deployed to states other than their own. Consequently, Corps teachers sometimes find it difficult communicating and teaching because students/pupils may not understand English Language, even though it is the official medium of communication, while the corps members may not understand the local language to translate the communication. Studies carried out by

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<sup>24</sup>Aje.A. Aba.“Nigerian Politics, 1999-2009: Images from Chinua Achebe’s Mirror, in Joseph Mangut and TerhembaWuam , The Press and Literature in the Fourth Republic”, (Markurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2010), 145.

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Amaka and Apine in 2014 on the role of NYSC ad-hoc teaching staff in Kebbi state revealed that reports of cases have been established where parents came threatening school heads and Corps teachers because their daughters were reportedly taught by the Corps teachers on how to maintain personal hygiene, including washing of inner wears regularly.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The NYSC is a laudable Scheme geared towards national integration, peaceful coexistence and nation building. Education on the other hand is an integral aspect of development and advancement. Majority of the Corps members see teaching as a great profession, some actually derive pleasure in it. This has led to the absorption of some after the one year service. The NYSC Scheme has improved the access to education of children especially those in the rural areas Kaduna State. However:

1. There is need to encourage corps members to pay attention to lectures and trainings during the orientation exercises on the best practices in teaching. This will serve as an introduction on the rudiments of teaching and teaching methods.
2. There is need for periodic/regular reviews on policies and its implementation. The NYSC is a laudable Scheme that has helped in fostering peaceful coexistence and understanding of the multi ethnicity of Nigeria as a Nation. Regular monitoring of the Corps members should be made a priority and strategies on how to boost their performance should be mapped out.
3. There is need to sustain the language classes being introduced and taught to Corps members who are posted to the rural schools for their primary assignment. This will guide against loopholes that may emerge if the teacher and learner do not share the same language.
4. There is need for the key stakeholders to recognize and motivate Corps members posted to schools more than those

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posted to other establishments. This will further boost their performance and enshrine in them a sense of gratitude.

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# 11

## **The Role of NYSC in the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education, (NMEC) Campaign for Mass Literacy**

Jack Jeremiah

### **Introduction**

Literacy is a right of any individual. This is because literacy enables the full participation of the citizens in national development. More so, literacy is a significant apparatus for the acceleration of national socio-economic growth with regard to key priorities and challenges such as poverty elimination, HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation, behavioural change regarding gender equality, as well as good government for democratic societies.

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The significance of a literate populace cannot be overemphasized. An educated and skilled workforce is such an ad-on to the economy of any society. Literacy can be used as one of the tools for the diminution of poverty for sustainable growth of any society. Literacy has a broad spectrum of benefits to tap from in order for social, economic and political transformations of societies. This is especially so for the rural areas. People in the rural areas are prone to poverty, and so, literacy can serve as a tool which could liberate them.

It was against the aforementioned significance of having a literate populace that the government of Nigeria under Decree No. 17 of June 26, 1990 established the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, (NMEC). The commission is the Nigerian federal Government agency charged with the responsibility of making literate all those who for one reason or the other did not or cannot benefit from the formal school system. These include out-of-school youths, children in the street, women in purdah, victims of teenage motherhood (VVF), Nomadic illiterate people, Almajiris and other migrant fishing folks. The beneficiaries should be able to use the literacy skill acquired in their daily socio-economic activities.

In order to achieve its aim, the commission collaborates with government agencies, states, local governments and non-governmental organizations. One of its collaborators is the NYSC scheme. The scheme is expected to collaborate with the commission to drive towards mass literacy in the country. Nonetheless, NYSC since its inception has been a strong tool for the development of the educational sector and had made several efforts towards mass literacy in Nigeria. Thus, this study is a critique of the role the scheme played in the commission's objectives towards delivering mass literacy in Nigeria.

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**The Concept of Illiteracy:**

There are several perceptions as to the concept of illiteracy, but for the purpose of this study, the definition illiteracy by the United Nations' Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) would be adopted. According to the UNESCO, an illiterate is "a person who cannot, with understanding, read and write a simple statement on his everyday life; and a functionally illiterate is a person who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view, an illiterate therefore is an individual who cannot understand or comprehend written words or symbols and thus as an antecedent cannot depict any meaning to it or be able to use it in any form of communication.

However, this definition provided by UNESCO should not be made inclusive to the neo-illiterates. The neo-illiterates are anyone who today does not possess the requisite skills in computer and internet usage. Unfortunately, even in our institutions of higher learning, there are many "neo-illiterates".

Multiple studies like that of Eberle and Robinson<sup>2</sup> have asserted that those populaces who cannot read and write usually have some self-esteem issues of some sort, they usually do not have a positive perception of themselves. Eberle and Robinson recorded the following utterances of some illiterates in Vermont, U.S.A.:

"My biggest hurt of all is I feel I have failed my children because I couldn't help them with their school work".

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO The State of Education in Nigeria UNESCO Lagos Office Nigeria. (1998)

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Nnazor, Reginald, "Adult Education in Nigeria: The Consequences of Neglect and Agenda for Action", International Education Journal, (2005).

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"If someone handed me a piece of paper to read, I pretended to read it. If anyone asked questions, I said everything was alright and that I didn't have any questions. I want to write a letter ..., you got to get someone to do it for you. Everybody knows my business".

"When you don't read, it is like riding a motorcycle with your eyes closed, you don't know what is coming up next. The hardest thing about it is I've been places where I don't know where I was, if you don't know where you are, and you can't read something, you are lost. It sure ain't fun to be lost".

"How do you go about telling someone you want to marry that you can't read? Right? Man, it is like opening a bottle, putting a stick of dynamite in it, and hoping it doesn't go off".

it should be noted that this effect of not been a literate is relative, that is to say, whether in the US or Nigeria, illiterates tend to express a feeling of self-disappointment humiliation and a sense of failure arising from the embarrassments experienced as an illiterate.

### Literacy

Having studied the concept of illiteracy, it is only justifiable to have a look at the antonym of illiteracy which is literacy. As of illiteracy, there are numerous definitions as to what the concept of literacy is, however, for this study, the definition of literacy by the UNESCO and Persepolis Declaration of 1975 is employed.

The UNESCO defines literacy as: "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contents. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling the individual to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potentials, and participate fully in the community and wider society. To this may be added a further dimension of literacy earlier defined also by the UNESCO in 1965. This is known as functional literacy or work oriented literacy. It

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is considered to be comprehensive enough to teach economic skills and offer immediate use to the recipients in participating in important political issues and personal matters.<sup>3</sup> This dimension of literacy calls for definite programmes and instructional objectives and strategies within a context of development which should be part of an over-all educational plan in order that the new literates may become active members of the society.

The other definition propounded by the Persepolis Declaration of 1957 considers literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of the society in which one lives. It also stimulates man's initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development.<sup>4</sup> The ideology highlighted by this concept is that of literacy for liberation and the methodology that of dialogue based on significant themes relevant to the learner's everyday life.

### **The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult And Non-Formal Education, (NMEC)**

The commission is a constitutional parastatal of the federal government of Nigeria which is responsible for making sure individuals who are vulnerable to accessing to education are not deprived of it. They are charged with making sure the vulnerable populace is educated and made literates. The vulnerable populace in this context

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<sup>3</sup>Cited in D.UEgonu. *Approaches to Adult Literacy*. Onitsha:Cape Publishers International Ltd,1998

<sup>4</sup>Leon Bataille. A Turning Point for Literacy. Adult Education for Development the Spirit and Declaration of Persepolis. Elsevier Ltd, 1976.

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include: out-of-school youths, children in the street, women in purdah, victims of teenage motherhood (VVF), Nomadic illiterate people, Almajiris and other migrant fishing folks. When and if the vulnerable populace access education, they are to use the literacy skill acquired in their daily socio-economic activities.<sup>5</sup>

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, (NMEC) was established under Decree No. 17 of June 26, 1990. However, the commission did not immediately take off on activities in full until a year later on July, 5, 1999 when the governing board of the commission under the Chairmanship of Chief A. Y. Eke was eventually inaugurated by the then Minister of Education, Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa.<sup>6</sup>

From the onset of its establishment, the commission was deployed with the vision to eradicate all types of illiteracy and also provide Non-Formal education within the context of Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development. The commission was tasked with the mission to develop and sustain mass education for an enduring learning society as a critical leaver for self-reliance and national development. In order to achieve this, the commission pursued a broad spectrum of objectives which are to; develop policies and strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria; monitor and standardize implementation of Mass Literacy delivery in Nigeria; network with local and international stakeholders to actualize the vision of the Commission; produce self-reliant neo-literates through skill acquisition and functional literacy; create awareness on the importance of literacy and non-formal education and encourage participation on a more sustained basis; solicit the cooperation of all stakeholders in the task of making all Nigerians literate; develop literacy programmes with special

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<sup>5</sup>NMEC. Who We Are.<https://nmecc.ng.org/What%20We%20Are%20%20National%20Commission%20For%20Mass%20Literacy,%20Adult%20&%20Non-Formal%20Education.html>

<sup>6</sup>NMEC. Who We Are

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attention to disadvantaged groups such as women, the marginalized, rural dwellers and out-of-school children; and to collaborate with states, local governments and non-governmental organizations including other stakeholders in implementing literacy, non-formal and continuing education programmes in Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

To be effective in following up with its mission and objectives, the commissions' proposed activities are facilitated through six zonal offices in each of the six geopolitical zones of the country; North-East - Bauchi; North West - Katsina; North Central - Minna; South West - Ibadan; South - Benin; South East - Owerri and a National Documentation Centre for Adult Education located in Kano, which was established to train middle and lower level adult personnel in the country and to develop and produce teaching and learning materials in literacy and Non- Formal Education. Furthermore, the Commission supervises and supports the activities of State Agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Furthermore, the commission has four main programmes that guides its activities. The four main programmers are, Basic Literacy, Post Literacy, and Continuing Education and Vocational Education. Basic Literacy equivalence of pry 1-3 is the Literacy programme organised for beginners or for people considered to be stark illiterates; the people that have never been to school before.<sup>8</sup>

Post Literacy equivalence of pry 4-6 is on reading, writing and computing for people that have got the basic rudiment of computing and writing but want to learn more. The objectives of Post Literacy are to assist learners master social lives. Continuing Education/Extra Mural Studies equivalence of JSS 1-3 and above is an educational programme organised for learners that would want to sit for external examination

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<sup>7</sup>NMEC. Who We Are

<sup>8</sup>NMEC. Who We Are

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like JSSCE or SSCE. The objectives of this programme are to assist learners catch up and complete the Junior /Senior Secondary School Examination and develop themselves to meet the changing society and be able to make meaningful career choices. The last of them is the Vocational Education which is the introduction of the integrated approach to meaningful literacy activities. It is a major break-through in mass literacy delivery. This programme provides vocational courses for the benefits of early school leavers who are assisted to become more self-reliant in different artisan trades.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the commission consist of several organs which oversee its activities. Taking a top down approach, the commission is headed by the Executive secretaries who at the same time double as a member of the governing body of the commission. He is responsible for the overall management of the commission. The functions of the office of the Executive Secretary include: Being responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Commission; Formulating and coordinating the execution of policy guidelines for the successful eradication of illiteracy nationwide; Ensuring effective monitoring of inputs from the Federal Government, International Development Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the organized private sector into the implementation of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes; Presenting periodic progress reports on the implementation of mass literacy adult and non-formal education programmes to the Honourable Minister of Education; Liaising with the Honourable Minister of Education and the National Assembly on matters of funding and implementation of mass literacy programme; Sustaining cordial relationship and cooperation with State Agencies for Mass Education and other stakeholders; Pursuing mobilization campaigns for effective participation in literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes; Supervising activities in the Legal Office, Office

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<sup>9</sup>NMEC. Who We Are

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of Special Adviser/Technical Adviser, Public Relations/Protocol, Desk Officer Zonal Offices, Internal Audit, and Procurement Unit; and Coordinating and supervising the activities of the Zonal Offices of the Commission and the Kano Centre for Adult Education. More so, there are other six departments which are headed by directors who are directly responsible to report to the executive secretary.<sup>10</sup>

#### **The task of NYSC towards Achieving Mass Literacy.**

From the early years of the schemes' establishment, the agency had made several efforts towards mass literacy campaigns even before the formation of The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, (NMEC). Adult literacy and extra mural classes were organised often all over the country. The Corps members were actively involved in the government's policies towards promoting literacy in the country, one of which was the Each-One-Teach-One (EOTO) mass literacy programme of the Federal Government in the early days after the attainment of the country's independence.<sup>11</sup>

From the establishment of NYSC, the impact the scheme has had on the education sector of Nigeria is tremendous. It is arguably the most dependable source of manpower supply to schools in Nigeria. Gregory and Gabriel<sup>12</sup>argued that out of the 40,000 Corps members who serve from the establishment of the agency to 1990, 70% had served in the educational sector in Nigeria as instructors, teachers, and much of its likes. The Literacy level and even the standard of education in Nigeria had witnessed positive development regardless of the actions or inactions of the government and lecturers to frustrate the students. Without doubt, the scheme has contributed to the supply of manpower to primary, post-primary and tertiary institutions all over Nigeria. The

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<sup>10</sup>NMEC. Who We Are

<sup>11</sup>G. Enegwea and G. Umoden. NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service. Lagos: Gambuno Publishing Company, 1993

<sup>12</sup>G. Enegwea and G. Umoden. NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service.

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federal government policy as well as deployment policy which emphasizes that annual 60-70% of Corps members should be posted to educational sector has had a major impact on mass literacy in Nigeria.

From studies embarked and feedbacks, it has been agreed that the manpower the scheme stimulates in the education sector in Nigeria has specifically helped in sustaining schools especially those in the rural areas. By the kind of training given to NYSC Corps members, he/she is capable to serve in almost any part of the country. So, it is safe to say that the scheme has greatly contributed to the educational sector of Nigeria. It is of course an established fact that NYSC has contributed a lot and has filled in a reasonable gap when it comes to the educational sector in Nigeria. Corps members are posted to rural places to teach. Of all the impacts the NYSC had made on every sector in Nigeria, the impact on the educational sector stands out.

One of the objectives of the National Commission For Mass Literacy, Adult And Non-Formal Education (NMEC) is to develop policies and strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> As part of the collaborators of the commission, the NYSC is somewhat obligated to develop policies at the Community Development Service (CDS) level and effectively implement these policies in order to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria. These policies could be implemented at the community level through the various CDS groups specifically relevant to the promotion of mass literacy in Nigeria like the Mass Literacy CDS group. The objectives of the NMEC stressed that the commission and its collaborators such as NYSC develop literacy programmes but with specifications to the disadvantaged groups such as women, the

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<sup>13</sup>NMEC. Who We Are.<https://NYSC/What%20We%20Are%20-National%20Commission%20For%20Mass%20Literacy,%20Adult%20&%20Non-Formal%20Education.html>

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marginalised, rural dwellers and out of school children.<sup>14</sup> The table below<sup>15</sup> shows the efforts of the Corps members towards this feat;

SN	PROJECT/PROGRAMMES
1	Organisation of Mass Literacy Classes to women at Bauchi State
2	Vocational/Entrepreneurship training and counselling of physically challenged, prison inmates in Bayelsa State.
3	Free mural classes to children in Onoppa, Bayelsa state
4	Mass Adult Literacy campaign in Bakassi camp, Azikoro, Bayelsa
5	Organisation of mass adult literacy classes in Opolo
6	Organisation of extra mural classes at Otuokpe, Bayelsa
7	Free extra mural classes to the less privilege in English Language, Mathematics, and Basic Science in Cross Rivers.
8	Free adult classes for women in Imo state
9	Vocational training of the Physically challenged, prison inmates etc in Kano State
10	Extra mural classes for students of GSS, Rawayau, Katsina State
11	Vocational training for prison inmates
12	Training of rural women and youths on self-empowerment schemes
13	Campaigns on girl-child education
14	Mass literacy campaigns in Rivers state
15	Adult educational programmes in Rivers State
16	Reskilling and training of rural women in craftsmanship
17	Training of rural women and youths on self-employment in Yobe state

<sup>14</sup>NMEC. Who We Are.

<sup>15</sup>It should be noted that the data on the table provided does not represent all the mass literacy campaigns efforts of the NYSC Corps Members but a compilation of some of those projects by the researcher.

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A close look at the functions of the commission would show that the NYSC scheme has, in fact, tailored some of its activities to become relevant to the commission's functions. The NYSC works in collaboration with all concerned to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria. Through its CDS groups, with the help of the community and the appropriate agencies of the Federal, State Governments, the Universities and Non-Governmental Agencies to design and promote strategies and programmes for the conduct and implementation of the National Mass Literacy Campaign. The Corps members had also been involved in the dissemination of teaching materials to educational programmes to facilitate education in various societies which is one of the core functions of the organisation.<sup>16</sup> Example of such acts could be found in almost every part of the country. The table below<sup>17</sup> is evidence of the efforts of the NYSC Corps members towards the dissemination of school materials;

SN	PROJECTS/PROGRAMMES
1	Donation of chalkboards and cartons of chalk to Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Compassion Home and Nursery/Primary School, Ahiaeke Ndume, Umuahia
2	Construction of a science laboratory. Donation of books to St Michael primary School, Obulo-Eziama
3	Construction of classroom block at Lodu Ndume, IbekuAfara, Community, Umuahia North LGA. Organisation of adult literacy classes at Lodundume, Ibeku, Umuahia North
4	Establishment of Science Lab at Achara, Abia State

<sup>16</sup>NMEC. Who We Are.<https://What%20We%20Are%20-National%20Commission%20For%20Mass%20Literacy,%20Adult%20&%20Non-Formal%20Education.html>

<sup>17</sup>It should be noted that the data on the table provided does not represent all the mass literacy campaigns efforts of the NYSC Corps Members but a compilation of some of those projects by the researcher.

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5	Provision of 100 desks for Command Day Secondary School, Army Barracks, Yola.
6	Donation of library chairs and school uniforms an Akwa Ibom.
7	Construction of 40 benches with lockers for JSS students
8	Construction and donation of 100 benches and desks in Command Children School, Bauchi State
9	Donation of computers to Ikibiri School, Bayelsa State
10	Provision of computers to Government Secondary School, Kway Kusar
11	Provision of School uniforms for the less privilege in five primary school in Delta State
12	Construction and donation of 6X4 foot laboratory storage shelf in Ebonyi State
13	Donation of computer sets and computer literacy materials in Edo State.
14	Donation of copies of relevant textbooks and desk to rural schools in Ekiti State
15	Donation of computers, printers, and other accessories to secondary schools, Ondo State

Indeed, numerous researchers had viably argued that the challenge Nigeria is facing is not about policy making but about how well those policies are followed through, implemented, monitored and evaluated and most times, the resources to effect those policies. However, in regards to resources needed, the NYSC has been seen to possess the needed human resources as well as the capacity needed to delivering Mass Literacy in every community of the country and thus, serve as a leverage for the scheme in efforts regarding achieving NMEC aim towards mass literacy. Furthermore, Abhuere<sup>18</sup> argues that there's the

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<sup>18</sup>J.IAbhuere. NYSC: Historical and Theoretical Background Context for National Unity. In D Danfulani and A. Aja (Eds). NYSC in its Fourth Decade: A Strategic Policy Outfit for National Development. Ibadan: Spectrum, 2008.

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willingness by the Nigerian youth to be involved in nation building initiative by the government. The concluded 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections are evidence of the youth's willingness to participate in national growth even if it means putting their life at risk.

In respect to the aforementioned, Danfulani<sup>19</sup> opined that if we must admit, in the theology of scientific extrapolations, the youths in any nation must obviously strive for self-realization with a view to contributing their possible best in the services of their country, so we must totally agree that the dynamism of that youth should have, as its finality, the indispensable objective of building a strong, united-self-reliant nation. This assertion was in line with the establishment of the NYSC in the early years after the civil war. More so, the purpose of the scheme is to grow in the mind of the youth the spirit of selfless service to the country and to the community at large. NYSC can help drive the vision towards mass literacy in Nigeria in terms of teaching and organizing adult education programmes, vocational classes, and extra mural lessons for the targeted group. Corps members can also help in adult education centres at different local government councils in Nigeria by providing skill acquisition training to their host communities.

More so, as organizing the community for development tends to be challenging in Nigeria especially when it comes to social initiatives like that of mass literacy, NYSC can use its human resources to fill in this gap in community development. The Corps members serving in different local governments can come together and organize the community through their leaders, identify their needs, help them gather available resources and, if need be, seek support from the government towards achieving mass literacy development campaign

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<sup>19</sup> D. S. C. Danfulani. NYSC and its Strategic Confidence Building Mechanisms for National development. In D Danfulani and A. Aja (Eds). NYSC in its Fourth Decade: A Strategic Policy Outfit for National Development. Ibadan: Spectrum, 2008.

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projects in the communities which could reduce the level of illiteracy in the country through organization of mediums for mass education. This is possible as asserted in previous paragraphs that the youths have an enthusiasm towards nation building and are willing to offer their services without any reward for community development. It is, therefore, very important to intensify the efforts of the NYSC towards the accelerated delivery of mass literacy and adult education programmes in Nigeria. This action would see the government benefit from this worthy initiative as it would also reduce cost on what they spend on community development, in this case, mass literacy programmes.

The government also recognizes the significant role NYSC plays in mass literacy in Nigeria. On numerous occasions, they had made efforts to boost the manpower of the educational sector through deployment of Corps Members to serve in, especially, vulnerable areas where there is a shortcoming in regards to manpower for the actualization of mass literacy in the country, for example, in reviving the education sector by deploying more Corps members in rural schools. The Zamfara State Coordinator of the scheme, Mallam Ballama Bello, also agreed with this argument when he made a remark in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Gusau. More so, he recognized the fact that most of the schools in rural communities in Nigeria have a challenge of getting access to education in the country and chief of this challenge is the inadequacy of teachers. So, the posting of Corps members to various schools in the rural area would do a lot to contribute to mass literacy in Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

It was in respect of the significance role the Scheme plays in the educational sector in Nigeria that the law makers of the House of Representatives were moved to amend the National Youth Service

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<sup>20</sup> Vanguard Newspaper. Why NYSC is Deploying More Corpss Members in Rural Schools. December 20, 2016.

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Corps (NYSC) Act to prioritize the deployment of Corps members to schools. Furthermore, the House resolved to "commence the process of amending the National Youth Service Corps Act to establish a programme to identify, recruit and train willing, capable and promising young Nigerians to serve as teachers in under-served areas." The Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, noted that the House chose to consider the matter of the millions of out-of-school children and who, as a result, are denied their fundamental right to receive the training and skills acquisition opportunities.<sup>21</sup>

As per the role of NYSC in NMEC efforts to increase mass literacy in the country, Corps Members could resort to embarking on library projects as a priority. The library serves as a memory store for human intellectual collections and achievements which are normally done in a form of graphic records. More so, libraries function on two main factors which are information and communication.<sup>22</sup> If literacy means the ability to inform and be informed, then the library is a formidable instrument for promoting literacy in society.

To illustrate the preceding assertion, in the ancient and medieval periods, people were taught how to read and write in libraries. At present, libraries are still being used as centres for conducting literacy classes as well as providing graphic records to facilitate teaching and learning. Libraries can also be used to improve knowledge and skills. Considering the aim of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), NYSC can complement the efforts of the commission by making library projects a priority. Aside that, the library can be used to promote mass literacy in Nigeria by the NYSC through several strategies. One of the strategies the NYSC Corps

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<sup>21</sup> Abdul Seye. Reps to Amend NYSC Act to Deploy More Corps Members to School. Daily Post newspaper. March 12, 2020

<sup>22</sup> Gbadebo Oyeniran Oyelekan, "Promoting Mass Literacy Campaigns through Library Service in Nigeria", *New Library World*, Vol. 94.1109, (1993): 14-19

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members can use is to have a clear assessment of the information needs of the people in the area with specifications to the people and also examine how to effectively pass this information to the populace in the area they plan on embarking a library project. For example, in the rural areas, Aboyade<sup>23</sup> identified the information needs of rural dwellers; these include information on health, agriculture, politics, job opportunities, etc. Since most of these people are illiterate, information communicated through print media will not have any relevance to their needs. And since print media would not have any relevant to these set of individuals, it is advised the Corps members innovate such strategies as of acquiring non print media such as radio, television, film, and other audio-visual materials as channels for communicating information to those who are illiterate.

In assisting the commission to reach its target of literacy, the NYSC can establish a network of libraries all over the country especially in rural areas where literacy level is very low. This would enable the masses access those libraries especially among the vulnerable populace and achieve a lot when it comes to NMEC's vision towards achieving mass literacy in Nigeria.

It would also enable other agents of mass literacy campaigns such as Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRI), etc. to use library facilities to reach out to the people.

### Conclusion

The pertinent role which the National Youth Service Scheme has played in mass education cannot be over-emphasised. This has led to the recognition of the NYSC as a major collaborator of the education sector by the Nigerian government. The impact of the Scheme on the

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<sup>23</sup> B.O. Aboyade. *The Provision of Information for Rural Developments*. Ibadan: Fountain Publications, 1987.

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education sector of Nigeria is tremendous, as they have not only channelled their efforts towards mass education which include the education of the less privileged child, but their activities also extended to adults, orphans, vocational training for prison inmates among others. More so, it can be said that the society has been a sole beneficiary of these activities, because these trainings help reduced the rate of crime and juvenile delinquency among the teeming youths in the society as they found reasons to learn and be beneficial to the society they lived in. This study found out that the National Youth Service Scheme has contributed to mass literacy and various facets of the educational sector. That is, not limiting to formal education attain in the class room alone but also informal education.

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Vanguard Newspaper. Why NYSC is Deploying More Corpss Members  
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## **The Role of NYSC in Facilitating Mass Literacy in Nigeria**

Adeniji Olawale Abayomi  
and  
Safiya Abu Wada

### **Introduction**

The main thing that separates developed from underdeveloped countries is a gap in knowledge. Education is a pivotal for development in any nation,<sup>1</sup> and that is why investment in education through mass

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<sup>1</sup> MA Oyebamiji and Inenesit Essiet Umofia, "Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on the Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States", *International Journal Of Education*

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literacy becomes important. Though, scholars have argued that when reference to development is mentioned, they refer to quality education for all.<sup>2</sup> On a contrary however, the position of other scholars are on no correlation between literacy and national integration or development. While opinion of some scholars dwell on the belief that exposure to literacy is enough (not necessarily qualifies), their belief was that not everyone can get quality education. Nevertheless, most work and experience from countries around the world shows there is a need to educate a vast or majority of the citizens to enable them understand and translate the workings of the country into reliable effort.<sup>3</sup> Using UK, US, Canada and other countries in central Europe as an example, it is generally believed that Illiteracy is a major developmental challenge, which means that only a literate nation can make greater strides towards development.

In Nigeria, the importance of education to national development and integration started gaining ground from the period before its independence by nationalists.<sup>4</sup> After independence, the federal government of Nigeria took great steps to improve the level of literacy in the nation through the educational programmes, institutions, and the mass media.<sup>5</sup> Government embarked on several policies that gave needed attention to educational programmes to ensure mass literacy in the country. Most of these programmes are not limited to Universal Primary Education, Universal Basic Education, but also National commission for Mass Literacy and Adult Education in 1973.

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*and Evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, International Institute of Academic Research and Development, 2016, 1

<sup>2</sup> Kingdom E. Orji and Maekae Job, "the Role of Education in National Development: Nigerian Experience", *European Scientific Journal* vol.9, No.28, October 2013, 315 ISSN 1875-7431

<sup>3</sup> a case in point is the United Kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> Hauwa Imam, "Education Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.1, 2012, 184.

<sup>5</sup> Oyebamiji and Inenesit, *Op cit.*

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The National Youth Service Corps scheme is one of the informal ways that the federal government has used to rebuild the decaying unity and educational system in the country, especially to bring equal opportunities in education, literacy, unity and development to the communities of the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory. It was put in place in an effort to bring attention to the social issues of the country and provide solutions to them. At first, Corps members were mostly posted to schools in remote rural area to complement the efforts of government schools that are overburdened.<sup>6</sup> By this, the scheme ensures that each graduate who is defined as youth serve in different parts of the country for a compulsory one-year period. Section 9, sub-section 2 of the NYSC Act, Cap. N84, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 provides for these Corps members to be posted to schools<sup>7</sup> as places of primary assignment for the one-year period they are to serve the nation. The youths (Corps member) were inspired to selflessly serve the communities of the nation and express the spirit of unity and brotherhood, regardless of culture and social position.

However, since its inception, NYSC through its Corps members have made remarkable progress in bringing literacy to places that have never been reached. Corps members have devoted themselves to prisoner's education, dilapidated classrooms have been rebuilt, educational materials were supplied and adult education has been fostered, and general literacy rate, though could not be totally quantified, has improved. However, with these efforts, Nigeria illiteracy

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<sup>6</sup> Adeola J Afolayan, Anthony M Nzoka, Emmanuel B Tapshay, Yunusa Tanimu, Tunde Ajayi and Shehu B Harris, *Selected Speeches and Strides of the 18<sup>th</sup> NYSC Director-General Brig Gen. S Ibrahim*, The Special Duties Department, NYSC Headquarters: Abuja, (May, 2020),84.

<sup>7</sup> Though it has been expanded to other public and private institutions, majority of the Corps member serve in Schools.

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rate is still at 62.02%,<sup>8</sup> the future is quite blurry for effective development in a post-covid-19 era and fast technology developing world.<sup>9</sup>

It is with this that this chapter examines the role of National Youth Service Corps scheme on the mass literacy in Nigeria. The objective is to establish the extent at which activities of the Corps members have improved mass literacy in Nigeria; the challenges and way forward. To achieve this, the chapter relied on a balanced use of both primary and secondary sources of data, the finding was presented using analytical and descriptive approach. It argues that, with the activities of Corps members, NYSC has made remarkable progress in the reduction of illiteracy in Nigeria; that the setbacks are due to inadequacies in the so-called partnership with both government and private agencies involved in mass literacy in Nigeria. Finally, the chapter maintains that using NYSC as a key partner for actualising mass literacy in the country would go a long way in reducing the human and material burden posed by private partners for government and the commission to achieve their objectives.

### Mass Literacy

According to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the word literacy has a meaning that has surpassed its conventional definition of being a set of reading, writing and counting skills. The term is now expanded to reflect the changing world global system as being but not limited to identification, understanding, interpretation, creation and communication in an increasing digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast changing

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<sup>8</sup> Max Rose and Esteban Ortiz Ospina, Literacy, Our world in Data, 2013.  
<https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Literacy Decade: International Strategic Framework for Action, 2009, 4. Unesdoc.unesco.org

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world.<sup>10</sup> Literacy is an important factor for sustainable development that enables greater participation in the labour market, improved child and family health and nutrition, reduces poverty and expand life opportunities. Mass literacy on the other hand is when majority or all of the population of a country, community or society have basic ability to read or write in any language common to them in such a way that they can understand the information passed between them. These majorities of the population should also have the ability to key into their own development as well use the technology available to them with this basic knowledge. Mass literacy education is a part of adult educations that involves the literacy campaign with its major targets, the vast population, irrespective of their location in the country or community. This is to enable them gain basic knowledge to key into the different aspect of development that exist in their country and ensure their ability to understand and translate in the positive way possible the vast available data that is circulating. This will also enable them to differentiate and make reference when necessary to available sources to prevent being misled particularly in this era of globalization and terrorism. This is why literacy is seen as an important tool and a means that will enable people key in fully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital society with its continuous advancement in technology, so as to be able to learn and adapt to these changes as they affect all spheres of life.<sup>11</sup>

### **Mass literacy in Nigeria and the role of National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria**

Literacy in Nigerian dates as far back as the period the independent nation states in the country started to have relations with the Arab Muslim traders from North-Africa. Among these traders were those

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<sup>10</sup>United Nations Literacy Decade: International Strategic Framework for Action, 2009, Unesdoc.unesco.org/themes/literacy-all

<sup>11</sup> Bethany Oxford, literate school: Redefining Literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, September 22, 2018, retrieved from medium.com/literate-school/redefining-literacy-in-the-21<sup>st</sup>-century.

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knowledgeable in the Islamic religion and who used the medium of their trade interactions to teach some of the people they came across and some were actual Islamic scholars propagating the religion, by teaching them the Qur'an and Arabic language in Africa. These teachings were done to enable the converts read and understand the scripture. Also, during the era of the Christian Missionaries, the people of the country were taught how to read and write to enable them understand the scripture. This shows that being literate during this period was not to key into the development of the community or society but to enable them understand the various teachings of the religions introduced to them.<sup>12</sup> A new importance to being literate was introduced in the country during the colonial era. Most of the people who worked hand in hand in the running of the various colonies with colonial masters were those who were fast in understanding the colonial language as well as read it. During the world wars, colonial masters started to make it a priority to ensure that adult males in their colonies were able to understand the basic English language. This was to enable them understand and communicate on the battle ground. As a result, they embarked on massive literacy campaign. This is largely because of the Memorandum on education Policy in 1925 by the British in tropical Africa which led to the adoption of adult education.<sup>13</sup>

Mass literacy in Nigeria started after plans had been put in place by the department of education when the country through her colonial master keyed into the United Nations international decade for ending illiteracy campaign in 1940. By 1944, mass literacy had commenced in the country with the use of district head as well as both Christian and

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<sup>12</sup> Hauwa Imam, "Education Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.1, 2012, 186

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Fasokun and Cecilia Pwol, National and Regional Reflections on Operationalising the Benchmarks/ Nigeria: the Current situation within the Framework of the International Benchmarks, DVV International, accessed from <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions>.

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Muslim missionaries.<sup>14</sup> The reason for ensuring the vast majority of the adults in the country understand to read, write and communicate during this period was not aimed at ensuring the development of the colonies but to make the running of these colonies easy for the British officials. This made the literacy campaign to be short lived.

However, the importance of education was given priority after the world wars particularly in Nigeria. Mass literacy in the country therefore, gained much recognition after her independence mostly due to the need to ensure that everyone contributed to the development of the country and, after the civil war (1967-1970) for people to understand the importance of the country remaining united.<sup>15</sup> This led to various efforts to ensure that every individual in the country was able to at least gain basic knowledge to communicate and possibly read and write.<sup>16</sup> Literacy during this period was to enable the people to understand the differing information that were spread in the country in the manner they were supposed to. This shows the difference in the importance of education in develop and developing countries.

The efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria at mass literacy commenced in 1982 as a national policy to last for ten years from 1982-1992.<sup>17</sup> The period therefore marked the birth of the Commission For Mass literacy and Adult Education in the country to ensure that groups and individuals in communities that were least developed and disadvantaged especially in the rural areas could contribute in their

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<sup>14</sup> Helen Ebunoluwa Adebola, "The Public Policy Challenges of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the Global Age", *perspectives on Globalisation, Development Policy*, Afro Euro Centre for Development Studies, 2008, 1047-1048. ISBN 978 84 612 8474 0

<sup>15</sup> Hauwa Imam, "Education Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.1, 2012, 185

<sup>16</sup> Giving credence to the traditional definition of literacy: the ability to read and write and pos

<sup>17</sup> Helen Ebunoluwa Adebola," The Public Policy Challenges of Mass Literacy, 1048

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own little quota to the development of the country effectively wherever they found themselves.<sup>18</sup>

The National Commission for Mass literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education was established as a parastatal under the Ministry of Education by the Decree 17 of the military regime on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1990. The commission commenced operation on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1991 with the inauguration of its Governing board by the then Minister of Education, Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, in Lagos. The commission is to ensure that all those citizens in the country who for one reason or the other cannot afford and attend the formal school system are provided with an opportunity at it in an informal way. As a result, the commission is saddled with the following broad responsibilities;

- a- Develop policies and strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria.
- b- Monitor and standardize implementation of mass literacy delivery in Nigeria.
- c- Network with local and international stakeholders to actualize the vision of the commission.
- d- Produce self-reliant neo-literates through skill acquisition and functional literacy.
- e- Create awareness on the importance of literacy and non-formal education and encourage participation on a more sustained basis.
- f- Solicit the cooperation of all stakeholders in the task of making all Nigerians literate.
- g- Develop literacy programmes with special attention to disadvantaged group such as women, the marginalized rural dwellers and out-of-school children.
- h- Collaborate with states, local governments and non-governmental organisations including other stakeholders in

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<sup>18</sup> Helen Ebunoluwa Adebola," The Public Policy Challenges of Mass Literacy, 1048

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implementing literacy, non-formal and continuing education programmes in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup>

The commission has six zonal offices. The Kano centre also supervises and supports the activities of states agencies for Adult and non-formal education in 36 states along with the Federal Capital Territory.<sup>20</sup>

Though, in Nigeria, we recognize that literacy is a right. We know that literacy has been recognized internationally as both a human right and a crucial tool for pursuing other rights through our involvement in various international conferences and meetings where such statements are made from time to time.<sup>21</sup> However, illiteracy remains a major problem in Nigeria. Nigeria's most recent data show an adult literacy rate of 62 percent, according to the 2018 Global Monitoring Report (71.3 percent for men and 52.7 percent for women), a significant 10.94% increase from 2008.<sup>22</sup> The illiterate population is more than 40 million, of which 75 percent are women. In other words, none of Nigeria's literacy programs have yielded the desired results, and millions of people continue to be denied access to literacy due to a lack of successful educational policies.

Despite the efforts of UNESCO (Nigeria) in literacy education in Nigeria, an ongoing review of the International Adult Literacy Benchmarks shows that Nigeria is still not working within the framework prescribed for adult literacy programmes. Up to now, Nigeria's literacy

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<sup>19</sup> National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education, assessed from nmec.gov.ng

<sup>20</sup> Kano State Agency for Mass Education was created in 1980, making it the first post-independence state government to create an autonomous agency responsible for adult and non-formal education. The Agency also won UNESCO literacy awards for its efforts in adult literacy. See Fasokun and Pwol, 2008 *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Nigeria has participated in international conferences such the Persepolis Declaration 1975, the Vienna Declaration 1993, the Hamburg Declaration 1997. See,

<sup>22</sup> "Nigeria: Literacy Rate" UNESCO, 2018, Accessed March 1, 2021. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ng>

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policy has been based on a narrow concept that considers literacy to be limited to the ability to read, write and calculate. In today's post-Covid-19 scientific and technological age, this is no longer enough for people to function effectively. Literacy involves not only adapting to current circumstances, but also possessing the problem-solving and critical-thinking capabilities needed to make any necessary changes.

### **The role of NYSC in Mass literacy in the Country**

The federal government of Nigerian has committed itself to achieving Education For All (EFA) objective 4 and MDGs. But strategy being implemented through National Council for Mass Literacy and Adult Education in Nigeria with the technical support of UNESCO and other partners has not given desired result as illiteracy rate continues to increase.<sup>23</sup> While these past attempts are laudable, it has done little to decrease the level of illiteracy in Nigeria. Having said this, though, NYSC was not considered to be an important agent in the promotion of mass literacy campaigns in the first place; and was not drafted in as a partner as such.<sup>24</sup> It has since its establishment been a non-formal pathway or tool that ensures that priority groups are reached; and it has continued to impact literacy level in the country through the activities embedded in its Community Development Projects (group or personal) in which Education Development is germane. With these projects, the Corps members impact their host communities through literacy campaigns.

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<sup>23</sup> "Revitalization of Adult & Youth Literacy", National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult & Non-Formal Education, accessed February 15, 2021,<https://www.nmec.gov.ng/rayl.php>

<sup>24</sup> except for the National Library, which teamed up with the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to start reading clubs across the country. See, Kanayo Umeh,"

FG develops operational plan for mass literacy programme", The Guardian, April 12, 2018

<https://guardian.ng/features/fg-develops-operational-plan-for-mass-literacy-programme/>

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With the intention to ensure that the future youth understand and appreciate the diversity of the country<sup>25</sup>while at the same time providing them with the opportunity of gaining experience before going into the labour market, the National Youth Service Corps was promulgated by a decree of the Federal Military Government on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1973.<sup>26</sup> The NYSC became one of the longest efforts of the federal government to ensure youths are involved in the service of their country by utilizing to the fullest the abundant fresh and young high level manpower available in them for the progress of the country. This makes the National Youth Service Scheme the largest mobiliser of the vast Majority of educated Youth in the country with their compulsory one-year service to the nation.<sup>27</sup>

The NYSC is therefore responsible for mobilizing graduands from the tertiary institutions who successfully completed their academic years for their respective course of study. After these graduates are mobilized, they are called-up for a three weeks camp in the respective state Orientation Camps where they are deployed to serve. The Camp is to indoctrinate and orient these youths on the environment and culture of the states they are posted to. At the end of the Orientation Camp, they are posted to places of primary assignment (PPA) within the states they are deployed. The Corps members engage in a compulsory Community Development Service (CDS) during their service year. The program is aimed at harnessing the skills, creativity and innovativeness of the youths into effective machinery for national development which they discharged to their host community while serving.<sup>28</sup>It is a

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<sup>25</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service*, National Youth Service Corps directorate Headquarters: Yaba (Lagos), 1993, xi.

<sup>26</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...*, xi.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...*, xi.

<sup>28</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...*, 56.

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necessary prerequisite to passing out after the one-year period of service for all active Corps members.

The Scheme has made a significant contribution to the nation's social, political, and economic transition since its establishment in 1973. The scheme has been at the forefront of the nation's effort to correct the disparity in our rural-urban growth through numerous Community Development projects carried out by Corps members in recent years. It is apt to say that, one of the four (4) cardinal programme of NYSC is the CDS. Corps members collaborate with local communities through the CDS to promote self-sufficiency by actively prospecting and implementing development projects and programs that have a significant effect on the host communities' socio-economic development. In principle, members of the service Corps are referred to as Corps members. Each Corps Member is required to be assigned to a specific CDS group as his or her Group CDS, while the personal CDS project/programme is optional.<sup>29</sup> Sixteen CDS groups were identified approved by the NYSC scheme.<sup>30</sup> The CDS's projects have largely transformed our societies in the fields of education, economic development, poverty eradication, social welfare, and, most importantly, national consciousness and socio-cultural regeneration that was tailored into.<sup>31</sup>

Education Development CDS Group (Mass Literacy, Adult Education, Extra Murals ICT) has being in the forefront of promoting mass literacy, adult education, career guidance and counselling, with extra mural

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<sup>29</sup> Abdullahi, Muhammad and A. I. Chikaji, "Issues in Community Development Service Scheme of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps and its Relevance to Community Development", *International Journal of Research in Science & Engineering* 2 no.6,(December 2016), 218-224

<sup>30</sup> NYSC Wwbpge, [nysc.gov.ng/cds.html](http://nysc.gov.ng/cds.html).

<sup>31</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...*, 57.

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lessons for students etc.<sup>32</sup> Generally referred to as 'Education', these groups are mandated with the aim and objectives to achieve EFA Goals. Mass Literacy Community Development Group is one of the CDS groups approved by the NYSC. The platform was set up primarily to reduce illiteracy through literacy programmes/activities and their mandate is to work towards achieving EFA (Education for All) Goals in Nigeria. As the name implies, Mass Literacy CDS group is to bring literacy to the door steps of the masses, especially those living in rural areas and urban slums of the society. With their activities which include campaign against Illiteracy, and organization of extra-mural classes for Adults and other in-school program, Aishat, Hope and James,<sup>33</sup> opined that, their activities have brought over seventy (70) individuals out of illiteracy, thereby contributing to the making of a literate society.<sup>34</sup> Many others have also volunteered in mobilising resources to offer scholarship grants to indigent students as their community project during their service year.<sup>35</sup>

These activities, however, have earned many Corps members a regular teaching job in their host communities. For instance, Adogbeji Oghenevwärhe opened that nothing can be more fulfilling in life than helping to build the career of other individuals, especially the downtrodden.<sup>36</sup> She was an ex-Corps member who devoted her time

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<sup>32</sup>Kunle Ologunro, "16 NYSC CDS Groups And Their Functions", Zikko, , May 7, 2020, <https://www.zikoko.com/life/nysc-diary/16-nysc-cds-groups-and-their-functions/>

<sup>33</sup>Aishat (22 years) and Hope (20 years) are serving Corps members in Abia and Zamfara states respectively, while James (30 years) is an ex-Corps member of Ekiti state. Their details were omitted as requested by the interviewers.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, Michael Eniola, NYSC Corps member, 25 years, Zamfara, on February 22, 2021

<sup>35</sup>Afolayan et' al, *Selected Speeches and Strides of the 18<sup>th</sup> NYSC...*, 81.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Njoku, 'Ex-Corps member dedicates life to teaching prisoners', *The Guardian*, February 22, 2020. <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/ex-Corps-member-dedicates-life-to-teaching-prisoners/>, accessed January, 20, 2021

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since her service year to impact inmates at the Enugu Maximum Correctional Centre. She asserts that:

I met with my boss and explained to him that this is something I like to do and that if he could give me some hours in a day, it will enable me go to prison to help teach them. My boss, being a lenient man, agreed and that was how I found myself there... My major focus at the moment is how to get the Federal Government to establish primary and secondary schools in the premises of the Prisons to serve inmates, who had no opportunity of "reading and writing before their present predicament."

Also, instances of where Corps members built a block of classrooms, renovate dilapidated ones, and enrol financially challenged students in school to complement government efforts are numerous to count here. They have provided educational opportunities for members of their host communities to learn basic and vocational skills that are essential for such a society's overall development. From the above, it is glaring that NYSC scheme would have done more if adequate partnership can be entered into between the National Commission for Mass Literacy and Adult Education, with adequate motivation for interested Corps members. Though selfless service of Corps members cannot be overemphasized, there is a need for government to step-in to fasten the process. Through NYSC CDS, especially in the rural areas, it has encouraged the spirit of collective communal services; which reduced the level of dependency on government for infrastructural development in those areas.<sup>37</sup>

With the overwhelming numbers of Corps members that have served in rural and urban communities of this country, it could be right to adjudge that pupils have been touched, students have been inspired,

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<sup>37</sup> Gregory Enegea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...,* 61  
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school dropout has been given hope, likewise adult education has received an upsurge in participants. As a result, NYSC is providing a relief to these sectors which are short staffed, as both public and private schools have benefitted immensely from its establishment.<sup>38</sup> This is evident in table 1 bellow.

**Table 12.1: Showing the number of Corps Members posted to both Primary and Secondary Schools.**

Service Year	No. of Corps Members Posted to primary School	No. of Corps Members Posted to Secondary School	Total
2015 service year	8378	57248	65626
2016 service year	10710	67095	77805
2017 service year	8940	54199	63139
2018 service year	10838	63617	74455
2019 service year	6813	38416	45229
Total	46679	280575	326254

**Source:** Adeola J Afolayan, Anthony M Nzoka, Emmanuel B Tapshang, Yunusa Tanimu, Tunde Ajayi and Shehu B Harris, *Selected Speeches and Strides of the 18<sup>th</sup> NYSC Director-General Brig Gen. S Ibrahim*, The Special Duties Department, NYSC Headquarters: Abuja, (May, 2020), 80.

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<sup>38</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service...*, 162

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From the above analysis, NYSC scheme has been able to post the total of 326254 Corps members to schools across the country from 2015 service year to 2019 service year in an effort to contribute to the development of the education sector. If appropriately utilized by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria as a prerequisite for attainment of mass literacy, by 2030, Nigeria would have met the EFA objectives.

Finally, NYSC has made substantial progress in improving the reading skills of pupils, students, and individuals who have interacted with Corps members. Evidence has shown that parents may likely send their children to schools where Corps members are present, as well as to acquire new information about healthy living, civic rights, and livelihood activities.<sup>39</sup> Official report from the Ministry of Education also agree that the Corps members attached to schools in rural areas have bolstered mass literacy campaigns and led to fewer illiteracy rate in Delta state.<sup>40</sup>

### **Constraint in the effective Mass Literacy campaign under NYSC**

**Insecurity** – This is one of the major challenges that the scheme is going through especially with regards to the posting of graduates to different parts of the country. This issue of insecurity has been one of the challenges of the scheme right from inception although the intensity of this challenge has changed. In 1973, when public reactions were assessed, public opinion especially that of parents showed concerns to have their ward or children work in places far from home. The fears that law and order could break down anytime due to the fragile nature of the country including the fact that most of these graduates were going to places they neither have understanding of

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Mrs Dukwu Favour, 39 years, Teacher, Okpanam, Delta state.  
Interviewed on February 15, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mr. Dennis Molokwu, 52 years Civil Servant, Kwale, Delta state.  
Interviewed on February 14, 2021.

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their conventions, code of behavior which they could violate unknowingly and which could result to punishments greater than the offence.<sup>41</sup> This is mostly a situation that is encountered by Corps members who come from the south, west and eastern part of the country to northern part who are used to dressing in western lifestyle and vice versa. Currently, the rising cases of insurgency, terrorism, banditry, farmers/herders and kidnappings are part of the challenge to mass literacy campaign.

**Funding:** For any project or programme to be effective, there is need for adequate funds to be available. The issue of funding is another challenge that is faced in the effective campaign and education by Corps member in contributing to Mass literacy in the country. Corp members embark on programmes to help sensitize the people in the communities they serve. Unfortunately, most of the programmes are not given proper attention because of the challenge of funding from the expected partner, in this case the National Commission for Mass literacy, adult and Non-formal education.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the masses during these campaigns are not reached. This results to individual efforts by Corps members in contributing their little quota to enable mass education by informally funding the school activities of several people in the host communities.

Also, the passion of Corps members to willingly engage in mass literacy education is hindered by the lack of attractive incentives. This is by far one of the major challenges of the teaching profession in the country. It is considered one of the most prestigious jobs, yet with the least prestigious pay. For instance, this had forced many Corps members

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<sup>41</sup> Gregory Enegewa and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years Of National Service*, National Youth Service Corps directorate Headquarters: Yaba (Lagos), 1993, 17

<sup>42</sup> The collaboration between the NYSC and National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is not an active one, as it is still an emerging collaboration. assessed on February, 26<sup>th</sup> 2021. See the [Nysc.gov.ng/cds.html](http://Nysc.gov.ng/cds.html).

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who are professionally trained teachers – graduates of educational institutions often wish to be sent to corporate organizations/institutions other than schools. The need to ensure that incentives are put in place particular for those Corps members who will be willing to engage in Mass literacy in the rural areas will change the perception of the job. This will encourage them to inculcate the little knowledge they have with passion and dedication. This was re-iterated by the Director General of the NYSC. In his speech, he stated that the need for attractive incentives cannot be overemphasised in encouraging hard work and dedication of staff which also apply to the Corps members. He therefore renewed his call to State and Local Governments to prioritise the provision of standard facilities, including befitting Corps lodges in the rural schools and other service locations. He mentioned the need for hard work of the Corps member to be rewarded by awards for outstanding performances as well as extra-bonuses for teachers.<sup>43</sup>

**Language Barrier:** NYSC mobilises graduands and send them to other states other than their states of origin. This implies that Corps member serving outside their place of origin might have little or no knowledge of the language spoken in the community they are posted. Although, English is the lingua franca of the country, majority of Nigerians do not know how to read, write nor speak the proper English, especially those in the rural areas who relate with themselves on a day to day basis without the influence of an outsider, so communication is done on a regular basis in the local dialect. This makes it difficult to communicate with the people particularly when the Corps members are deployed from the eastern part of the country to the northern part of the country where they barely understand the language or speak it and vice versa

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<sup>43</sup>Afolayan et' al, *Selected Speeches and Strides of the 18<sup>th</sup> NYSC Director-General Brig Gen. S Ibrahim*, The Special Duties Department, NYSC Headquarters: Abuja, (May, 2020),84

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to effectively educate the people in these communities. This causes a dilemma on both sides and affects the zeal to actively participate in the mass education and the willingness of those to be taught, to learn.

#### Way Forward

It is important to use the youth to achieve the goals of national development and integration. For a country like Nigeria, the importance of this cannot be overstated, being that the youths make up the largest part of the population in the country.<sup>44</sup> With the NYSC Scheme being the largest mobiliser of these youths to actively serve the motherland for a year, a scheme that is one of the longest and successful efforts by government to promote the unity and equal development in the country, it is only wise that other sectors utilize this avenue to achieve their objectives. While some of these sectors have indeed seen the opportunity presented in the scheme with large number of youths at its disposal for national service, the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is yet to effectively utilize this scheme in achieving its objectives. Hence, its objective of soliciting the support and cooperation of all stakeholders in the task of making all Nigeria literate, develop literacy programmes with special attention on disadvantaged group such as women, the marginalized rural dwellers and out-of-school children as well as collaborating with states, local government and non-government organisations cannot be achieved. The NYSC is also the only Scheme that sends youth to the remotest parts of the country, majority of whom engage in imparting knowledge in schools. These Corps members' efforts in these remotest rural areas that mostly constitute the largest number of illiterates in the country have helped to sustain these schools they are sent to. This is because the Corps members are

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<sup>44</sup> H.Plecher, Statista: Age Structure in Nigeria 2019,  
<http://www.statista.com/statistics/382296/age-structure-in-nigeria/>

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willing and have the capability to teach wherever they find themselves.<sup>45</sup>

### Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained from this paper, it has been observed that poverty and illiteracy are the two main problems facing Nigerian society. Therefore, we still cannot compete with the developed countries in the 21st century. It was also observed that NYSC had played a pivotal role in the campaign against illiteracy in Nigeria. Although the literacy needs and capacity building of community members are met by the Corps members, the fact remains that even when efforts are made to maintain them, influence is no longer perceived if they are not supported by the government. The Corps members of the NYSC are advised to focus more on awakening people to take initial steps in their own growth and to work with the government to increase the performance of the scheme during mass literacy campaigns. Finally, in order to make everyone functional and reduce the literacy gap in Nigeria, (i) the key agent for mass literacy in Nigeria is to bring NYSC on board; ii) choose significantly trained and qualified Corps members with increased incentives; iii) involve individuals in different development programs that would enable optimal potential to be attained and reduce waste.

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<sup>45</sup> Gregory Enegwea and Gabriel Umoden, *NYSC: Twenty Years of National...*, 163.  
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## **NYSC and Educational Development in Nigeria: Contributions, Challenges and Prospects**

Aguiyi, Chukwuebuka Cornelius

### **Introduction**

It is a truism that Nigeria has lost its pride of place among the comity of nations in spite of her rich human capital development and abundant natural resources. No doubt, the nation is plagued by communal clashes, religious chauvinism, ethnic jingoism, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, sectarian violence, militancy, terrorism, endemic corruption, electoral violence, hate speeches, and most prevailing ethnic clashes between some ethnic nationalities in the country.

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In order to arrest this ugly situation that has impinged on our development and that has robbed us from realizing the country's dream of being among the twenty most developed economies of the world, there is need to try quality education option as being advocated in the philosophy and ideology of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Education is vital for socio-economic and political development. It is an instrument par excellence for national development. It is a potent tool in graduating families out of poverty and promoting social security. Education is the frontier for social justice and the wheels of social mobility and redistribution of societal wealth (National Policy on Education)<sup>1</sup>. Education as being propelled by NYSC scheme is defined as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities for their own benefit and that of the society<sup>2</sup>. It is geared towards developing the individuals for them to live effectively and efficiently in the society and to contribute to its advancement and upliftment. Hence, through education as championed by NYSC, the behaviour patterns of the citizens could be changed in the desired direction. In other words, with sound education with national outlook and input by different instructors from all parts of the country, people will start to understand and appreciate one another better and try to restore the dignity of man. Hence, we have to recognize the role quality education plays in equipping individuals with requisite knowledge and skills for survival and peaceful co-existence, which enhances national development.

#### **Quality Education**

Education is more than reading, writing and arithmetic. It is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future and is critical to reducing poverty, inequality, hatred, insecurity

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<sup>1</sup>Federal Republic of Nigeria.(2004). *National Policy on Education* (Revised). Lagos. Nigeria. Federal Government Press.

<sup>2</sup>Okeke, C.C. (2013). *Philosophy of Education*. Owerri: Design Prints Publishers.

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and other vices. The development of any society depends largely on the creative capacity of the citizens to be capable of effectively exploring and exploiting the country's natural resources and transforming them into finished products and services so as to enhance the standard of living of the country's citizens<sup>3</sup>. This type of education should be functional and be able to satisfy degree of people's need and solve problems of the society. Elechi called this type of education, utilitarian education. Utilitarian education is education that is involving or containing a function or functions; practical rather than decorative, utilitarian, capable of functioning or working<sup>4</sup>. So, for Nigerian education to be utilitarian, it must be practical and useful. Functional education will ensure and/or produce food for people, create jobs, provide services, lead to democracy and ensure national security<sup>5</sup>. Functional education is the total process of bringing up an individual to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequently to be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society<sup>6</sup>. Fafunwa also defined functional education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he or she lives. He went further to state that when evaluating any educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at any given time<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>Nwangwu, I.O. (2017) *Basic issues in school management*, Enugu: computer edge publishers.

<sup>4</sup>Elechi, C. N. (2014), *Managing Education for National Security: A Case for Utilitarian Education*. Enugu, Creative Minds and Productivity.

<sup>5</sup>Ali, A.A. (2010) My reflections on Nigerian education (1990-1998) *Convocation lecture at Federal College of Education Technical Asaba*

<sup>6</sup>Idowu, A. (2019). Functional education and nation building: The challenge of the next millennium. *Lead paper presented at the 4th national conference of federal of education*, Kontagora.

<sup>7</sup>Fafunwa, A. Babs (1974). *History of Education*, London: George Allen and Unwin.

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Education is said to be quality when its purpose goes beyond the provision of education as an end but as a means, the end of which are targeted at the felt needs of the country. It is that education which is not merely theoretical, but rather is skill oriented, geared towards the cultivation of intellectual skills, vocational/technological skills, social skills and the like<sup>8</sup>. This kind of education according to him once acquired by the individual remains for a lifetime and is continually useful. Williams and Anekwe, in a more concise definition, aptly captured quality education as that, which should be capable of producing Nigerians who can manufacture raw materials, machines and tools needed for our industries, produce enough food for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable and transform the nation from consuming one to a manufacturing one<sup>9</sup>. It is this type of education that equips the learner with the potentials and capabilities for self-reliance. These achievements from a good and quality education go a long way to reducing illiteracy and poverty which fuels political, communal clashes, religious chauvinism, ethnic jingoism, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, sectarian violence, militancy, terrorism, endemic corruption, electoral violence, hate speeches that impinges our national unity and even development.

### NYSC and Education

Within the past years' development specialists have been focusing attention on the contribution which education can make to nation building. Harbison *et al.* (1964), Adams (1971), Lowe, Grant, & Williams, (1973), Beckett & O'Connell (1977) have tried to identify

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<sup>8</sup>Mkpa, M. A. (2012) Promoting functional education in the New millennium: in Anwor, O.O. &Obodo, G. (ed). *Promoting functional education in the third millennium*. Enugu: Faculty of Education, ESUT.

<sup>9</sup>William, C. &Anekwe, J.U. (2010).Nigerian university education and functionality in the 21st Century.*Issues and challenges in Nigeria education in the 21st Century*.

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relationships between education and political stability especially in the so-called developing countries<sup>10111213</sup>. In a developing country like Nigeria, Federal, State, Local government and members of the public – stakeholders have been given education high priority. The main reason is that education is one instrument of change with which a country can achieve greatness socially, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. In other words, every nation strives hard to get maximum output from the minimum input. Essentially, agitation for deployment of Corps members to retain its traditional hue-with the majority of Corps members going to the classrooms for quality and maximum education output started two decades ago, due to increasing rate of poor academic performance of students and to achieve national policy on education.

However, in this millennium and in getting the best from the leaner, input in the field of education has witnessed many innovations due to initiation and execution of many educational programs embarked upon by the Corp members throughout the Federation. The policy-makers recently reaffirmed their faith in the role which education can play in nation building when they declared in the new *National Policy on Education*(2004) that "The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development." The Policy goes further to identify national aims and objectives of education which include, *inter alia*,

- I. the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;

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<sup>10</sup>Harbison, F. & Myers, C. A. (1964) *Education, Manpower and Economic Growth* (New York, McGraw Hill).

<sup>11</sup>Adams, Don (1971) *Education in National Development* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

<sup>12</sup>Lowe, J., Grant, N. & Williams, T. D. (1973) *Education and Nation Building in the Third World*(Ibadan, Onibonoje Press).

<sup>13</sup>Beckett, P. & O'Connell, J. (1977) *Education and Power in Nigeria* (London, Hodder & Stoughton).

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- II. the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society;
- III. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- IV. the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society<sup>14</sup>.

For those who seek insights into the process of national development, the inference which may be drawn from the above priority orderings of the aims and objectives of Nigerian education is that education is simply a tool for nation building. It is within this context that we shall examine the functions or the role of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the fostering of national unity and socio-economic development in Nigeria through quality education. The NYSC programme has for many years facilitated regular and effective distribution of skilled manpower, steady breaking of social and cultural barriers as well as the building of friendly bridges across ethno-linguistic boundaries. It promoted values of national unity and development, rekindled interest in neglected but vital areas of national development like education and promoted youths' interest in teaching and learning. The regular invitation of corp members to participate in the conduct of such sensitive national assignments as census, elections, immunization programme constantly pricks the conscience of the nation to the right course of development.

The NYSC programme has helped in the educational development of the country, especially from junior secondary to tertiary levels<sup>15</sup>. Those who share the sentiment of sustaining the scheme like the Arewa

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<sup>14</sup>Federal Republic of Nigeria.(2004). *National Policy on Education (Revised)*. Lagos. Nigeria. Federal Government Press.

<sup>15</sup>Aba, A. A. 2010. Nigerian Politics, 1999-2009: Images from Chinua Achebe's Mirror, in Joseph Mangut and Terhemba Wuam (Eds.) *The Press and Literature in the Fourth Republic*, Markurdi: Aboki Publishers, pp. 133-147

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Consultative Forum (ACF) state that no other programme in the country best meets objectives of the national education policy than NYSC. In an editorial, The Tide (2005:4) held that the reasons proffered in 1973 by the Yakubu Gowon administration for the establishment of the NYSC scheme are still very relevant in this country's search for an enduring national unity. There is, therefore, no dispute on the desirability of the scheme and its benefits in our desire to maintain a strong, united and peaceful country despite recent assaults on its integrity. Amongst the Corps members themselves, the quantity and quality of skills and professional training NYSC programme has facilitated will remain indelible in the history of the Nigerian nation<sup>16</sup>. The traditional community development programme which was introduced in the 1976/1977 service year has helped a lot in the promotion of learning, rural education, tourism, healthcare and agricultural development. At the end of the 2012 Batch "B" orientation course, 45,000 Corps members had been trained in various skill areas. A further breakdown shows that 5,404 were trained in agro-allied skills, 5,509 in food processing and preservation, 8,035 in culture and tourism-related skills and 5,062 in cosmetology. Information and communication technology had 8,119, power and energy 2,885 and environment 2,672. Another set of 2,837 members acquired skills in beautification, 2,057 in construction and 2,425 in education (Utomwen, 2012). All these portray the relevance of the NYSC programme in promoting quality education for national integration and socio-economic development.

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<sup>16</sup>Utomwen, D. 2012. *Tackling NYSC's Security Challenge*, <http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/12/10/tackling-nyscs-security-challenge/>. Retrieved on 1st March, 2021

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### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The culture of graduate youths serving their countries has been practiced in different forms in USA, India, Korea, and Ghana. Since 1973, graduates of Nigerian universities and later polytechnics were required to undergo a year of national service in any part of the country. In 1976, the NYSC programme was extended to HND holders and NCE holders, who were inculcated because of the dire need for teachers that would facilitate the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy. For very good reasons, the Federal Military Government limited the Scheme initially to graduates of Nigerian Universities not above the age of 30 years who had successfully completed their first degree. In 1977, there was the abolition of the age limit for participation in the scheme, which was later re-introduced and currently pegged at those not above thirty (30) years of age, just as the NCE holders has been disbanded from serving the country. It is worthy of note that these group of people that passed out may not be blamed for refusing to accept the theory of settling in the host state because Nigerian history is filled with cases of people that have been retrenched by a state governments, in order to employ their own people, using such professional names like right-sizing and down-sizing.

Notwithstanding the security problems that have befallen the Nigerian state, the country still manages to remain a place of first choice for investment in Africa; hence the NYSC programme can still be factored in promoting sustainable peace and security as well as national development. There is increasing need for progressive re-organization of the NYSC in this era of multiple security crisis. This is because without the NYSC discharge certificate, the time spent in the university and polytechnic would have been wasted so to say, as nobody would offer a Nigerian graduate a public job without principally requesting the NYSC certificate.

The then leadership of Brigadier General Okorie-Affia once declared the aim of establishing a Distress Call Centre (DCC) for Corps members to

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use during time of distress and security threat. The country's network providers should be approached through a combined effort of the NYSC, National Communication Commission and the Federal Ministries of Information, Communication as well as Defence to see that access to network is not disrupted.

There is need for the extension of the camping period to about three months, during which the Corps members would be trained in vocational skills and other entrepreneurial acts that would make them self-reliant and initiators of small and medium scale enterprises after the service year.

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## **NYSC and the Dynamics of Rural Education System in Nigeria**

Elisha Zigwai Ambrose

### **Introduction**

Scholarly works has established that Education in the rural Nigeria mostly is on the disadvantage side because it is an activity carried out in the city or the possibly privileged area. All the stakeholders in the rural areas are facing one problem or the other, and these include the structure, the job satisfaction, the background, and lack of maximum co-operation from student and their parents. These and other factors bring about some negative influence on the smooth running of the system of education in rural areas. The Nigerian education system is

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based on the vestiges of Colonial education system.<sup>1</sup> By and large, it has been posited that, "over the years, it has been criticized for being too theoretical to be able to make meaningful impact on the life of Nigerians.

Hence, the position of youth policies and programmes appeared not to be nationalistic before independence. Not until the Gowon regime, in 1973, which introduced the National Youth Service Corps Scheme<sup>2</sup> solely with a view to foster the spirit of oneness and selfless service in the diverse communities across Nigeria - this Scheme is the fulcrum around which this study revolves. In Nigeria, for instance it has most often been argued that, there is no aspect of the economic, social and cultural life the NYSC Scheme has not contributed meaningfully to.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, this Scheme offers many graduates an entry point into the labour market. Many dedicated Corps members have been offered employment in their places of primary assignment.<sup>4</sup>

These are graduates who would ordinarily have roamed the streets unemployed and ignorant of the opportunities that exist in other parts of the country.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Imam, H., "Educational Policy in Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Post-Independence Period", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 1, (2012), 189.

<sup>2</sup>Agumagu, A. C., Adesope, O. M., & Mathews-Njoku, E. C., "Attitude of Youth Corps towards the Community Development Service of NYSC Nigeria", *Journal of Agricultural and Social Research (JASR)*, Vol. 6, No.1, (2006), 78-82.

<sup>3</sup>Bamidele, L., "NYSC: An enduring legacy. A public lecture organized in Abuja on June 4, 1998. Retrieved February 27, 2021, from <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/links/NYSC>

<sup>4</sup>Ademowo, Y."NYSC: Exploring the Diversity in the Unity of Nigeria", 2007. Retrieved on February 26, 2021, from [www.nigerian-newspaper.com/national\\_youth\\_service\\_Corps.htm](http://www.nigerian-newspaper.com/national_youth_service_Corps.htm)

<sup>5</sup>World Bank, *NYSC: An Enduring Legacy*, 2003. Retrieved February 20 2021, from [www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2021/20/21](http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2021/20/21)

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In addition, there are communities that have benefited from the Scheme through services rendered by Corps members, some of which may not have been provided by either government or private intervention. The same is the case in urban Centre's where financial institutions, industries and the petroleum sector also tap from their expertise.<sup>6</sup>The national youth service Corps Scheme is indeed a channel for national unity and socio-economic development especially with the provision and availability of adequate facilities that will aid functionality and engender competitiveness among prospective Corps members and not just persuasive and mandatory concept as it is today. It is paramount to re-affirm the significance of the community development service of the Scheme in harnessing the nation's economy/abundant resources especially in rural areas of the country.<sup>7</sup>However, preliminary interviews with some former and current Corps members revealed that among all the programmes of the NYSC Scheme, the community development service was/and is the most exciting, interesting and challenging aspect of the Scheme. This invariably informs that, there is need for analytical examination of the contributions of the NYSC education group in rural communities across Nigeria and the myriads of challenges confronting the group in general which the chapter will critically examine.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Rural and Urban Areas

For the purpose of clarity, the terms - 'urban' and 'rural' need to be defined operationally. Generally, attempts to define these two terms

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<sup>6</sup>Udende, P., &Salau, A. A. "National Youth Service Corps Scheme and the Quest for National Unity and Development: A *Public Relations Perspective*" (Ilorin: Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, 2013).

<sup>7</sup>Ademowo, Y., "NYSC: Exploring the Diversity in the Unity of Nigeria",2007, Retrieved February 25, 2021, from [www.nigerian-newspaper.com/national\\_youth\\_service\\_Corps.htm](http://www.nigerian-newspaper.com/national_youth_service_Corps.htm)

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have thus followed three perspectives. The first perspective is the subjective or perceptual. In this case, urban or rural area may be defined in terms of their visual components. This is the case when the definition of urban or rural area is based on the facilities or services (e.g. electricity, market, water, tarred roads etc) available in a place. The second perspective is the objective or quantitative. This perspective uses quantitatively determined criteria in defining urban or rural areas e.g. population size of a place. The third perspective is definition by exclusion. In this perspective, when one of the terms is defined, the other term is defined by exclusion from the defined term. For instance, having defined urban area, a rural area is now defined as any place or area that is not urban.<sup>8</sup>

Different countries or regions of the World tend to define the terms ‘urban area’ and ‘rural area’ in different ways. For instance, in UK urban areas are places with 26% or more of its population living in a market town or settlement with 2,500 or more persons. That means areas with less than 26% of its population living in a market town or a settlement with less than 2,500 persons are considered rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

In Nigeria, an urban area is defined as an area with a population size of at least 20,000 persons.<sup>10</sup> By the principle of exclusion therefore, a rural area is a place with a population size of less than 20,000 persons. In addition, they are remote areas outside the seat of government

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<sup>8</sup>Boniface G. Nworguand Loretta N. Nworgu,, “Urban-Rural Disparities in Achievement at the Basic Education Level: The Plight of the Rural Child in a Developing Country”, *Developing Country Studies*, Vol. 3, No.14, (2013) ISSN 2224-607X (Paper) ISSN 2225-0565 (Online), [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, Reducing disparities: Balanced development of urban and rural areas and regions within countries of Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, (New York: 2001)

<sup>10</sup>Aluko, O.E. “The Impact of urbanization on housing development: The Lagos experience, Nigeria”, *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, Vol. 3, No.3, (2005).

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(federal, state or local government) with very few or no infrastructural facilities where the major economic activity is largely agricultural production.<sup>11</sup>In spite of the fact that there is a growing tendency towards urbanization, the majority of the Nigerian population still resides in the rural areas.<sup>12</sup> Which suffer from copious economic, social, political and geographical deprivations.<sup>13</sup>The impact of rural deprivations or neglect is pronounced and is manifest in severe rural poverty, poor health services, poor educational services, lack of safe drinking water, poor road networks and lack of communication facilities.

### **Education in Rural Nigeria**

There are various forms of formal educational facilities in rural Nigeria. These include (a) Informal out-of-school education offered to rural families by experts in agriculture, home economics, health, small-scale industries, etc. This type of education is often known as ***extension education***. (b) Semi-formal literacy education organized for adults who had no opportunity to acquire formal education at earlier age. This is known as ***adult education***. (c) Formal education offered at the primary and secondary levels to rural children and adolescents. At the primary level, two main types of education can be identified in Nigeria. These are the western type of education and the Quranic type of education with the latter being more prevalent in the Moslem areas of the country. Since Nigeria had grown up under the influence of the western world, there has been the tendency for people to underrate Quranic education generally. Thus for instance, 4 years of western

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<sup>11</sup>National Open University, Introduction to Rural Sociology. Course Guide, (Lagos: National Open University, 2008).

<sup>12</sup>UNESCO (2009). UN Statistics: Progress on MDGs

<sup>13</sup>Onokerhoronye. A.E. "Planning for rural development in Nigeria: A spatial approach", *Community Development Journal*, Vol.13, No.1, (1978).

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education is equated with 15 years of Quranic education. Until recently, most parts of rural northern Nigeria had only Quranic schools whereas western-type schools have always predominated in the south.<sup>14</sup>

Extension Education is an informal non-school based education. It is often directed to rural people with the aim of upgrading their competence or skills in specific areas such as agriculture, health or home management. In Nigeria, the Ministry of Agriculture hires and trains agricultural extension agents to carry out agricultural extension work with farmers. Ideally, it is expected that farmer-extension agent's ratio in the country should be 750 farm families or less to 1 full-time extension agent. However, this ratio remained at an average of 2500:1 as at 2000. This compares unfavorably with 200:1 in India or 250:1 in Kenya. As a result of this insufficiency of extension agents, extension education in rural Nigeria is not a continuously sustained programme which could have generally upgraded farmers' knowledge, skills and productivity.<sup>15</sup> Other forms of extension education in the areas of health care, home management and the establishment and management of small-scale industries are faced with the same problems of insufficiency of specificity staff, sporadic contacts and emphasis on rendering specific service rather than on general education.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that Primary school education in Nigeria can be obtained in western-type schools or in Quranic

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<sup>14</sup>Aghenta, J. A.A, "Turning Point in Education and Development in Nigeria", Inaugural Lecture Series 58 of University of Benin, Benin Delivered on January 24, (2001).

<sup>15</sup>Obanya P. "Major Challenges to the Development of Secondary Education in Nigeria", Paper Presented At The First Regional Conference On Secondary Education In Africa (SEIA), Kampala, Uganda, June, 9-13, (2003).

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schools.<sup>16</sup> Nearly all villages in the present day Nigeria have a western-type primary school as a result of the Federal Government's Universal Free Primary Education Scheme instituted in 1976 and the UBE in year 2000. This consists of a graded system of education which starts with the teaching of basic literacy at the lower primary levels (1-2) to the teaching of other specialized subjects like history, geography, civics, integrated science etc. Nigeria prepares the pupils for entry into post-primary institutions. Those who cannot enter post primary schools drop out and either learn some trade, migrate to urban areas in search of jobs, or remain on the farms. The inability to go on to the secondary schools in most states is due to fee paying and is often located outside the village. Although there is no reliable statistics to show the drop-out rate from rural primary schools, it is estimated that, in the southern part of the country, this may be 40 per cent while in the northern part of the country, it might be up to 60 per cent. In the north however, drop out is not mainly a direct result of inability of parents to pay school fees since generous scholarships are often available for those who want to go beyond the primary school level, but a reflection of the lingering resistance of some rural parents against westernization. Also rural Fulani children particularly assist their parents to herd cattle right from the age of 7. This fact coupled with the unsettled nature of their lifestyle account for the unwillingness of parents to encourage their children to remain in school to the extent that in 1977, the Governors of some states in the northern part of Nigeria had to issue threats on parents who withdraw their children from school. Nomadic education system was introduced in Nigeria in the late 80's to afford

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<sup>16</sup>Abidogun, B.A. "Education sector reforms and childhood education for rural development in Nigeria," An unpublished monograph, reviewed on the 28/02/2012 from [www.transformeduOrg/linkclick.aspx](http://www.transformeduOrg/linkclick.aspx). 2012.

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Cow Fulani children in the north and riverine area dwelling children in the south the opportunity and facilities to have some basic literacy.<sup>17</sup>

Still, it has been asserted that, generally, pupils attend primary schools from home hence the distance of school from home may also affect attendance. Moreso, he stressed that according to a 1981 Rural Infrastructures Report in Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> there are great variations from state to state and rural to urban area within states with respect to the number of primary schools, proportion of trained teachers, size of class per trained teacher and average walking distance to school.

Quranic schools are found mainly in the northern part of Nigeria and some Muslim areas of the south. Generally, the school holds either in Mosques, private homes of the teachers or in open spaces under tree sheds. It might have 10 to 40 pupils and is strictly privately owned and run by the teacher (Umma). The instruction itself consists mainly in memorizing verses of the Quran, learning Arabic alphabets, reading and writing Arabic. Usually, the pupils can memorize verses of the Quran and can write Arabic, they hardly understand the meaning of what they are reciting at the primary stage of the curriculum. Also, when the child is old enough to go and learn a trade, the hours of schooling are reduced and afternoon sessions cancelled. The teacher charges small fees at regular intervals and also receives gifts such as grains, meat, and food, pieces of cloth or prayer mat and free labour from his pupils. Although steps have been taken to upgrade Islamic

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<sup>17</sup>Ijaduola, K.O. Education in Nigeria: An Historical Perspective, (Ogun: Ijebu-Ode, Lucky Odoni (Nig.) Enterprises. 1998).

<sup>18</sup>Okoh, E. "High Level Education, Manpower Development and Training. A key to sustainable Economic growth and Development," (Inaugural Lecture Series 63, University of Benin: 2002).

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education in the country generally, the Quranic schools in rural areas are not controlled by the Ministry of Education.<sup>19</sup>

For instance, in the Southern part of the country, efforts have been made to retrain some of the Islamic teachers so that they can incorporate subjects like English and Arithmetic in their curriculum. However, since the country uses western standards, Quranic school education is hardly recognized as useful beyond the Moslem community. Secondary School is the intermediate step on the educational pyramid in Nigeria. Although they offer a variety of subjects, they are not structured to train pupils in specific skills but to prepare them for entry into higher institutions of learning. Most secondary schools in southern Nigeria were originally founded and run by Christian missions, other voluntary agencies and private proprietors hence they were often located close to rural areas. On the contrary, most secondary schools in the northern parts of the country were government owned and were located in urban centres.<sup>20</sup>

This fact accounts for the staggering variation in average walking distance between home and school in northern and southern states of the country. However, in recent times, many state governments have phased out boarding facilities in secondary schools to reduce cost thereby making it mandatory for pupils to attend school from home. In Oyo and most other southern states, quite a number of new secondary schools have been established in order to reduce the walking distance entailed as a result of this policy. Nevertheless, secondary schools are unevenly distributed between rural institutions; most rural areas may have none. The rural infrastructure report showed that as of 1980, Kano State had 13 of its 25 post-primary schools in Kano Metropolitan

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<sup>19</sup> Adamu, A. U. "Educational Reforms in Nigeria", (Department of Education, Bayero University, Kano, 2003), Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Adamu, A. U. "Educational Reforms in Nigeria..."

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LGA while 7 Local Government Areas of the state had no secondary school at all.<sup>21</sup>

On the whole while the UBE Schemes are aimed at eliminating illiteracy in the country eventually, rural Nigeria is still largely populated by people with very low levels of education. However, studies involving farmers from different parts of the country consistently show that an average of about 60 per cent is non-literate. This proportion is even higher for women. In addition, it has been posited that literate children do not tend to affect the general level of education in rural areas as these invariably migrate to towns thereby leaving the proportion of non-literate persons almost unchanged over the years. The 1991 population census figures confirm this observation.<sup>22</sup>

In a similar vein, it has been opined that, the structure of primary and secondary education in Nigeria has consistently betrayed the unnamed objective of selecting the best from the rural areas to join the elite class in urban area after these must have gone through the university which is so far the apex of the Nigerian educational pyramid. This urban elite class is largely made up of white collar job holders. The subject taught are largely not founded on the indigenous culture neither does the curriculum take cognizance of the varied talents of the students. It is still largely a system of education that seeks to instil and perpetuate deference toward all that is European, American or generally foreign to Nigeria. There is the tendency to underrate technical education and to overemphasize the 'grammar' school. In this way, education offered up

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<sup>21</sup>Adamu, A. U. "Educational Reforms in..."

<sup>22</sup>Adewole A. "Universal Basic Education: Aspects of meaning and purpose"  
Proceeding of the 15th Annual Congress of the Nigerian Academy of Education,  
(University of Benin 6th-9th November, 2003), 64.

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to the secondary level could not be said to have effectively equipped Nigerians to participate in the process of change.<sup>23</sup>

According to National Population Commission (2012) it is generally believed that Nigeria has a total population of 170 million people, out of this number 67% live in the rural areas while the remaining 34% live in the urban centres.<sup>24</sup>

### **Government Policies and Educational Development in Rural Nigeria Communities**

The current state of rural schools in most Nigerian communities is not different from other parts of the country. Schools in the rural areas lack teachers, even when teachers are posted to the rural areas they fail to report and no penalty is administered to them. The teachers that report for duties are either NYSC members or students on industrial training and a minute number of permanent staff (some unqualified).

The conditions of the rural schools in most Nigerian communities are nothing to write home about as some don't even have seats, while some buildings are even collapsing. In terms of academic infrastructures (textbooks, scientific equipment etc), rural schools seem not to be part of governments plan to provide such. In fact about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the students produced in the rural areas are half-baked students who can hardly compete with those who schooled in the cities. This could be seen in admission list of various schools in the state where most students offered admission seems to be from the city. There has not been any meaningful legislation or policy to improve the plight of rural education. The current policies in the state are still those of the

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<sup>23</sup>Arikewugo O. "The Politics of Universal Education in Nigeria." In T. Ajaji, J. O. Fadipe, P. K. Ojedele and E. E 2002, 32.

<sup>24</sup>Impact of Education in Rural Development Process, Retrieved On 2 March, 2021 From [www.researchclue.com](http://www.researchclue.com)

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national and international bodies to improve education in the world; such as the UBE, national policy on education and the Millennium Development Goal. The implementation of these policies seems to be more favourable to the cities.

### Rural Education and the NYSC

Education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development. It has witnessed active participation by non-governmental agencies, communities, and individuals as well as government intervention.<sup>25</sup> It is therefore desirable for the Nation to spell out in clear and unequivocal terms the philosophy and objectives that underlie its investment in education. The National Policy on Education seeks to fulfil that role. The need for a national policy on education came about as a result of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference which was attended by a cross-section of Nigerians. The conference was a culmination of expressions of general dissatisfaction with the existing educational system which had become irrelevant to national needs, aspirations and goals.<sup>26</sup> After the National Curriculum Conference, a seminar of experts drawn from a wide range of interest groups within Nigeria was convened in 1973. The seminar, which included voluntary agencies and external bodies, deliberated on what a national policy on education for an independent and sovereign Nigeria should be.

The outcome of the seminar was a draft document which; after due comments were received from the states and other interest groups, led to the final document, the National Policy on Education, first published in 1977. According to the National Policy on Education, the objectives are as follows:

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<sup>25</sup>Obadare, Ebenezer "Statism, Youth and Civic Imagination: A Critical Study of the National Youth Service Corps" (NYSC), Centre for Civil Society, Old Building, Houghton Street, London, (2005).

<sup>26</sup>Obadare, Ebenezer "Statism, Youth and Civic Imagination"...2005.

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- the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Nigerian educational system was modelled after British model. The model is bereft of lofty realities that place indigenization into the curriculum compendium and self-reliance. These models were based on the same problematic “moral prisms” that guided mainstream development theory. The institutionalization of colonial models of development in Nigeria conceptualized youths as key agents in constructing a Nigerian identity.<sup>27</sup>

### Challenges Facing Education in Rural Areas of Nigeria

Whereas the problem of education in Nigeria is perceived to be general, it is said to be more severe in the rural areas.<sup>28</sup> “Some of these noted challenges are lack of zeal and interest by teachers due to poor and delayed salary and poor condition of work, frequent strike action by teachers, lack of curricular and other materials such as textbooks, libraries, instructional materials and at times classrooms, desk and chairs.” Nevertheless, it has been asserted that, “about 2000 (mostly primary) schools existing in the rural areas in Nigeria are said to have no classrooms and lessons are received under trees or thatched houses.” It is observed that instability of the government institutions and lack of infrastructure that is transportation, communications, and

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<sup>27</sup>Halloway ..., 2013.

<sup>28</sup>Anyaegbu R, Christman, D.E and Jingpu, C. The Challenges of Rural Education in Nigeria: Potential Lessons from China. E Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Setting. Vol. I, No. 2, (2004), 160-174.

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utilities are part of the challenges.<sup>29</sup> Many primary schools in the rural areas are not even connected to the power supply grid and are therefore unable to take advantage of new development in educational technologies. Other challenges are low community participation in education planning and policy implementation, poverty, corruption, cultural challenges, psychological challenges, socialization challenges, insecurity and political crisis and poor implementation of plan. Due to this situation and personal reasons, many teachers reject posting to rural areas while those that accept posting treat their presence in such areas as a part time assignment. Yet, effectively educating the rural population that make up over 60% of the country is a necessary precondition for national development.

Furthermore, it has been opined that “rural education is key to rural development and an essential building block of national development; that poverty cannot be eradicated without eliminating illiteracy among the rural populace and without finding a systematic way to raise their level of knowledge.”<sup>30</sup>Hence, there is the general consensus that the rate of agricultural development and rural transformation is directly related to the educational standard of the rural communities. Such rural education programme will widen the rural populace’s horizon and predispose them to greater receptivity of new ideas.<sup>31</sup> The need thus arises for appropriate reforms and policies to address pertinent

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<sup>29</sup>Dike, V. “The State of Education in Nigeria and the Health of the Nation”, 2004, [www.AfricaEconomicAnalysis.org](http://www.AfricaEconomicAnalysis.org).

<sup>30</sup>Anyaegbu R, Christman, D.E and Jingpu, C. The Challenges of Rural Education in Nigeria: Potential Lessons from China. E Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Setting. Vol. I, No. 2, (2004), 160-174.

<sup>31</sup>Fabunmi, M. Social and Political Context of Educational Planning and Administration, (Ibadan: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2003).

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issues affecting the development of our educational system especially as it concerns education in the rural areas.

There may or may not be a primary school, and it may or may not give a complete primary course. It is *no* wonder that those who have come to appreciate the hospitals and schools, the tap-water and electric light, the range of shops and the bustle of the more modern towns, prefer to move, if they can, to a town, even though living in a town costs them more. The village school stands out imposingly in contrast to the huts and small houses, but closer inspection reveals that it, too, is of the simplest construction, often just a row of oblong rooms filled with benches and blackboards. There is little apparatus; the walls are nearly bare and books are few. Often there are difficulties in looking after apparatus and books, even when they can be afforded. The school building may lack doors and windows, and so the wind and the rain drive goats to enter unimpeded. White ants may quickly destroy anything that is not specially protected. The classes for the youngest children are often overcrowded, and sometimes the children are so crammed together that it is impossible for the teacher to get round to see the work of those in the centre. But higher up the school, the classes get smaller and smaller. The bigger children are wanted to help at home or in the field, or they may have got bored and left school, or their parents, especially those with increasing families, may no longer be able to afford the fees.<sup>32</sup>

The teachers will usually have had some years of secondary education, in many cases up to school certificate level. Some will, in addition, have had two years at a teacher-training college, but many will be untrained, especially in those areas where there has been a rapid expansion of education. They will not be the intellectual cream of their generation, because there are so many more attractive careers than teaching.

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<sup>32</sup>Griffiths V.L, *The Problems Of Rural Education*, (New York: UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning, 1989), 62.

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Moreover, their general background and sophistication will be very limited. Nearly everywhere, they suffer from a sense of grievance. One reason for this is that their rates of pay are usually not as favorable as those of many others who have received the same amount of education. Another reason in many countries is that their prestige, which once was high in rural areas when they were the only educated persons, has inevitably slumped with the spread of education. This picture of rural limitations is here and there relieved by the presence of an exceptional individual, such as a devoted headmaster or a strong progressive personality amongst the members of a leading family. Traditional social attitudes and the impact of improved agricultural production and marketing can drastically modify one or more of these features of rural life. Nevertheless, for vast areas of the developing countries these are the hard conditions which have to be faced. They are conditions which quickly become obvious to any foreign observer, even on a quite brief acquaintance with rural life.<sup>33</sup>

### **Historic Aims of Going to School**

Whatever may be the official aims of education and the hopes of educators, the fact is that most parents look on the schools as a means of escape for their children from the hardships and privations of rural life. To establish special schools for rural children, where the curriculum deliberately attempts to keep them **on** the land, is to thwart their hopes and ambitions for their children and for their own old age. A recent survey in one of the developing rural countries showed that very few parents wished their children to become farmers. Experience would seem to show that in most areas special schools for rural children would be completely unacceptable. This is understandable if one thinks of the origin of the modern school. It did not originate in any attempt by rural communities to improve their own way of life. It was introduced by foreigners, religious bodies, or colonial governments,

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<sup>33</sup>Griffiths V.L, *The Problems of...,* 64.

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and its first economic effect was to siphon off a few of the brightest children into clerical and other white-collar employment. The tradition persists, and is unlikely to change until farming can show greater financial returns, stability, and ease than the white-collar jobs. It is unnecessary to say more about the proposal for a separate system of rural education, because it is, in fact, rarely taken seriously by the Government.<sup>34</sup>

### **Mother Tongue Language Curriculum Implementation Challenges**

An area that has raised controversy among scholars in the National Policy of Education is commitment to language.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Section 1 subsection 10 of the Policy on Language in NPE (2004) states that the administration recognized that language was important in promoting social interaction, facilitating national cohesion, and ensuring cultural preservation and therefore every child will have an opportunity to learn the language of his or her immediate environment. Therefore, in the interest of the country it was a requirement that each child learnt at least one of the three Nigerian languages, namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. English serves as the official language and for literacy purpose, meaning it's used for official processes, and in secondary and higher education as well as in the judicial system.<sup>36</sup> The arising argument among some scholars is that the adoption of the colonial language as the official language and in instruction in schools has impacted negatively on the use and development of indigenous languages.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Griffiths V.L, *The Problems of...*, 65.

<sup>35</sup>Olagbaju, O. O. "Multilingual Education in Nigeria: Policy, practice, challenges and solutions," *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol.5 No.6, (2014), 66-73.

<sup>36</sup>Federal Republic of Nigeria: *National policy on Education*, (Abuja: Government Press, 2004).

<sup>37</sup>Fafunwa, B. "The national policy on education: some factors militating against implementation," *Journal of Nigerian Education Research Association* Vol. 4, No. 1, (2009), 9. Retrieved on February, 27 2021. Available at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234662139>.

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Another author supports the challenge of the multilingual education in Nigeria noting that although the NPE allows the use of the local languages and somewhat gives superiority to English thus the problem of how to fully implement indigenous language continues.<sup>38</sup> The language dilemma came across clearly in the work of Emenanjo<sup>39</sup> who wondered why the mother tongue (MT) or the language of one's immediate community is considered so important at the pre-primary level as an integral part of the child's culture. The author also questioned the link between the home and the school, and the reason it should be "principal" and not "solely" used at this level. Emenanjo also queried "how people identify the language(s) of the immediate community in pluralistic settings like urban centers or international communities like universities.<sup>40</sup> The problem with language is based on how to justify use of three languages when other languages are present, and secondly on how to ensure that the selected languages have enough materials to sustain teaching. For example it has been rightly observed a hitch in adopting an indigenous language as a language of instruction in Nigerian schools is justifying adoption of one indigenous language with about 270 indigenous languages. While all these languages may qualify as instructional tongues for early primary classrooms in Nigeria, it has been noted also that many of the smaller languages have no written orthography, which makes materials production quite difficult.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Olagbaju, O. O. "Multilingual education in Nigeria: Policy, practice, challenges and solutions," *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol.5, No. 6, (2014), 66-73.

<sup>39</sup>Emenanjo E.N. "Language and the national policy on Education: Implications and prospects", 1985. Retrieved on 22nd of February,\2021.Available at <http://fafunwafoundation.tripod.com/fafunwafoundation/id9.html>

<sup>40</sup>Emenanjo E.N. "Language and the national policy on..., 129.

<sup>41</sup>Olagbaju, O. O. "Multilingual education in Nigeria: Policy, practice, challenges and solutions," *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 5, No. 6, (2014), 66-73.

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By and large, agreed with this perception having conducted a study in which teachers indicated that they had a challenge in obtaining enough content and materials in the indigenous language. Hence, it has been argued further that, the way for Nigeria to incorporate fully the indigenous languages is by adopting them fully as official languages and in instruction at different levels of education. Currently, the NPE allows use of indigenous language in lower education levels, but students change to English in secondary and post-secondary.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, as noted by Adegbite (2009), the unequal use of English and indigenous languages in the country is an important contributor to the underdevelopment in Nigeria. The emerging knowledge is that an effective NPE would find a way to balance between the indigenous languages and English, or promote more use of the indigenous languages.<sup>43</sup> The probability would then be useful in adopting a language that would create the platform needed to promote national development.<sup>44</sup>

Underlining the importance of the use of indigenous languages is the notion that they reflect distinctive histories, cultures, and identities that underlie the conceptualization of the society. The identity includes the traditional knowledge of the land. The UNESCO in confirmatory

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<sup>42</sup>Fafunwa, B. "The National policy on Education: Some factors militating against implementation. *Journal of Nigerian Education Research Association* Vol. 4, No.1, (2009), 1-9 Retrieved on February 27th 2021. Available at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234662139>

<sup>43</sup>Adegbite, W. "Languages and the challenges of education in Nigeria," *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association*, Vol.1, No. 4, (2009), 11-28. Retrieved on February 27, 2021. Available at <http://www.nigeriaenglish.org/content/v14/1/adegbite2.pdf>

<sup>44</sup>Ofulue, C. I. "Literacy at a distance in multilingual contexts: Issues and challenges," *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, Vol. 12, (2011), 6. Retrieved June 27, 2021. Available at <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/981/1957>

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asserts that, languages form the baseline of cultural identity, and linguistic diversity is an important part of cultural diversity. Notably, language plays an important part in the progress of the nation including the fight against poverty, hunger and disease and thus needs to be part of the national planning process.<sup>45</sup> Indigenous languages in particular are crucial to preserving indigenous knowledge, because the ability to speak ones native language helps people to be pleased about who they are in relation to themselves, their communities and to creation. The India Control of Indian Education (1972) offers a notable explanation on the importance of indigenous language, asserting that "Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development". It continued to assert that language was not simply a vocal symbol, but a dynamic tool that shaped the way a person thought, looked at his world, and the development of his worldview. Therefore, knowing ones indigenous language was helpful in ensuring a person knew who he was, and became proud of his heritage and language.

However, many African languages have become extinct while the majority of them are on the verge of extinction.<sup>46</sup> It affirms strongly that, "Languages disappear for many reasons, but usually it is because the speakers are pressured to adapt to a more dominant culture. The imposition of the language of the colonialist, chiefly English and French in most African nations no doubt has impacted negatively in the development of the continent". Understandably, Africans and in

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<sup>45</sup>Ofulue, C. I. "Literacy at a distance in multilingual...", 8.

<sup>46</sup>UNESCO (2006) Plan of action world program for human right education: Retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2021. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001478/147853e.pdf>

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particular Nigerians need the colonial languages for interaction with their neighbors and the international community.<sup>47</sup>

To this end therefore, as it has been noted in NPE for Nigeria to interact smoothly with its neighbours, it was appropriate for all Nigerians to learn to use French as the other official language in the country and it should be made compulsory in schools. The author noted that however despite NPE encouraging acquisition of French as another language, only a few public and private primary and secondary schools learn the language. A reason for this is that many schools do not have a qualified French teacher. The availability of teachers and content is a strong contributor to the continued use of English in official and instructional language over others. The quality of the education in primary schools in rural Nigeria is also hampered by failure to use a standardized language of instruction. As language plays an important part in the progress of the nation including the fight against poverty, hunger and disease and thus needs to be part of the national planning process.<sup>48</sup> The national policy on education clearly stipulates that the language of instruction should be that of the immediate environment.<sup>49</sup> The reasoning is that using a language that the learners are conversant with will make the transition from home to school less dramatic and traumatic for the children and equally enhance understanding and comprehension of the learnt concepts. However, it has emerged that the majority of rural primary schools use English as the language of instruction. The other schools use pidgin and the local languages as the language of

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<sup>47</sup>Odukoya, D. "Formulation and implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNCAWA) 2009, Retrieved on February 26, 2021. Available at <http://www.slideshare.net/ernwaca/formulation-and-implementation-of-educational-policies-in-nigeria>

<sup>48</sup>Ofulue, C. I. "Literacy at a distance in multilingual contexts..., 2011.

<sup>49</sup>Federal Ministry of Education "Nigerian education sector diagnosis; a Frame..., 17.

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instruction. In most rural families, English is hardly spoken and in the few homes where the family members speak in English, they hardly use the intelligent and standard form of the language.

### Funding as a problem of education in Nigeria

As reported by The International Organization for Migration (2014), “Funding of education remains a great challenge in Nigeria. This has been a recurring decimal in the national polity. Budget allocation for the education sector falls abysmally below the United Nations’ suggested 26 per cent of the total budget with the total deregulation of the educational sector in Nigeria at all levels, funding remains a great challenge to the sector”<sup>50</sup> Underfunding has greatly affected the dwindling quality of education as lack of adequate funds leads to insufficient supply of essential material and human resources to facilitate achievement of the set educational goals.<sup>51</sup>

The government has to put into consideration the high population growth in order to allocate sufficient funds to cater for the needs of all the children. Limited funding has also led to inability to access learning resources that are up-to-date and of high quality. Learners have to contend with poor quality resources that hardly support educational achievement. In rural Nigeria, there are insufficient textbooks and other critical guides to aid in understanding of the taught concepts. Thus, implementation of the educational policy is pegged on availability of sufficient resources, as this will encourage teacher-learner interaction.

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<sup>50</sup>International Organization for Migration, “Promoting better management of migration in Nigeria. Abuja, 2014. Retrieved on February 25, 2021. Available at <https://nigeria.iom.int/sites/default/files/newsletter/202014.pdf>, 26.

<sup>51</sup>Abidogun..., 2015

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**Another problem is Teachers' problem**

The challenges of teachers are rampant across rural schools in Nigeria. There is poor as well as delayed salaries which have continued to hamper teachers motivation in the rural communities. This trend has resulted in frequent strike action that viciously disrupts the education process. In addition, the poor working conditions also hamper the ability to deliver on their mandate. The majority of the teachers do not like working in rural schools due to these inherent challenges. The teachers posted to such rural schools are not motivated and often treat their jobs as part time engagements. Cases of teacher absenteeism are high, thereby affecting the overall quality in education. The government policy stipulates that every Nigerian teacher should be duly qualified with the minimal certification being the Nigeria Certificate in education.<sup>52</sup>

However, a spot check into the rural primary schools reveals that full compliance to this policy directive is yet to take effect. In certain schools in rural south east Nigeria, teachers with TC11 and WAEC qualifications are still teaching in certain primary schools. Statistics indicate that only about 70% of the teachers have the requisite qualifications to effectively teach in the primary schools.<sup>53</sup> The quality of teachers in Nigeria is relatively low. The teacher plays a critical role in ensuring the potential of all the learners is realized. Indeed, the quality of the teacher is essential in ensuring that the education results of the learners are continually improved. Statistics indicate that right

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<sup>52</sup>Federal Ministry of Education “Nigerian education sector diagnosis; a Frame work for re-engineering the educational sector”, 2005. Retrieved on February 26, 2021. Available at

<http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Nigeria/Nigeria%20Education>

<sup>53</sup>Ike, P. “Problems and politics of educational policies and..., 7.

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from the admission into teacher education programs in the universities and colleges, the teachers are extremely demoralized.<sup>54</sup>

The mandate to place students to different courses lies with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) .The board generally picks students who did not perform exemplary well in the placement exams and thus missed slots in the more competitive courses. This means that the candidates who pursue teacher education are generally of low quality and do so due to lack of alternative professional courses. Primary school teachers lack support from the supervisors and other professional colleagues, thereby contributing to lack of professional accountability. Lack of proper remuneration further compounds the problem of job performance and the retention rates of the teachers are relatively low as the majority move on to other opportunities as soon as they arise.<sup>55</sup> To solve the perennial shortage of staff in the rural schools, the state government had directed that about 75% of the deployed NYSC members had to be posted to the rural schools.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, the government would introduce a special allowance for these officers as a means of motivating them as well as enhancing retention of staff in the rural areas.<sup>57</sup> However, it emerged that the lewd implementation modalities have hampered the enforcement of this policy. Another policy aimed at solving the problem of teacher shortage requires that a teacher does not teach in an urban school for a period

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<sup>54</sup>Aiyamenkhue, E. "The challenges of Nigeria education system and the way forward 2011.Retrieved on February 12, 2021.Available at <http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/78102/1/the-challenges-of-nigeria-education-systemand-the.html>

<sup>55</sup>Aiyamenkhue, E. "The challenges of Nigeria education system and"...12.

<sup>56</sup>Ike, P. "Problems and politics of educational policies and implementation in..., 23.

<sup>57</sup>Federal Ministry of Education "Nigerian education sector diagnosis; a Frame..., 2005.

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exceeding five years.<sup>58</sup> This policy aims at ensuring that even the experienced teachers teach in the rural schools, thereby enhancing education access to virtually all learners. However, the implementation of this policy has been marred by the massive corruption that exists in Nigeria. Teachers bribe to ensure that they remain in the urban schools. In other cases, failure by the ministry officials to strictly implement the policy leads to rampant teacher absenteeism that adversely affects the quality of education in the rural public schools.

### **Poor infrastructure and learning environment**

There is an acute shortage of curricular as well as other instructional materials, textbooks and stationary in the rural Nigerian schools. In some areas, there are no basic infrastructure such as classrooms and thus lessons are undertaken under such unsafe locations as thatched houses or even under trees. There are certain schools without seats and the learners are forced to sit on the floor during their lessons. Other schools lack critical amenities such as toilets, which adversely affects the learning process. Science laboratories, sports equipment, play grounds and workshops are critical facilities which are alien to a majority of the rural primary schools in Nigeria. The undeveloped government institutions as well as infrastructure have also spilled over to the education sector. For example, due to lack of a well-developed transportation network in rural Nigeria, several schools are virtually inaccessible. In addition, the majority of the rural primary schools cannot incorporate E-education, as they have no access to electricity. Such schools cannot benefit from the emerging technologies in a bid to improve on the educational achievements of the learners.

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<sup>58</sup>Federal Ministry of Education “Nigerian education sector diagnosis; a Frame..., 2005.

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### **Prospects for NYSC and Rural Education in Nigeria.**

There is a need for proper funding of the Ministry of Education to actualize its tasks, creating well-articulated program for rural development which will reduce the variation in the administration and performance of rural development program in Nigeria, providing adequate teaching staff that are properly trained and certified, providing teaching aids for imparting quality education and incorporate in curriculum our traditional education which are the cardinal goals for development of the latent physical and intellectual skills.

There is also the need for inculcating respect for elders and those in a position of authority, acquiring specific vocational training and developing a healthy attitude towards honest labour, and understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of the community at large, increasing state and local government commitment and participation, establishing parent rural directorate to make the parents conscious about education and encourage them to send their children to school.

Government should have political consciousness to deal with parents that do not send their children to school, establish police force that will arrest the children of school age that are roaming around during school hours and punish their parents accordingly. The ministry will collaborate with states so that schools can be visited to make sure teachers are discharging their duties. Technical vocational education and training (TVET) should be made available in schools.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Abdulkarim Alhaji Isa et al, "Restructuring School Education in Rural Nigeria: Issues and Challenges" *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume III, Issue XII, December (2019) |ISSN 2454-6186, 2-4.

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### Recommendations

The following recommendations were offered to help the NYSC Scheme consolidate on the gains of community development service:

- Security of lives and properties must be guaranteed so as to sustain the willingness of graduates of tertiary institutions to participate in NYSC Scheme; acceptance of postings to various communities in the nook and cranny of the country; as well as, readiness to play active role in the discharge of community development service in their communities of service.
- Also, adequate monitoring and evaluation should be done to ensure that project funds are properly utilized. This will motivate Corps members to work. Individual Corps members who have personal projects to embark on would be encouraged to do so.
- It is further recommended that commitment of the Scheme's management and proper guidance of Corps members as well as availability of operational facilities and logistics would go a long way in tackling aforementioned challenges confronting the provision of community development services.

### Conclusion

At this juncture, one can conveniently submit that the NYSC Scheme have indeed brought many development in the areas of human integration, education, social and cultural integration amongst several others. This is evident in scores of social, economic and political activities it involves in. For instance, Corps members in the Scheme have been used as staff or/and are regularly invited to participate in the conduct of such sensitive National assignments as it is currently done by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) where they are being used as Ad-hoc staff for various elections across the Nation. The study has established that, the challenges associated with rural education can be holistically addressed if more allocations are made to the educational sector and a special package given to rural teacher as a

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way of encouragement and motivation while joining forces with the NYSC Scheme in delivering quality education to rural communities across Nigerian where Corps members are posted to serve their father land. The chapter concludes that, despite the myriads of challenges that the NYSC Scheme is been faced with, the programme have achieved a lot in the areas of national integration, and towards enhancing peaceful coexistence between and amongst different communities in Nigeria.

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### Introduction

Nigeria, a country located on the western cost of Africa is a home to over 250 ethnic groups, with hundreds languages, and the customs and traditions gives the country great diversity. The three largest ethnic groups are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The official language spoken is English, chosen to facilitate linguistic unity. The diversity has impacted balefully on her socio-political existence. The event of 1966-1970 give to question the unity and continued existence of the country as an

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ethnically partitioned Nation.<sup>1</sup> The Military Government led by General Yakubu Gowon (Rtd.) established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program as a purport of achieving national integration. The development cannot flourish especially in heterogeneous nations. In Nigeria, the need for unity and bridling of all centrifugal force forth with after the Civil War led to the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1973. The Scheme was established as an agency to restore peace after the 30<sup>th</sup> month of Nigerian Civil War. The unfortunate antecedent in the Nation's history gave impetus to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to encourage the spirit of oneness of all Nigerians, irrespective of cultural or social background which contributes to unity, peace and progress of the country.

Education in Nigeria is more of a public enterprise that has witnessed government complete and dynamic interaction and active participation. Education provides individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to advance themselves and their nation socially economically and politically.<sup>2</sup> The establishment of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has immensely contributed to the development of the educational sector. The NYSC scheme was put in place in an effort to bring attention to the social issues of the country and provide solution for them. The fundamental aim of the scheme is to inspire the youths of Nigeria to selflessly serve the communities of the Nation and express the spirit of unity and brotherhood, regardless of culture and social position.<sup>3</sup> The term social issues refer to the various topics and problems that are connected with the society and the people in it.

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<sup>1</sup>National Youth Service Corps, Historical Background, (NYSC, 2012), accessed 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, <http://www.nysc.gov.ng/history2.php>

<sup>2</sup>OduwafowakanBenardAdesina, *The Effect Of National Youth Service Corps Teachers' Input on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Ogun State*, (E-Leader Singapore 2013), p3.

<sup>3</sup> National Youth Service Corps, NYSC Handbook,1999 edition.

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Social issues encompass the educative aspect, the community development activities of Corps member etc.<sup>4</sup>

### Knowledge

Knowledge is familiarity, awareness or understanding of someone or something such as facts, skills or object. The term "knowledge" refers to theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It can be implicit or explicit, formal or informal, systematic or particular.<sup>5</sup> It is also defined as something gained from good education, peers, extensive reading, consultations and life experiences. Dombrowski, explain that there are three (3) kinds of knowledge: a) Experimental Knowledge; this refers to knowledge gained from experience. Experimental knowledge is personal since it can be acquired only through direct interface of our sensory system and then processed by our brain. It is essentially based on perception and reflection. Several people having the same experience may acquire different experimental knowledge since reflecting upon a living experience means integrating it in some previous similar experiences, if they do exist. And knowledge structure. In other words, it is what we get from direct connection with the environment. (b) Skills knowledge; mean capacity to do something well usually acquired or learned. It is also referred to as knowledge about how to do something. It is based on experimental knowledge. They are interconnected and have some specific features and (c) Knowledge Claim are what we know or we think we know. Knowledge claim enable us to learn from each other and built our shared knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>M.A Oyebamiji and InemesitEssietUmofoia, Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities, *international journal of education and evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, 2016, p30

<sup>5</sup> Oxford Dictionary, meaning of Knowledge, Oxford Dictionary 2014, retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021

<sup>6</sup>Dombrowski E, Rotenberg L, Bick M ,*Theory of knowledge*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2013),p38-44.

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### **NYSC and Knowledge Production in the Nigerian Secondary School**

The National Youth Service Corps scheme is a way that the Federal Government has brought education to the communities. This is why most Corps members are posted to schools for their primary assignment. This is the fact that a lot of activities are carried out in the schools. The impact on these young Nigerians is well documented and is specifically felt in the educational and health sector across the country.

NYSC has always played a major role in knowledge production both in rural and urban development. Most of the Corps members are posted to teach in schools with emphasis on rural knowledge production, where their services are most needed. Most Corps members posted to rural schools are zealous and dedicated, more aware of new means and ways of imparting knowledge on the students. In some part of the country, the school system would have collapsed without Corps members because many people in the rural areas are just used to getting things done themselves as most of the teachers are SSCE and NCE holders. With the deployment of NYSC members, seeing the Corps members fresh with in-depth knowledge, discipline and exposure, it boosted the moral of the Teachers in a way to improve better and impart knowledge on the students.

There are some schools where special arrangements were made for Corps members due to shortage of teachers.<sup>7</sup> The teachers are more likely to teach multiple subjects but the deployment of Corps members brought a massive change as Corps members undergo special induction on teaching methodology, class control etc. The NYSC scheme helps in giving 'Handbook' for those posted to teach to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Corps members not only impart knowledge, they also renovate class rooms, laboratories, toilets in schools and inculcate in the students mind the habit of sound health and cleanliness.

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<sup>7</sup>Shuaibu Ibrahim, *NYSC and National Development*,(Abuja: NYSC,2020), Pp26-27  
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The Corps members have immensely contributed to knowledge growth in numerous ways, touching lives at grassroots level through education development group. These include: mass literacy, adult education, that enhance the education standard of host community, career guidance and counselling for students, campaign against illiteracy, girl-child education, extra-mural class for adults, organizing of in-school programme, promotion of culture and tourism. Some of these activities were carved out in Kpakaima Secondary School, Delta State on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, where the students of the school were sensitized on the 'Value of Education' as activities that are good, useful and valuable from education point of view; to understand that education has the greatest value upon their lives.<sup>8</sup> Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know, it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. The ultimate aim of education is to achieve good life.<sup>9</sup>

Education is a basic instrument by which economically and socially relegated adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully in the society as citizens. It is the basic foundation of our society. Education helps to invigorate our minds and mould inquisitive minds into intellectuals .Education is a string that can enable one acquire greatness in life. The students are exposed to ideas that gaining knowledge alone doesn't make one educated and education is complete when we learn how to live and how to behave.<sup>10</sup> Education is self-empowerment. When they receive good education, it helps to work after them in any given situation. In the same vein,

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<sup>8</sup> Happiness Christopher, 25years,Corps member, Kaduna, 15 February,2021.

<sup>9</sup>Nikita Iyer, *Education Values: Meaning, Objectives and Sources*,<https://www.yourarticlerepository.com/education/educationarel-values-meaning->

<sup>10</sup>M.A Oyebamiji and InemesitEssietUmofia, Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities, *international journal of education and evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, 2016, p30

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shading more light on Career, Guidance and Counselling, the students were guided on making choice in terms of hope and future ambitions. This develops into the areas of focus on what they want to study, become and practice in life.

The Students of Government Girls Secondary School Kakuri Kaduna were part of this sensitization program by Corps members' on the importance of the Girl-Child Education .The girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen(18) years of age.<sup>11</sup> This is the age before one becomes a young adult. During this period, the child is capable of being shaped, building and developing the desirable personality and character that is generally acceptable in the society. To have the knowledge that is generally acceptable in the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him or her develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically. It is a process through which individuals are made functional members of their society.<sup>12</sup>To educate means to train the mind, character and abilities of individuals.

Some Corps members that are sent to schools introduced the use of the 'Audio Visual Room' which is an electronic media possessing both a sound and visual component. This helps the teacher to present the lesson effectively. It aids in improving the students critical an analytical thinking .This has greatly added to knowledge as the students were able to experience learning in an effective way. The audio visual method appeals most to the sense and gives a deeper impact as it

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<sup>11</sup>Proshare Intelligent Investing, The value of GIRL-Child education in Nigeria, Retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 <https://www.proshareng.com/news/Education-Knowledge/The-Value-of-Girl-Child-Education-in-Nig>

<sup>12</sup>Proshare Intelligent Investing, The value of GIRL-Child education in Nigeria, Retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 <https://www.proshareng.com/news/Education-Knowledge/The-Value-of-Girl-Child-Education-in-Nig>

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involves greater attention in the act of learning and it helps the child to retain the concept taught through this aid.<sup>13</sup>

However in the aspect of health the Corps members visited schools and communities to enlighten them on health care and how to prevent diseases. In trying to achieve this they conduct educational campaign to raise awareness and improve knowledge of diseases, their system and treatment options. The people of the community and students can only make decisions if they have the right knowledge and information. Awareness played a role in improving access to healthcare. Corps members empower students and communities with information and skills on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support. They also offered free medical care to the communities.

Corps members of the National Youth Service Corps have over the years been contributing to knowledge through publication and distribution of templates to students and members of their host community. Akpanedet Uduak Bassey was a Corps member who served in Kano in 2018-2019 and made a publication on 'Harmful Effect of Excess Food Preservatives'. The work pointed out the danger of excess chemical in food preservatives which are harmful to the body. Foods have many nutrients such as carbohydrate, proteins, minerals or vitamins which produce energy and maintain life. These foods have limited life shelf and in order to maintain their quality, preservatives are used and it may likely be dangerous to human body.<sup>14</sup> This is known as an artificial way of preserving food which is done by unclear radiation, vacuum packing and hypobaric packing. Synesthetic chemicals are used nowadays for food preservatives. It is seen as the most effect way longer shelf life in food and at the same time causes harm to the body. Harm caused by excess food preservatives include;

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<sup>13</sup>National Youth Service Corps,*ABC of Community Development Service*, (Abuja, NYSC 2014),p.5

<sup>14</sup>National Youth Service Corps, "End of Service Year Magazine/Photo Album", Kano,NYSC2019, P11.

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headache, allergies and cancer. Food preservatives are good as it increase the shelf life of food but when the chemical is in excess, it is harmful to the body. The side effect is dangerous as it can result to death. Food is stored for emergency and in order to avoid the damage to health, the Corps members point out natural ways for food preservation.

### **The Role of CDS Groups in knowledge Production in Nigeria**

The contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to national development have recorded a massive impact in the growth and development of the country. The impacts of the Corps members on national development have been felt in diverse sectors of the critical areas of our national life, in which Corps members' contributions to national development are most dominant. The national youth service Corps mobilizes, inducts and develops each year a critical segment of the youth within Nigeria society thereby utilizing the Corps members through available opportunities and support structures.

The Community Development Service (CDS) is a cardinal programme of NYSC which provides Corps members with the platform of rendering humanitarian services. It is through the CDS program that the Corps members of NYSC undertake developmental activities during their one year of national service to improve their host communities in one way or the other. It is compulsory for the Corps members to participate in Community Development Service as part of their contribution to the development of the country.<sup>15</sup>

The 'United Nations', defined Community Development as "an educational method by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate

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<sup>15</sup>National Youth Service Corps, *ABC of Community Development Service*, (Nigeria: NYSC, 2014), P-1

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these communities into the life of the nation, to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.”<sup>16</sup>

The objectives of CDS include;

- Impacting positively on the improvement of rural community life.
- Developing the spirit of entrepreneurship in the Corps members, to utilize the challenges which rural development poses and inculcate in the Nigerian Youth the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism and creativity.
- Providing the forum for Corps members to experiment with ideas and translate them into concrete achievements thereby relying less on foreign technology and encouraging the use of local raw materials in the execution of projects.
- Harnessing the enormous talents and skills of Corps members into an effective machinery of change in our rural communities.
- Providing complementary service in our National development activities, by ensuring that our under-privileged population learn basic techniques for self-help through the appropriate technology concept being promoted by NYSC.
- To instil in Corps members the tradition of the dignity of labour and productivity and to complement the activities of government at all levels in the stride towards national development.<sup>17</sup>

The CDS also requires that Corps members use their acquired skills to provide services like education, health care delivery, rural infrastructural and community development, agriculture, science and technology, and enlightenment campaign for the benefit of their host

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<sup>16</sup>United Nations, *Education Sector Reform in Nigeria: A Change Management Challenge*, (Nigeria: UNESCO Abuja Publication, 2006), P-31

<sup>17</sup>National Youth Service Corps, *ABC of Community Development Service*, (Nigeria: NYSC, 2014), P-1

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community. In ensuring the success of the CDS, NYSC trains the Corps Members to be dedicated and enthusiastic irrespective of the challenges they might face in so far as they are not life threatening.<sup>18</sup>

The Community Development Service has impacted positively on the host communities all around the country. Corps members intermingle and appreciate one another's culture and background. Corps members are encouraged to make observations, identify the needs of the community and attempt to fix it based on capacity either as an individual or as a group after following the due process and approval. The goal of this group is to improve the economic, health, political and socio cultural condition of the host communities.<sup>19</sup>

There are several Community Development Services designed to actualize the objectives of NYSC in diverse ways. One among the groups is the 'Gender Vanguard', the one referred to as the most noble of them all. A Corps member of Kano State Batch B, 2018, by the name Yusuf Akeem wrote an article on the activities of his CDS group Gender vanguard. A member of the group had been committed to the mission of the CDS that is bridging the gap between both sex by sensitizing the general public regularly on equality of both male and female child through series of awareness program. The members of the group visited schools, they sensitize the students on the evil effect of drug abuse and personal hygiene. Also, they visited hospitals such as Aminu

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<sup>18</sup>Dereck Osadere Arubayi, Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development, *School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester*, 2015, p90

<sup>19</sup>M.A Oyebamiji and InemesitEssietUmofia, Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities, *international journal of education and evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, 2016, p32.

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Kano Teaching Hospital, donated drugs and other items to the less privileged. Another project carried out by the Gender Vanguard is with the caption 'Yes we can pad a girl child'. it is aimed at providing a sanitary pad for the vulnerable and less privilege girl child.<sup>20</sup>

One of the outstanding contributions of CDS programme to knowledge production in Nigeria comes through the Education development CSD group. This group has for years been executing projects and conducting programmes that add to knowledge in many instances. In 2019, the education development group CDS in Kano mobilized money and paid the school fees of seven (7) orphans. This same group also trained one hundred and fifty (150) students from school of Arabic Studies, Halal College and Rumfa College all in Kano on computer operation and information technology. This will no doubt enhance the students brain capacity and also expose them to digital learning as it is fast spreading in the world.<sup>21</sup>

The Education Development CDS group also organized health talk which include good hygiene management, menstrual hygiene and prevention strategies of common disease such as; Malaria, and Typhoid fever. Corps Members had carried out projects like sensitization on adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, adult literacy campaign, extra-mural classes for students and road safety campaign among many others. The mass literacy education becomes a campaign when offered to the masses of people. The primary purpose of the mass literacy in Nigeria is to enable every illiterate citizen to acquire skills of reading, writing and numeracy that will help to function in his or her environment. This is intended to liberate the people from the illiteracy in Nigeria. Towards seeking for solutions, the government in Nigeria identified itself with the effort at eradicating illiteracy by rendering

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<sup>20</sup>National Youth Service Corps, *End of Service Year Magazine/Photo Album (Kano, NYSC)*, 2019, P10.

<sup>21</sup>National Youth Service Corps..., P11.

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supports in the establishment of adult literacy classes and vocational skill acquisition training the provision of teaching and materials. Adult literacy cannot be left out when talking about mass literacy.<sup>22</sup> An adult in this case is someone in the Nigerian context who is mentally, physically, socially and psychologically mature and who is able to manage his own affairs. Adult literacy therefore has to do with the ability of an individual (man or woman) to read, write and communicate in known languages. Adult literacy is a tool that can equip individuals to improve themselves intellectually, to empower themselves economically, socially, and politically relevant. The Corps members in this case work hand in hand with the component which is Reading, Writing, Mathematics, English and Cultural literacy.<sup>23</sup> The reason for greater emphasis on adult literacy is that this category of citizens deserves serious attention so that they cannot only contribute to the socio-economic and political growth of the nation but also improve their welfare and lives. These forms of functional educational are given to youths and adults outside formal school system. In recent times, the NYSC in collaboration with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant on Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP-MDGs) of the Presidency and other international partners (World Bank and the British Council) embarked on training of young Corps volunteers as Development Knowledge Facilitators (DKFs). The role of the DKFs is to act through their CDS program as advocates of the MDGs and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. It is important to note that the Community Development Service program and projects

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<sup>22</sup> J.C. Ihejirika, A Pre-View of Government Efforts in Promoting Mass Literacy in Nigeria: Lessons from Adult Education Historical Research,*Journal of Education and Practice* Vol. 4 No, 4

<sup>23</sup> M.A Oyebamiji and InemesitEssietUmoфia, Influence of the Activities of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme on Knowledge of Social Issues in Host Communities, *international journal of education and evaluation*, Vol.2, No.1, 2016, p30

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are largely centered on the education sector being the key area of social integration and knowledge transfer.<sup>24</sup>

The Cultural and tourism group (Band, Dance, Drama and Tourism) is designed to showcase the art and culture of Nigeria. Corps members are expected to help illuminate the history, culture and heritage of their host community. They also represent their states in the national competition organized by NYSC. They create awareness on tourism, identify talent creation of club and entertainment.

Environmental protection group: Through this CDS group, Corps members create awareness on sustainable environment management and regeneration. They plant trees, sanitation, drainage control and erosion control. A Corps member of this group who served in Maikatako Bokkos Local Government Area in Jos, Batch A 2017, tell the activities of the group and how they contribute to people in the communities. As a group, they went to Bokkos market and embarked on sanitizing the market and the Local Government Secretariat. They bought brooms and trash cans.<sup>25</sup>

The sporting events organized in schools by Corps members improve knowledge on social issues. By enlightening the youths on healthy lifestyle through participation in one form of physical activities and identify talents. The activities are; organizing sport competition, participating in sports competitions and identifying and training members of the community.

Agriculture is another important sector of NYSC. The Agro-allied NYSC CDS group established different agricultural ventures and farm house equipped with modern implements to promote better food production

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<sup>24</sup> Adebola H.E and Agusiobo P.A, The Role of NYSC In The Delivery of Adult Education Programme In Nigeria, Unizik Orient Journal of Education, 2013, p78

<sup>25</sup> Joshua Hussaini, Corps member,28 years,kaduna,22/02/2021.

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and security. Corp members teach communities new farming techniques.

The Corps members have greatly influenced the aspect of entrepreneurship among host communities. Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted and multidisciplinary with roots in economics, psychological, sociology, skill acquisition and management (Carlson etal; 2013).<sup>26</sup> It is the bedrock of development aspiration of most developed nation. The scheme aimed at uniting and improving skills of the youths. The Corps members use the knowledge gained from NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development to improve the life of their host communities through awareness and sensitization on skills acquisition and the reality that only about 10% of the Nigerian workforce has a wage, around 38% work in agriculture and 52% are self-employed. However, in the current situation of the country, one cannot depend on livelihood from experience gained within the four corners of the school classroom. There is need to acquire skill in entrepreneurship, business innovations as part of active means and source of living. The students were engaged in skill acquisition training in different aspect of entrepreneurship which includes; production of liquid soap, shoes, bags, beads making, catering services etc as a dependable means of living and productivity contributing to the growth and development of the country.

### Conclusion

The NYSC scheme has recorded achievements in all facets of our national development. It greatly reduced the tension of the tragic Civil War in Nigeria, unifying national emblem of our diverse multi ethnic society. Over the years, the scheme has proven to become an agent of peace, unity and integration, building and promoting peace and harmony amongst the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The scheme

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<sup>26</sup> Mike ChikeNwosu, *Youth Entrepreneurship Among University Graduates In Anambra State, (Nigeria 2019)*, p26.

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outlived many upheavals and impacted positively on the development of the country. The NYSC scheme through the Corps members has immensely contributed to knowledge in different aspects of their activities. The Federal Government has taken great steps to improve the level of literacy in the country through educational programmes, instructions and mass media. The NYSC scheme is one of the ways Federal Government developed education in the country. This is supported by a lot of community development projects carried out in schools. The knowledge imparted is particularly felt in education and health institutions.

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# 16

## **Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim: An Overview of His Achievements as 18th NYSC Director-General**

Bem Japhet Audu  
and  
Maryam Hamza

### **Introduction**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has attained tremendous height since the assumption of office by Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim as the Director General (DG) of the Scheme. This is not surprising, given the fact that Gen Ibrahim is a thoroughbred military administrator, who combines scholarship, emotional intelligence and finesse in his administrative duties. His experiences cut across administration in the

Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:

military and civil establishments, which combination have accelerated the pace of the modest service rendered to the NYSC.

Key issues that confronted the Scheme upon his assumption of office include the need to sustain the relevance of the NYSC in a fast-changing world; second, inadequate motivation and welfare for Corps Members and staff of the Scheme. The third was the challenge of unemployment among the youths after the mandatory one year national service.

Gen Ibrahim's track record as a visionary leader readily came to play in tackling these challenges. He initiated a five-point policy thrust to address them. These five-point policy thrust include the following:

- ❖ Sustain effective utilisation of the potentials of Corps Members for optimal benefit;
- ❖ Strengthen existing collaborations with critical stakeholders;
- ❖ Improve on the welfare and security of Corps Members and staff;
- ❖ Pursue a technologically driven organisation to deepen effective service delivery;
- ❖ Reinvigorate the NYSC Ventures and SAED in line with the NYSC Act for greater impact.

It is against this backdrop that this essay examines the achievements of Gen Ibrahim as Director General of the NYSC, using a descriptive approach and evidence -- based study. The paper argues that Gen Ibrahim has not only transformed the NYSC, but has also repositioned it to benefit the Corps Members, members of staff and indeed, the nation at large.

The assumption here is that leadership is a process of galvanising resources to attain group goals. Gen Ibrahim's leadership style has led to the transformation of the NYSC by strengthening the institution, in terms of welfare, security, innovations and technological advancement. Despite these laudable achievements, there have equally been

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challenges. The Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic threatened to derail the activities of the Scheme. As an astute administrator, he rose to the occasion through a robust coordinated response to manage the pandemic that has become a reference point and template for other establishments in the country.

### **Towards a Biography of General Ibrahim: Trends in his Academic, Military and Administrative Career**

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim (Associate Professor), was born on the 13th July, 1967 and hails from Nasarawa Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. He attended the famous University of Jos where he obtained Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in History (1989 and 1992 respectively), before proceeding to bag a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education from Tai Solar in University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. Driven by his tenacity to acquire knowledge, he went on to obtain a Ph.D in History from the University of Abuja in 2007.

Since his commissioning into the Nigerian Army, he has served in various capacities in military formations across the country. His appointments and postings include: The Institute of Army Education (Research Officer). Researched and produced Nigerian Army Journals and Briefs for the Nigerian Army in particular, and the Military in general; NYSC (Military Assistant to the Director General) 1997-1999; Nigerian Defence Academy (Taught 100 and 200 Levels 2000-2004; National Defence College (Staff Officer I Military History 2004-2009; Headquarters Nigerian Army School of Education (Senior Instructor) 2009-2011; Commandant Command Secondary School, Suleja 2012-2014; Nigerian Defence Academy (Head of Department, History and War Studies), 2015-2018; and Registrar, Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno State(2018-2019).

Brigadier General S Ibrahim is a scholar of high repute, who authored, co-authored, edited, co-edited and contributed articles/chapters to numerous books and academic Journals.

Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:

Despite his tight schedule, Brig Gen S Ibrahim still devotes time to academic work, including the supervision of students' thesis and dissertations, serving as Internal and External Examiner of Master's Students at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim was appointed 18th Director General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), and assumed the leadership of the Corps on 10th May, 2019. This ushered in a transformation era for the Scheme which has not only been a source of immense benefit to the Service Corps, but the entire country in general.

The General also had a cluster of completed courses in the military, and excelled in these courses. Brig Gen Ibrahim is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and War Studies, Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna. These feats in both military and academic trainings, as well as experience in service are what marked him out as a visionary, seasoned and ingenious administrator.

Since assumption of duty as the Director General of the NYSC, the media has been awash with burgeoning records of his strides. His vision for the Scheme informed his decision to roll out a five-point policy thrust, geared towards utilising the potentials of the Corps Members maximally. Since assumption of duty at the NYSC, his pragmatic leadership skill has set the Scheme on the path of rejuvenation and continuous relevance. Like his predecessors, he came up with robust and ambitious programmes, aimed at repositioning the Scheme as a self-sufficient and revenue -- generating government organisation.

This chapter will attempt an appraisal of the delivery of these specific goals by the administration of Gen S Ibrahim within a short period of two years, in spite of the huge challenges facing the Scheme.

Sustain effective utilisation of the potentials of Corps Members for optimal benefit.

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The successful conduct of the 2019 NYSC Sports and Cultural Festivals is a remarkable achievement of the Director General in harnessing the huge potentials of the Corps Members for national development. The NYSC Sports and Cultural Festivals serve as one of the veritable avenues through which the Scheme promotes national unity, cultural integration, as well as showcasing the abundant talents of Corps Members in the areas of sports and culture for gainful employment in the sports and film industries. The Festivals were revived by the present management. The grand finale was held in Abuja. Not only that, measures were put in place to ensure that the event holds annually.

Another success of the NYSC Director General is the production of an NYSC movie titled "A Call to Service" currently undergoing post production work. Apart from its entertainment value, the movie is being packaged to create public awareness on the roles of stakeholders to the Scheme. These stakeholders include the three tiers of government, Corps employers, as well as serving and prospective Corps Members. Ultimately, the film will promote better understanding of the Scheme to the public, in addition to sensitising them on their expected roles to the Scheme.

Another noteworthy achievement of the Director General is the establishment of NYSC National Cultural Troupe. This initiative is to provide a veritable platform for Corps Members to develop their talents in drama and cultural dance, while also eliciting public support towards harnessing such talents through private and corporate patronage. Remarkably, the NYSC Cultural Troupe will also shore up the revenue base of the Scheme through its activities which will be commercialised.

In the same vein, the NYSC Director General has successfully organised a National Anti-Corruption Walk. This is in furtherance of the NYSC's contributions to the fight against corruption through the activities of the Corps Anti-Corruption and Integrity CDS Group. The programme involved the participation of thousands of Corps Members in the first ever nationwide rally/road walk organised by the Economic and

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Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development on 14th February, 2020. The Director-General personally joined the Corps Members and officials in Kano State for the rally, which was tagged "Nigerian Youths March Against Corruption."

This action further boosted the commitment of the NYSC in eradicating corruption and promotion of good moral and ethical values in the country.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic nearly crippled the global socio-economic activities and did not spare the Scheme. The 2020 Batch "A" Orientation Course was suspended barely eight days into the programme. However, the ever resourceful and proactive Director General challenged the creative ingenuity of Corps Members who responded appropriately to the challenge by producing non-pharmaceutical intervention materials such as face-mask, liquid soap, alcohol - based hand sanitiser and donated same to the indigent populace across the length and breadth of the country.

Under the leadership of Gen Ibrahim, the NYSC has also carried out public awareness campaigns on containment measures for the dreaded virus. The initiative of the Director General was later adopted by some public institutions.

Another innovative contribution of the NYSC in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is the fabrication of foot-operated water, liquid soap and hand sanitizer dispenser by individual Corps Members in several States.

For instance, Babatunde Dolapo Dayo and Sebe Godspower - Abia State; Abdullahi Sani - Kano; Abdulsalam Abubakar and Obiefuna Ebuka - Kwara; Adeyanju Adeyemi, Afolabi Victor, Ogunmoye Victor - Oyo and Onyekwere Chiwotaoke - Zamfara and Ilori Deborah - FCT were among the Corps Members that fabricated and donated the devices.

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In addition, Corps Members, acting on the platform of Charity CDS/SDGs Group, have been contributing towards mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 at the grassroots, through the donation of food and other relief items to State and Local Governments, as well as indigent members of the society. These strategies by the Director General paved the way for the Scheme to obtain approval from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to resume full operations, especially the Orientation Course.

Relatedly, several Corps Members on teaching assignment also contributed towards sustaining the educational progress of their students by adopting virtual teaching approach while schools remained closed as a result of the pandemic.

As per the pursuit of a technologically-driven organisation to deepen effective service delivery, the Director-General recently conducted the first ever video conference with the 2021 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Corps Members in all the 37 Orientation Camps. It was an avenue to interface with thousands of Corps Members simultaneously, in line with COVID-19 safety protocols. He has sustained this initiative by periodically holding virtual meetings with serving Corps Members, as well as NYSC State Coordinators across the country.

It is gratifying to disclose that the Director General's interface with National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has ensured the equipping of the NYSC Rivers Secretariat with computers by the agency. That singular gesture has in no small measure deepened the proficiency of Corps Members and staff members in the area of Information technology.

The Chief Executive introduced the inscription of date of birth on the Certificate of National Service and Exclusion Letter, beginning with the 2019 Batch "A" Corps Members and 2019 Batch "C" respectively. This is in a bid to check the manipulation of date of birth by ineligible persons seeking mobilisation for National Service, and it has had a positive

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effect in checkmating the falsification of records for employment, visa, political appointments, among others.

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim conceptualised and designed a state-of-the-art ICT Office for the Scheme. The design had already been forwarded to the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) and Federal Ministry of Works and Housing for approval. The cost of construction was appropriated in the 2021 Budget, and the Scheme is awaiting the release of funds for its commencement.

Other laudable efforts by Gen Ibrahim to deepen effective service delivery include, the development of a Five-Year Strategic Development Plan for the Scheme, review of the NYSC Composite Policy Document and documentation of the activities of the Scheme, all aimed at positioning the Scheme as a research hub for academics and the general public.

Under his watch, the Federal Government drafted the NYSC into the Presidential Steering Committee on Alternate School Programme. The inclusion of the Corps in the Committee is in recognition of the invaluable contributions of the Scheme to national development, particularly in the sphere of Education.

NYSC is a repository of talents, parading the most enlightened class of Nigerian youths, who in forty - eight years of the Scheme's existence have continued to make varying degrees of multi-sectoral contributions to the growth and well-being of the nation.

Therefore, the inclusion of the Scheme, whose visibility has been top-notch in the last two years as member of the Mambila Hydro Power Project speaks on the high premium the Federal Government places on the Corps.

Undoubtedly, membership of these august bodies have clearly underscored the high pedestal the Director General has taken the Scheme in his two years of his eventful and remarkable administration.

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In respect of improving the welfare and security of Corps Members and staff, in a rare demonstration of empathy and commitment to the welfare of Corps Members, the Director General personally visited and encouraged Corps Member Saidu Mohammed Adamu, who was admitted at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, as a result of gunshot injuries that he sustained while on election duties during the recent bye-election held in Ekiti East Local Government Area of Ekiti State in March 2021.

Similar visits were also paid to several members of the Service Corps on admission in hospitals in Sokoto, Katsina, Edo, Plateau, Taraba and Kwara States, among others, following their involvement in road traffic accidents.

The Director General has also paid condolence and reassuring visits to the families of deceased and missing Corps Members in Plateau, Kaduna and Edo States. Such gestures have increased the confidence of Corps Members and their families in the Scheme, and have also engendered more zeal for patriotic service by the members of the Corps.

The Director General further demonstrated his commitment to Corps welfare by procuring prosthetic limbs for a Corps Member in furtherance of his welfare policy. The sum of Thirty-two Million Naira (N32,000,000.00) was expended to procure the limbs for Corps Member, Nuraddeen Tahir from Kano State, who, along with other Corps Members, was involved in a road traffic accident, while on his way to report for Primary Assignment after the 2019 Batch 'B' Stream 1 Orientation Course in Taraba State. The Corps Member, who had earlier lost an arm at a younger age, had the other one amputated as a result of the accident. The artificial limbs have already been supplied, while Nuraddeen was trained on the effective use of the limbs before he was re-united with his family. With this development, he can now effectively perform normal tasks such as writing with the limbs.

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The Director General relentlessly pursued the issue of increment of Corps Members' allowance in the wake of approval of the new National Minimum Wage. His effort paid-off and the allowance of Corps Members was increased from Nineteen thousand, Eight hundred Naira (N19,800.00) to Thirty-three Thousand Naira (N33,000.00). Following the commencement of the payment of the new rate with effect from January 2020, the Director General along with the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development and some representatives of Corps Members paid a "Thank-you" visit to His Excellency, the President and Commander-in-Chief, Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari GCFR on 6th February, 2020 at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Following improvement in the security situation in the country, the Director General sought for, and got approval from the Federal Government for a return to the earlier suspended ceremonial passing-out of Corps Members. Accordingly, the Passing-Out Ceremony of the 2019 Batch 'A' Corps Members was marked with colourful parades nationwide, thereby increasing the visibility of the NYSC.

The successful conduct of Orientation courses is also another achievement of the Director General as he oversaw the successful conduct of the 2019 Batch 'B' Streams I and II, as well as 2019 Batch 'C' Streams I and II Orientation Courses.

As a proactive measure, NYSC Management suspended the 2020 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Orientation Course just a week into the exercise as a deliberate effort to avert the spread of COVID-19 in the Orientation Camps. The commendable action equally brought to the fore his concern for the health and general well-being of Corps Members and staff.

In recognition of his efforts at curtailing the spread of COVID-19, Victims Support Funds (VSF), an organisation chaired by Lt Gen TY Danjuma donated 60,000 RDT test kits to the Scheme. The kits are used

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for the screening of prospective Corps Members and camp officials for COVID-19 in NYSC Orientation camps nationwide.

In his quest to expand the administrative structure of the Scheme, the Director General ensured the smooth take - off of the NYSC Area Offices, whose approval had earlier been secured by the immediate past administration of Gen Kazaure, one in each of the six geo-political zones of the country, headed by a Director on salary grade level 17. This feat has opened up more vacancies, allowing for posting of other cadre of staff alongside the Directors to man the Offices. The Area Offices are located in Kaduna (North West), Niger (North Central), Bauchi (North East), Enugu (South East), Osun (South West) and Delta (South South) have since taken off and have in no mean way boosted staff morale and operations of the Scheme.

In line with one of the cardinal points of his policy thrust, the Director General has been pursuing policies that are geared not only towards motivating staff, but also promoting industrial harmony in the Scheme. This has been aptly demonstrated through prompt payment of entitlements, capacity building programmes, as well as timely and transparent conduct of promotion examinations. During the 2020 Promotion Exercise for instance, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighteen (1,718) out of the Two Thousand One Hundred Fifty-One (2,151) officers that participated in the event were elevated to the next grade level after meeting the requirements stipulated in the Public Service Rules and NYSC Conditions of Service. Additionally, the 2021 Senior Staff Promotion Examination recorded a huge success. The impact of these promotion exercises has reinforced the commitment of staff to work for an enhanced performance.

Meanwhile, as Management strives to enhance the motivation of staff, much premium is laid on the need to have a highly disciplined workforce. In this regard, officers who commit infractions are reprimanded in line with the provisions of the Public Service Rules (PSR).

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On strengthening the existing collaboration with critical stakeholders, on assumption of office, the Director General saw the dire need to sustain and strengthen the existing collaboration with critical stakeholders to garner more support and involve them in the management of the Scheme. He therefore embarked on advocacy visits to the stakeholders such as the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, whose administration founded the Scheme. The Director-General has had interface with the 36 State Governors, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, heads of Security and Anti-Corruption Agencies, Federal Road Safety Corps, among other stakeholders. The impact of this initiative is the improvement already being achieved in stakeholders' support to the Scheme which is of great essence.

The Director General also addressed a meeting of the Nigeria Governors' Forum – the first of such engagement by any Chief Executive of the Scheme. He used the occasion of the meeting to appreciate the State Governors for their support to the Scheme, through various intervention projects in their respective States. He drew their attention to other areas that needed to be addressed, being part of the obligations of the State Governments to the Corps, as spelt out in the NYSC Act.

Consequently the hosting of the meeting of NYSC top Management with the representatives of State Governments and the Federal Capital Territory Administration, a fallout of the meeting with the Governor's Forum is aimed at strengthening the collaboration with the Scheme, with a particular focus on the discharge of the statutory obligations of the States and FCT to the NYSC, as spelt out in its enabling Act.

The impact of the meeting is profound, as several State Governments have made remarkable gestures in support of the Scheme. Prominent among them is the donation of two NYSC permanent Orientation camps by Edo and Anambra States, plans by the Lagos State Government to build a 14,000 -- capacity Orientation camp and the ongoing upgrading and rehabilitation of camp facilities in twenty five States, while the

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expansion of camp facilities has commenced in nine States to meet the 5,000 -- Corps Member and 500 -- course official -- capacity camp.

Other notable gains derived from the meeting include, constitution of functional NYSC State Governing Boards in seventeen States, with eighteen States enhancing the regular payment of state allowance to Corps Members, provision and upgrading of transit camps for Corps Members in thirty -- one states, provision of watertight security for Corps Members in all the States and the FCT, issuance of circulars by State Governments against the rejection of Corps Members, increased partnership with the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), provision of decent accommodation or payment of allowance in lieu of that to Corps Members and provision of office and residential accommodation by the States hosting the Headquarters of the Area Offices.

In Promoting NYSC/Media relations, the Director General has since assumption of duty, strived to strengthen the cordial relations the Scheme enjoys with the Media. This, he kick-started with his maiden chat with Editors, Bureau Chiefs and Youth Correspondents of various Media Organisations in the country on 15th August, 2019. Brig Gen S Ibrahim also paid courtesy visits to Media offices in Abuja, including the Headquarters of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Media Trust Limited and Leadership Group Limited. Similar visits with Director-General's directive were also made to Lagos Head Offices of The Punch, Daily Sun, The Nation newspapers, among others. He has consistently maintained his Media-friendly posture, thereby attracting wider publicity for the Scheme's activities.

To deepen and sustain the wide publicity that the Scheme has enjoyed, he has resuscitated the production and airing of the NYSC Half Hour programme on NTA International Channel 251 and Armed Forces Radio FM. So far, plans have reached an advanced stage to establish the first ever NYSC FM Radio that will be useful to adequately drive the

Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:

publicity efforts of the Scheme and showcase its activities to Nigerians and the entire world.

The Director-General in furtherance of his transparent, inspirational and all-inclusive style of administration paid visits to some former Chief Executives of the Scheme. The gesture was aimed at appreciating their respective contributions to the development of Scheme when they were in the saddle of leadership, and also tap into their vast wealth of experience. The former Chief Executives appreciated the initiative as it was the first ever visit paid simultaneously to them.

The maiden meeting with the Registrars of some Foreign Corps Producing Institutions was also held, having, uncovered the fraudulent activities of some tertiary institutions in Africa, especially in the West Africa sub region which have the penchant to issue questionable academic certificates to unqualified persons, who in turn present same to get mobilised for national service. The Director-General has commenced an aggressive fight against this menace which has earned him the commendation of the President, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, during his address at the 2018/2019 President's NYSC Honours Award Ceremony. Similar commendations were given to him by a broad spectrum of vice chancellors of some indigenous and foreign institutions, including the Honourable Minister of Education.

In addition to hosting the meeting with the Registrars, internal mechanisms have been put in place for easier detection of unqualified persons attempting to present themselves for mobilisation for service. As a result of the stance of Management, some of the foreign institutions are now volunteering to alert NYSC of suspected fraudulent practices by their students. Interestingly, out of over twenty thousand (20,000) persons who registered online as foreign-trained prospective Corps Members of the 2019 Batch 'C' Service Year, only three thousand, four hundred and twenty (3,420) turned up for the pre-mobilisation physical screening of their credentials.

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To serve as a deterrent to others, sixty-five (65) unqualified persons arrested during the 2019 Batch 'B' Stream II Orientation Course in camps across the country are being prosecuted with some convictions already secured. These steps taken by Management have helped to create national awareness, especially on the need for parents and guardians to check the accreditation status of the institutions attended by their wards, and also monitor their academic progress.

The bold move by the Director General in sanitising the mobilisation process will also ensure that only well trained and competent persons occupy critical positions that will fast-track the development of the country.

The Director-General has equally hosted a national sensitisation programme on the NYSC Act on 24th July, 2019 in Abuja. Prior to this, it was clear that many Nigerians were not aware of the provisions of the Act – a situation that has led to avoidable infractions. With the sensitisation, which is still on-going, organisations and individuals are now having better understanding of their obligations to the Scheme. In particular, cases of evasion and abscondment from Service, especially by the foreign-trained Nigerian graduates, are expected to reduce drastically.

Broadly looking at the reinvigoration of the NYSC ventures and skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development programme in line with NYSC Act for greater impact, the Director General has been speaking passionately about his desire to make the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) Programme and NYSC Ventures Management Departments more functional.

To match words with actions, he has taken several steps towards reinvigorating the SAED programme, including, but not limited to the following:

- Renewal of commitment by the NYSC and Bank of Industry towards the resuscitation of empowerment of Corps entrepreneurs with business loans under the BOI-NYSC Graduate Empowerment Fund.

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- Intensive monitoring of GEF beneficiaries.
- New collaboration with NIRSAL Microfinance Bank on empowerment of Corps entrepreneurs.
- New partnership with Unity Bank Plc on a programme named 'Allawee' aimed at empowering Corps members.
- Collaboration with British-American Tobacco Foundation on empowerment of Corps Members with agricultural skills and business trainings, farm internship, mentoring and farm input supplies.
- Hosting of the 2020 NYSC SAED Stakeholders meeting aimed at reviewing the programme implementation strategies, as well as strengthening of existing partnerships and exploring new ones for further technical and material support.
- Pursuing the completion of the North West Skill Acquisition Centre in Kazaure, Jigawa State, this is now at advanced stage.
- Commencement of work on the North Central Skill Acquisition Centre in Keffi, Nasarawa State.
- Research-based collaboration with OAU-NACETEM sponsored by a Canadian Agency, International Development Research Centre on evaluation of the impact of SAED and reinvigorating it for greater impact.
- Resuscitation of NYSC Water Factory and Bakery at NYSC Orientation Camp Kubwa. The NYSC Water Factory and Bakery were revived and revitalised by the Director-General immediately he assumed office, and these two ventures are now producing at full capacity. The water and bread produced in these ventures are being supplied to the FCT, Nasarawa, Kogi, Kaduna and Niger State Orientation camps and the general public. These ventures now generate revenue to the Scheme and help Corps Members acquire skills too.
- Purchase of modern farm equipment for the four NYSC functional farms namely, NYSC Farm Kwali in FCT, Saminaka, Kebbi State, Dungulbi, Bauchi State and Iseyin Oyo State. Each of these farms now has tractors and other basic farm equipment.

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- The consistent support in terms of funding and staffing has increased the hectares under cultivation from 60 hectares to 160 hectares during the 2020 farming season.
- Reclaiming of NYSC farmland at Ezillo which hitherto was collected by the Ebonyi State Government. Immediately after the reclaiming, tractor was purchased for farming operations at the Ezillo Farm.
- The structure of Ventures Management Department was expanded which gave room for the promotion of staff, and has in no mean way motivated the staff members.
- Registration of the two NYSC Garment Factories, Water Factory and Bakery with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Arising from the last Meeting of the NYSC Top Management with Representatives of State Governments, the Governors of Edo and Ekiti States announced the donation of land for the siting of two garment factories which will boost the production of Corps Members' kit items.
- Developing partnership with relevant institutions such as International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA), NCRI, NCAM, ARMTI, NCAC etc. to enhance the productivity of NYSC Farms/Ventures among others.
- Resuscitation of moribund NYSC Feedmill, Lagos. The mill is now ready to start production of animal feeds.
- Construction of new poultry pen at NYSC farm Kwali, FCT.
- The Director General has met with the State Governors and other stakeholders with a view to securing land in all the States for agricultural production.

In addition to the above, twelve States have opened up their skills centres for the post camp training of Corps Members to further strengthen the skills and entrepreneurship training acquired in camp.

- The tremendous support given by the Director General has repositioned all the NYSC Ventures for greater revenue generation for the Scheme.

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Interestingly, the Scheme paid into the national coffers over Two Hundred and Eighty Million Naira (N280,000,000.00) as internally generated revenue which is unprecedented in the annals of the Scheme.

The Director General who has introduced the use of name tags by every member of staff for easy identification, equally in an unprecedented move sought the help of the Federal Government in tackling the ecological challenges confronting some of the NYSC Orientation camps. Government granted the request through the deployment of Ecological Fund to tackle the menace. Eight camps have been approved as beneficiaries in the first phase of the intervention. Already, work is ongoing in Cross River, Taraba, FCT and Nasarawa Orientation camps.

In recognition of his service to the nation, Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim who has institutionalised Farewell Parade for outgoing NYSC Chief Executives - a novelty, has received numerous commendations and awards which include:

- Chief of Army Staff Award as the Overall Best Participant for 2013 NAEC Executive Management Course.
- Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) Special Recognition Award 2014.
- Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Public Service/Fellowship (FCAI) by Institute of Corporate Administration.
- Professional National Award (Historical Society of Nigeria HSN) and
- Chief of Army Staff Commendation Letter 2018.

### **Conclusion**

The above discourse has given an insight on the achievements of General Shuaibu Ibrahim since becoming the Director General of the National Youth Service Corps. Within the last two years, the Scheme has made some giant strides owing to the pursuit of strict implementation of the Director General's five-point policy thrust. Therefore, the

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contributions of Brig Gen Ibrahim to the NYSC since his ascension into office cannot be overemphasised. These contributions are indeed remarkable, and will undoubtedly stand the test of time, having set the Scheme on growth trajectory and continuous relevance.

Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:

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### **Oral Interview**

Interviews with NYSC Coordinator

Jibril Umar, Head of Ventures Kubwa, 50+, Interviewed at Kubwa Abuja, 15/3/21

Emeka -- Rems Mgbemena, Deputy Director and Head, Publications Division, Press and Public Relations Unit, NYSC National Directorate Headquarters, Abuja, 50+, Interviewed at Abuja, 15/3/21

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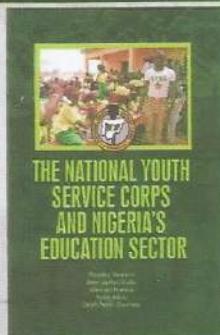
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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Education is a vital system through which human society attains changes and evolves advancement. The National Youth Service Corps NYSC paid attention to education since its inception and have impacted the Nigerian educational sector in various ways. The impact of the scheme on education has been tremendous as it has become the most dependable source of manpower supply to post-primary and tertiary institutions in the country overtime. The extension of NYSC educational programmes to education sector covered several rural communities and even some in the urban settlements. Annually, over 60 percent of corps members serve their primary assignments in educational institutions where they are adjudged to have performed creditably as instructors, counsellors and motivators of the younger and upcoming Nigerians under their care and training. This move by the NYSC have been acknowledged by the successive governments and even the Buhari administration. The relevance of NYSC in the educational sector continued to manifest in the annual engagement of corps members at the various educational levels in Nigeria. The book, The National Youth Service Corps and Nigeria's Education Sector traverse the monumental achievements of the NYSC in its contributions to the educational sector and also examines the challenges associated with its' participation.



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