

Manpower Development in a Fast-Changing World: Higher Education for Sustainable Development

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This study examines the role of higher education in manpower development in a fast-changing world for sustainable development. It explores the challenges posed by rapid changes in technology, globalization, and societal dynamics, and the need for higher education institutions to adapt to these changes. The study discusses various strategies that higher education institutions can employ to enhance manpower development, including curriculum innovation, experiential learning, industry collaborations, lifelong learning, research and development, career services, social responsibility, internationalization, and quality assurance. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of higher education institutions in promoting sustainable development by integrating sustainable practices, offering sustainability-oriented education, and engaging in research and partnerships that address sustainability challenges. It emphasizes the need for institutional commitment, stakeholder engagement, and a culture of sustainability on campus. The conclusion underscores the significant role of higher education institutions in shaping the future workforce and contributing to sustainable development. The recommendations provided in the study offer practical guidance for policymakers, higher education institutions, and stakeholders to strengthen their efforts in manpower development and sustainable development. Overall, this research underscores the critical intersection of higher education, manpower development, and sustainable development in a fast-changing world. **Keywords:** Higher Education, Manpower Development and Sustainable Development

Introduction

Higher education plays a critical role in shaping the workforce and driving sustainable development in an era characterized by rapid change and complex global challenges. As technological advancements, globalization, and environmental concerns reshape the world, the need for skilled and adaptable individuals has become increasingly pronounced. Higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to thrive in this fast-changing landscape.

According to UNESCO (2020), higher education is recognized as a key driver of sustainable development, fostering innovation, social inclusion, and economic growth. By

imparting specialized knowledge and promoting critical thinking, higher education institutions prepare individuals to navigate a diverse range of professions and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities. In a study by Altbach and de Wit (2019), it was highlighted that higher education has a vital role to play in meeting the demands of a dynamic labor market. They argue that the competencies acquired through higher education, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, are essential for individuals to adapt and succeed in an ever-evolving workforce.

Moreover, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly recognize the importance of higher education in achieving sustainable development. SDG 4 emphasizes the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, including access to higher education and vocational training (United Nations, 2015). The purpose of this research is to delve into the significance of higher education for manpower development in a fast-changing world and its contribution to sustainable development. By exploring the evolving role of higher education, the challenges posed by a rapidly changing global environment, and the strategies employed by institutions to develop a skilled workforce, this study aims to provide insights and recommendations for effective higher education practices.

In the face of technological advancements, automation, and artificial intelligence, higher education institutions must adapt their curricula to ensure students are equipped with future-oriented skills. According to a report by the World Economic Forum (2018), skills such as complex problemsolving, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence will be increasingly valued in the workforce of the future. Additionally, globalization has led to a shifting labor market, with jobs becoming more interconnected and requiring a broader set of skills. Higher education institutions must foster international and intercultural competencies to prepare graduates for global employment opportunities and cross-cultural collaboration (Knight, 2019). Also, environmental sustainability has emerged as a pressing concern, requiring higher education institutions to incorporate sustainability principles into their teaching, research, and campus operations. This aligns with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), which emphasized the role of education, including higher education, in promoting sustainable development.

Through an extensive review of existing literature, case studies, and expert opinions, this research journal seeks to highlight the best practices in higher education that foster manpower development for sustainable development. By doing so, it intends to contribute to the ongoing discourse on aligning higher education with the needs of a fast-changing world, ensuring the continued relevance and impact of higher education institutions in creating a sustainable future.

The Concept of Higher Education

Higher education plays a crucial role in developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for individuals to succeed in a fast-changing world. It provides opportunities for intellectual growth, personal development, and professional preparation (UNESCO, 2020). Higher education institutions, such as universities and colleges, offer a range of programs, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, vocational training, and research opportunities.

According to Altbach and de Wit (2019), higher education is an essential component of a well-functioning society, contributing to economic growth, social mobility, and cultural enrichment. It equips individuals with specialized knowledge and analytical skills, enabling them to adapt to new challenges and contribute to the development of their communities. Moreover, higher education fosters critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and creativity, which are crucial for navigating a fast-changing world.

UNESCO (2020) recognizes the transformative power of higher education in promoting sustainable development. Higher education institutions are key drivers of innovation, promoting research and development that addresses pressing societal issues. By producing highly skilled professionals and facilitating knowledge transfer, higher education institutions contribute to economic growth and social progress. Higher education plays a vital role in advancing social inclusion and equity. It provides opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to access quality education, breaking down barriers and promoting equal opportunities (UNESCO, 2020). Through inclusive admission policies, financial aid programs, and support services, higher education institutions strive to ensure that a broad range of students can benefit from higher education.

Moreover, higher education institutions have the responsibility to cultivate global citizenship and intercultural competencies among students. Knight (2019) emphasizes the importance of internationalization in higher education, which involves promoting cross-cultural understanding, fostering international collaborations, and preparing students to engage in a globalized world. By exposing students to diverse perspectives and experiences, higher education institutions contribute to the development of individuals who can navigate the complexities of a fast-changing and interconnected world.

Overall, higher education is a vital component of individual and societal development, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to thrive in a fast-changing world. It contributes to economic growth, social inclusion, and innovation, while also fostering global citizenship and cultural understanding.

The Concept Manpower Development

Manpower development refers to the process of enhancing the skills, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of individuals to meet the needs of the labor market and contribute to organizational and societal development.

It involves systematic efforts to train, educate, and develop individuals to fulfil the requirements of various roles and occupations (Tang, 2019). According to Piwowar-Sulej (2021), manpower development is essential for ensuring a competent and skilled workforce. It involves providing individuals with the necessary competencies to perform their jobs effectively, adapt to changing work environments, and contribute to productivity and innovation. Manpower development activities can include training programs, continuing education, professional development, and on-the-job learning experiences.

The goal of manpower development is to bridge the gap between the skills possessed by individuals and the skills demanded by employers and the labor market. By equipping individuals with the relevant competencies, manpower development initiatives enhance employability, job performance, and career progression (Stephen & Festus, 2022). Manpower development is crucial in the context of a fast-changing world. As technological advancements and globalization reshape industries and labor markets, individuals need to continually update their skills and knowledge to remain relevant and competitive. Keeling (2020) highlights the importance of adaptability and lifelong learning in a fast-changing world, where individuals must be prepared to acquire new skills and navigate evolving job requirements.

Furthermore, manpower development is closely linked to sustainable development. By investing in the development of human capital, societies can create a skilled and productive workforce that contributes to economic growth and social progress. Manpower development initiatives can also address social inequalities by providing individuals from marginalized communities with the opportunity to acquire valuable skills and secure better employment prospects (Lee & Clarke, 2019). Manpower development is a vital process for equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to meet the demands of the labor market. It promotes employability, job performance, and career advancement while contributing to societal development and addressing social inequalities.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory, developed by economists such as Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, posits that individuals' skills, knowledge, and abilities are valuable resources that contribute to economic productivity and growth (Winterton & Cafferkey, 2019). According to this theory, investments in education and training, such as higher education, enhance individuals' human capital, leading to improved employability, higher wages, and economic development (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1993). Human capital theory provides a rationale for the importance of higher education in developing the skills and knowledge necessary for manpower development and sustainable economic growth.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory emphasizes the significance of social networks, relationships, and connections in generating economic and social outcomes. Higher education institutions serve as important social capital hubs, facilitating the formation of networks among students, faculty, alumni, and industry professionals. These networks provide access to information, resources, and opportunities, enhancing individuals' employability and fostering collaboration and innovation (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988). Social capital theory highlights the role of higher education in promoting industry-academia collaborations, entrepreneurship, and knowledge transfer for sustainable development.

The Interplay between Higher Education and Manpower Development

The relationship between higher education and manpower development is complex and mutually influential. Higher education institutions play a crucial role in preparing individuals for the workforce and contributing to manpower development, while the demands and dynamics of the labor market shape the priorities and directions of higher education. This interplay between higher education and manpower development is critical for meeting the evolving needs of a fast-changing world.

Higher education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for successful entry into the labor market. Through rigorous academic programs, specialized training, and experiential learning opportunities, higher education institutions provide students with a solid foundation in their chosen fields. This acquisition of knowledge and skills enables individuals to contribute effectively to the workforce and address the challenges of a dynamic and evolving labor market.

Furthermore, higher education institutions have a responsibility to align their programs and curricula with the needs of industries and the labor market. By collaborating with employers, professional bodies, and industry representatives, higher education institutions can ensure that their graduates possess the relevant competencies and meet the demands of the job market (Teichler, 2018). This alignment between higher education and the labor market helps to bridge the skills gap and enhance the employability of graduates.

The interplay between higher education and manpower development also extends beyond initial job readiness. In a fast-changing world, continuous learning and upskilling are vital for individuals to remain competitive and adaptable in their careers. Higher education institutions can provide lifelong learning opportunities, professional development programs, and skills upgrading initiatives to support individuals in acquiring new competencies throughout their careers. This ongoing partnership between higher education and manpower development fosters a culture of continuous learning and supports the sustainable development of individuals and societies.

Moreover, the demands of the labor market and the broader societal context influence the priorities and directions of higher education. Rapid technological advancements, globalization, and changing industry landscapes drive the need for innovative and forward-thinking educational approaches (Keeling, 2020). Higher education institutions must respond to these changes by offering programs that nurture creativity, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial mindsets. By adapting to the demands of the labor market, higher education institutions contribute to the overall development and competitiveness of the workforce.

The interplay between higher education and manpower development is dynamic and reciprocal. Higher education institutions prepare individuals for the workforce by providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies. At the same time, the demands of the labor market shape the priorities and directions of higher education. This interplay ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the job market while promoting continuous learning and adaptation in a fastchanging world.

The Challenges of a Fast-Changing World

A fast-changing world presents numerous challenges that impact higher education and manpower development. These challenges arise from various factors, including technological advancements, globalization, economic shifts, and evolving societal needs. Understanding and addressing these challenges are crucial for higher education institutions to effectively prepare individuals for the workforce and contribute to sustainable development.

One of the significant challenges in a fast-changing world is the rapid pace of technological advancements. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and digitalization are reshaping industries and transforming job requirements (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Higher education institutions need to keep pace with these advancements by incorporating relevant technological skills and knowledge into their curricula.

Globalization is another key challenge that affects higher education and manpower development. Increased interconnectedness and the global movement of labor and capital have led to a more diverse and competitive job market (Marginson, 2016). Higher education institutions must prepare graduates to work in multicultural and global environments, requiring them to possess intercultural competence, communication skills, and a global mindset.

Economic shifts and changing industry landscapes pose additional challenges to higher education and manpower development. As economies transition from traditional sectors to knowledge-based and innovation-driven industries, the demand for new skill sets and competencies emerges (World Economic Forum, 2020). Higher education institutions need to ensure that their programs align with these evolving industry needs to foster a workforce that can contribute to economic growth and competitiveness (Teichler, 2018).

Furthermore, evolving societal needs and challenges, such as climate change, social inequalities, and demographic shifts, pose significant challenges to higher education and manpower development. Higher education institutions have a responsibility to address these issues by offering programs and research initiatives that promote sustainable development, social justice, and inclusivity (Keeling, 2020). This challenge requires a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to education, where students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to tackle complex societal problems and contribute to positive change.

In navigating these challenges, higher education institutions must embrace flexibility, adaptability, and innovation. They need to foster a culture of lifelong learning and provide opportunities for continuous skill development and upskilling. Collaboration with stakeholders, including employers, industries, governments, and communities, is essential to ensure the relevance and responsiveness of higher education to the rapidly changing world (Marginson, 2016). Addressing the challenges of a fast-changing world requires strategic planning, institutional agility, and a commitment to staying abreast of societal and technological developments. Higher education institutions play a critical role in equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to thrive in such a world, contribute to the workforce, and promote sustainable development.

Higher Education Strategies for Manpower Development

In a fast-changing world, higher education institutions need to adopt effective strategies to enhance manpower development and align educational offerings with evolving societal and industry needs. These strategies play a crucial role in equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for successful entry into the workforce and contributing to sustainable development. The following are key strategies that higher education institutions can employ:

- 1. Curriculum Relevance and Flexibility:** Higher education institutions should regularly review and update their curricula to ensure alignment with the changing demands of industries and the labor market (Teichler, 2018). This involves integrating emerging disciplines, incorporating technological skills, and fostering interdisciplinary approaches.
- 2. Experiential Learning and Work-Integrated Education:** Providing opportunities for experiential learning and work-integrated education is crucial for enhancing employability and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Cairns & Malloch, 2018). Internships, apprenticeships, industry projects, and cooperative education programs allow students to gain real-world experience, develop professional networks, and apply their learning in authentic work settings. Such experiences enhance graduates' readiness for the workforce and foster the acquisition of industry-relevant skills.

3. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Establishing strong partnerships and collaboration between higher education institutions and industries is vital for enhancing manpower development (Marginson, 2016). These collaborations can take various forms, including joint research projects, industry advisory boards, guest lectures, and internships. Engaging industry professionals in curriculum design, program evaluation, and guest teaching helps ensure the relevance and responsiveness of educational offerings to current industry needs (Okolie, et al., 2021).

4. Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Promoting an entrepreneurial and innovative mindset among students is crucial for addressing the challenges of a fast-changing world and fostering economic growth (Keeling, 2020). Higher education institutions can establish entrepreneurship centers, innovation hubs, and incubators to support students' entrepreneurial endeavours and facilitate the translation of ideas into tangible outcomes. Additionally, integrating innovation and design thinking into the curriculum can nurture creative problem-solving skills and foster a culture of innovation among students.

5. Lifelong Learning and Continuous Professional Development: Higher education institutions should provide opportunities for lifelong learning and continuous professional development to support individuals throughout their careers (Römgens, Scoupe&Beausaert, 2020). This can involve offering executive education programs, professional certifications, and workshops that enable individuals to upskill, reskill, and adapt to changing industry requirements. Embracing a culture of lifelong learning ensures that graduates remain competitive, agile, and adaptable in a rapidly evolving job market.

6. Research and Development: Higher education institutions play a vital role in driving research and development (R&D) activities that contribute to technological advancements, innovation, and sustainable development (Altbach& de Wit, 2019). Encouraging faculty and students to engage in research projects, collaborative partnerships, and interdisciplinary studies fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the generation of new knowledge. Research outputs can inform policymaking, address societal challenges, and provide insights into emerging trends and industries, thus guiding manpower development efforts.

Higher Education and Sustainable Development

Higher education institutions have a crucial role to play in promoting sustainable development by integrating sustainable practices into their operations, fostering sustainability-oriented education, and engaging in research and partnerships that address sustainability challenges. The relationship between higher education and sustainable development is essential for creating a more sustainable future.

Higher education institutions can promote sustainable development by incorporating sustainable practices into their operations and campus management. This involves adopting environmentally friendly policies, implementing energy-efficient measures, reducing waste

generation, promoting recycling and sustainable transportation options, and enhancing water conservation (Lozano et al., 2019). By modelling sustainable practices, higher education institutions demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and provide students with practical examples of sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, higher education institutions play a vital role in fostering sustainability-oriented education. This involves integrating sustainability principles and concepts across disciplines and offering dedicated programs or courses in sustainability studies (Barth et al., 2019). Sustainable development should be infused into the curriculum, encouraging students to understand the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability. By equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to address sustainability challenges, higher education institutions contribute to building a sustainable workforce and society.

Engaging in research and partnerships that address sustainability challenges is another key aspect of higher education's role in sustainable development. Higher education institutions can conduct interdisciplinary research to address complex sustainability issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, and social inequality (Leal Filho et al., 2020). Through collaborative research projects, higher education institutions can contribute to developing sustainable solutions, informing policy-making processes, and advancing knowledge in sustainability science. Partnerships with industry, government, and civil society organizations can also facilitate the application and dissemination of sustainable practices and innovations.

The integration of sustainable development principles into higher education requires institutional commitment and collaboration. It involves engaging stakeholders within and outside the institution, including faculty, students, staff, administrators, local communities, and sustainability experts. Sustainability committees, task forces, and dedicated sustainability offices can help drive institutional efforts and facilitate coordination and communication (Lozano et al., 2019). By involving various stakeholders, higher education institutions can foster a culture of sustainability and ensure the long-term commitment to sustainable practices and education.

Promoting sustainable development through higher education is essential for creating a more sustainable and resilient society. Higher education institutions have the potential to influence future generations of leaders, professionals, and innovators who will drive sustainability efforts in various sectors. By incorporating sustainable practices, offering sustainability-oriented education, and engaging in research and partnerships, higher education institutions contribute to advancing sustainable development goals and shaping a more sustainable future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, higher education institutions play a critical role in manpower development and sustainable development in a fast-changing world. They face the challenges of keeping pace with

technological advancements, addressing the needs of a globalized workforce, adapting to changing industries, and addressing evolving societal challenges. However, through effective strategies and approaches, higher education institutions can navigate these challenges and contribute to sustainable development.

By ensuring the relevance and flexibility of their curricula, higher education institutions can equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for emerging job roles. Experiential learning and work-integrated education bridge the gap between theory and practice, enhancing graduates' employability. Collaboration with industries fosters the alignment of educational offerings with industry needs and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship. Emphasizing lifelong learning and continuous professional development ensures that graduates remain adaptable and competitive in a rapidly changing job market.

Moreover, higher education institutions can contribute to sustainable development by integrating sustainable practices into their operations and campus management. Sustainability-oriented education equips students with the knowledge and skills to address environmental, economic, and social challenges. Engaging in research and partnerships that address sustainability issues helps generate solutions and inform policy-making processes.

To succeed in these endeavours, higher education institutions need to foster a culture of collaboration, engage stakeholders, and demonstrate institutional commitment to sustainability. By doing so, they can shape the future workforce, promote sustainable practices, and contribute to creating a more sustainable and resilient society.

In summary, higher education for manpower development in a fast-changing world for sustainable development requires continuous adaptation, innovation, and collaboration. Through strategic initiatives and a commitment to addressing societal challenges, higher education institutions can effectively prepare individuals for the workforce, foster sustainable development, and contribute to a better future.

Overall, higher education institutions have a significant role to play in shaping the future by preparing individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world and addressing sustainability challenges. The interplay between higher education and manpower development, supported by a focus on the challenges of a fast-changing world, enables institutions to contribute to sustainable development and create positive impacts in society.

Recommendation

Based on the discussion of higher education for manpower development in a fast-changing world for sustainable development, the following recommendations can be made:

Regularly review and update curricula: Higher education institutions should establish mechanisms to regularly review and update their curricula to align with emerging industry needs and societal challenges. This ensures that graduates are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills.

Foster collaboration with industries: Encourage and strengthen partnerships with industries through various means such as internships, joint research projects, and industry advisory boards. This collaboration facilitates the exchange of knowledge, enhances the practical relevance of education, and promotes innovation.

Emphasize experiential learning and work-integrated education: Provide opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, internships, and work-integrated education. This practical experience enhances their employability, bridges the gap between theory and practice, and prepares them for the demands of the workforce.

Integrate sustainability across disciplines: Infuse sustainability principles and concepts into the curriculum across different disciplines. This ensures that graduates have a holistic understanding of sustainability and are equipped to address complex environmental, economic, and social challenges. **Invest in research and partnerships for sustainable development:** Allocate resources to support research activities focused on sustainable development. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships with government, industry, and civil society organizations to address sustainability challenges and contribute to the development of sustainable solutions.

Promote lifelong learning and continuous professional development: Establish mechanisms and programs that encourage individuals to engage in lifelong learning and continuous professional development. This enables them to acquire new skills, adapt to changing job requirements, and contribute to sustainable development throughout their careers.

Foster a culture of sustainability on campus: Implement sustainable practices within higher education institutions by adopting environmentally friendly policies, promoting energy efficiency, reducing waste, and encouraging sustainable transportation options. Engage students, faculty, staff, and local communities in sustainability initiatives to create a culture of sustainability on campus.

Enhance career services and alumni engagement: Strengthen career services to provide guidance, job placement support, and networking opportunities for students. Foster alumni engagement to establish mentorship programs and facilitate knowledge-sharing, creating valuable connections for graduates in the workforce.

Embrace technology and innovation: Embrace technological advancements and innovation in higher education delivery and practices. Explore the use of online learning platforms, digital tools, and virtual collaborations to enhance educational experiences and reach a wider audience.

Prioritize quality assurance and monitoring: Implement quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of educational programs. Continuously monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact of higher education initiatives on manpower development and sustainable development.

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Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Nigeria Higher Education

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Introduction

Education in an inclusive setting appears to be a concept in this 21st century. This concept is beginning to gain recognition in the field of education. Student with and without disabilities are gradually being educated together in large scale societies. This is because most large scale countries have begun to recognize, appreciate, and accept students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In Nigeria, inclusive education has not fully gained recognition due to governmental policies. These policies help in the formulation and implementation of special education programs for learners with disabilities in Nigeria. Inclusive education involves bringing together persons with disabilities and the non-disabled to study in the same classroom with adaptable facilities and equipment. With this arrangement in place the assistive technology becomes an unconditional requirement for children

with special needs. It involves public and private programmes and laws. And it involves a number of other things including people who work in the "helping" professions. This also involves some of the basic requirement for the inclusive programme to be feasible in any environment. The attitudes of people towards those with disabilities globally, the challenges of people's attitudes towards disability in Africa, in Nigeria. and the challenges of people with disabilities themselves with a view to encourage the non- disabled to develop positive attitudes towards the disabled for social change.

Globally, three forms of inclusion for persons with disabilities exist for example, the right to education, the right to employment opportunities in their social order, and the right to politics/administrative positions. According to Obi, Mensah and Avoke, (2017) inclusion is a radical departure from the traditional segregation approach of educating children with disabilities which involves the adaptation of regular school practices to suit the needs children with disabilities. Inclusive education is a system whereby the disabled and non-disabled children are educated together in one classroom with modifications in physical structures, equipment and methods to suit the conditions of diverse special needs learners (Ashi, 2018). Inclusive education could be partial or locational (proximity to resource facilities) and functional inclusion with all specialized facilities in a regular education school setting. Functional inclusion is one of the goals of special education in Nigeria today with the aim to concretize the meaning of equal opportunities in education for all children, their disabilities notwithstanding (National Policy on Education, 2015. Revised).

In retrospect, inclusive education practices over the years in Nigeria and to mention but a few have been ongoing while some countries are presently at the level of reviews and follow up services in inclusive societies. The phase one of the global projects of Education for All (EFA,2014) was the collaborative work of internationally accepted paradigm. The Salamanca Statement reaffirms education as an entitlement for all rather than a privilege for some (Report on Inclusive Schools & Community Support, 2018-2020). This launch for action was the project: Inclusive schools and Community Support Programmes. As a result of this inclusive education launch some African countries took the lead and embarked on inclusive education practices in their nations. With the development of the Ministry of Education's strategic plan 2011-2015, and the piloting of inclusive education in ten districts, Nigeria is said to be well position in the implementation of inclusive education practices (Obi, Mensah, and Avoke, 2017). This is an indication that Nigeria is seriously lagging behind on issues related to inclusive education for special needs children. Apart from human right movements in Europe and America that served to promote the Individual with Disability in Nigeria higher Education Act (IDEA), many African countries have legal backing at all levels of their inclusion services for persons with disabilities. Obi, Mensah, and Avoke, (2017) noted that the international laws proactive development of education in other countries opened the way for Ghana Education Services (GES) to develop a strategic plan for2013-2015. The University of Education, Winneba in Ghana for example has a dual role of human resource capacity for the

visually impaired individuals who pursue programmes leading to Bachelor and Masters Degrees (Hayford and Majisi, 2015). These qualifications enable them to work in middle and top management levels in competitive employment. Ghana currently has model schools for inclusive education in the ten regions of the country as already mentioned. Kenya's philosophy is for the country to make sure every child has a chance to excel, hence the child's success is enhanced through the implementation of inclusive education services (Were, 2017). Nigeria has developed some structures such as development of standardized training curriculum for technicians in the schools and the people believe this approach could be models for other countries. The Nigerian situation is an uphill task in the realization of the country's responsibility towards the special needs population in our society. The present absence of a law for the right of persons with disabilities in Nigeria higher education forms a major part of the challenging issues of inclusion.

The notion of inclusive education was initially thought to be a concept in Nigerian educational system. However, inclusive education has since then witnessed some tremendous improvements in the last decade despite cultural, social-economic, and political constraints (Eskay, 2019; Abang, 2018, Oluigbo, 2016). These improvements began from the provision of Section 8 of the National Policy on Education since 2017 and have provided support mechanisms for students with disabilities. Because of governmental policies and cultural constraints, inclusive education did not witness series of advocacies, litigations, and legislations, as it was observed in large scale societies like the United States of America, which resulted in the establishment of legal mechanism to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. A recent indication is the promulgation of PL(public law) 99-457 which, to a large extent, addresses special education concerns of students. Inclusive education is, by definition, the full integration of learners with and without special needs into the same classrooms and schools and thereby exposing them to the same learning opportunities. Ahmad (2011) defined inclusive education as the education of all students with and without disabilities or difficulties in learning together in colleges, and universities with appropriate network support. Okwudire and Okechukwu (2018) saw inclusive education as the progressive increase in the participation of students, in reduction of their exclusion from the cultures, curricula, and communities of local schools. Okwudire and Okechukwu (2018) further explained that with inclusive education, all students in a school regardless of their strength or weakness in any area become part of the school community. It is a place where students are seen as equal members of the classroom without being marginalized. The Nigeria government and educational administrators have failed to put forth resources to facilitate the provision of inclusive education in some schools in Nigeria. Furthermore, there are still no indications of efforts to handle these shortcomings. According to Eskay (2019) and Oluigbo (2016), these shortcomings include: legal mandates, placement issues, assessment, least restrictive environment, identification and referral, non-biased assessment, and instructional programming. In the United States, there are laws, such as PL 94-142 and IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) 2014 that have

been used to acknowledge the unique needs of children with disabilities in an inclusive setting. In spite of the Nigerian government being a member of the United Nations education on human rights and child right, yet she does not acknowledge the need for every child to be free, have leisure and play and be protected from harmful practices, violence, injury, and abuse in an inclusive setting. Nigeria, in 2013, made a decree for the provision of inclusive education with clear and comprehensive legal protection and security backing, yet due to governmental policies and cultural constrains, such decree did not succeed. This is a big problem for most special education and non-special education school administrators in Nigerian.

The Concept of Special Education

Special education in higher education has defined in various ways by scholars. For instance, Mba (2011) opined that special education is an ideal general education in which individual differences are considered and provided for. Adima, Ladipo and Abosi (2011), in Oladejo (2010) defined special education as an aspect of education that treats people as individuals and makes allowances for the use of special equipment and methods of teaching according to individual needs. Special education has also been described as classroom or private instructions involving unconventional techniques, materials, exercises, facilities and subject matter designed for children and adults who have physical deformities, behavioural disorders or learning disabilities (Osakwe, 2010). According to Osakwe (2010), citing the Nigeria Individuals with Disabilities Education Act special education is that type of education with specially designed instructions to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. These definitions are relevant to the present discourse, even though, special education is not meant for the disabled only. This is because the present paper is focusing on the education students with disabilities, who might be disadvantaged in the regular educational programmes.

Trends of Inclusive of students with disabilities Education in Nigeria

In retrospect of the education of special needs students in Nigeria the practice has evolved around a reverse kind of special needs education in few special Nigeria higher education that were established as segregated colleges in their own rights. The St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired Obudu in Cross River State, which was initially founded by the Sisters' of St. Joseph of Peace in 1891. The Good Shepherd Special Education Centre, Ogoja also opened an integrated programme for secondary school children with hearing impairment. These two schools and a few others opened up in other parts of Nigeria as reverse integrated schools. The programmes these schools should in the near future become inclusive education schools given all consideration for the establishment of inclusive education in Nigeria as in other African countries where resources are provided.

Meaning and Classifications of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, otherwise known as People with special needs are those people with one form of disabilities or the other, capable of limiting their involvement and participation in the regular educational programmes, and subsequently affect their academic performance and functionality in the society. They can be classified into eight, with respect to the type and nature of their disability problems. These classifications are as discussed in turn below:

The Hearing Impaired: These are people with little or no ability to hear sounds through one ear (unilateral impairment) or both ears (bilateral impairment). They can be totally deaf or hard-of-hearing.

The Visually Impaired: These individuals have difficulties in one or more functions of their visual system. They are also either totally blind or partially sighted.

The People with Speech Disorders: People with speech disorders are those that experience lack of development and stimulation which affect the effective mental formation of words or their physical production.

The Emotionally Disorder: These are the people that have problems in their emotional development. They are not usually emotionally stable.

The Mentally Retarded: People with mental retardation are those whose mental ability, growth and development are hindered by biological, environmental or hereditary factors that prevent them from adapting and adjusting to the normal environment. They could be the moronics, the imbeciles, the idiotics, the trainable and the educable based on the degree of their retardation.

The Physically Disabled: The physically disabled people are physically disadvantaged due to conditions that permanently prevent them from exercising normal body control and movement.

The People with Learning Disabilities: These people have disorders in one or more of the fundamental physiological processes involved in the understanding, speaking and writing of language, which include wrong pronunciation of words, spelling, reading and so on.

The People with Multiple Disabilities: People with multiple disabilities, as the classification implies, are those with more than one form of disabilities. They suffer from a combination of any of the aforementioned disabilities.

Government Efforts on the Education and Plights of Students with Disabilities

Atolagbe (2015) described disable people as innocent people, who are members of the human society, having no other world to live in, than the one we jointly own. Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria had made some efforts in taking care of the students with disabilities for them to have sense of belonging. Ogbue (Oyewo, 2019) reported that the initiative of the Missionaries led to the development of positive attitude of Non-Government Organizations and Governmental Agencies toward the establishment of various Institutions to take care of the needs of the disabled people. Such Institutions include Cheshires Homes, Ibadan School for the Deaf.

Wesley School for the Deaf as well as the Pacelli School for the Blind among others. The Federal Government of Nigeria also recognizes the importance and relevance of the disabled when in the Third National Development Plan, decreed that 'Educational services for the disabled shall be the joint efforts of all tiers of government. To this end, the Federal Government directed that two percent of positions in their establishments be allocated to qualified disabled persons. It said further that State governments should set up Vocational Training Centres for the disabled as a matter of priority. Another effort of the Federal Government on the disabled persons is the establishment of National Council for Special Education in 1976, with the aim of looking into the issues of the disabled and advice the government from time to time. Furthermore, the Federal Government established a College of Education called Federal Government Advanced Teacher Training(Special) Education, Oyo in 1977 (now Federal College of Education [Special] and saddle it with the responsibility of producing teachers for the handicapped as well as the gifted and the talented students. A Special unit was also created at the Federal Ministry of Education while Special Education Section was also created in all the State Ministries of Education in response to a directive from the Federal Government Finally, some Federal Universities namely the Universities of Ibadan. Calabar and Jos, offer courses in Special education to both the undergraduates and the post-graduates.

Strategies for Implementation of Inclusive Education

The rationale for effective implementation of inclusive education practices and follow up services is considered under the following strategies:

- There has to be a political will of the state government backed by enacted law for the right of persons with disabilities and the implementation cost of special education services as discussed earlier
- Assessment centres have to be established in three locations in the state for assessments by specialists trained as school psychologists/educational psychologists to assess those who are eligible for placement in inclusive education. This approach is based on the premise that not all children with special needs can be educated through inclusive education. Those with severe handicapping conditions will still be placed in segregated special education centres for example, children with severe developmental disabilities/severe to profound mental retardation are placed in centres or hospital bound schools.
- A systematic and conscious effort has to be made to train teachers to have attitude change towards admission of special needs children into regular education schools. This approach is based on the views of people who believe that blindness, deafness and physical disability is contagious. This idea further explains why some people would not want to associate with those who have deformities in case they give birth to children who are deformed (Ashi, 2018).

- Media education through CRBC, Odukani and Ikom radio booster stations will enhance a widespread sensitization campaign on inclusive education in the state.
- The government needs to dismantle most accessibility barriers in regular schools and put ramps along stair cases and designated areas for cars or wheelchairs in public places. All inclusive education model schools and even higher institutions in the state must be hazard free for all categories of students with disabilities. Nigeria has hazard free inclusive schools in all the regions as already mentioned.
- Government has to buy basic equipment and materials for each of the categories of disabilities in each school.
- Special education teachers should be posted to serve as supportive teachers in all the inclusive education schools (e.g.2 teachers per class, 1 special and 1 regular teacher)
- A well equipped resource room manned by a specialist in each of the model school is inevitable. A specialist teacher provides special education services for example a raised tactile map of Nigeria for blind students in a geography class.

Strategies for Educating Students with Disabilities

Osakwe (2010) highlighted two major strategies by which students with disabilities could be properly educated. These, according to the scholar as:

Inclusion: This is a process, whereby regular education classes are combined with special education services in a regular system. The scholar further asserted that in this strategy, continued and planned interactions with contemporaries and freedom to associate in different groups are encouraged. Inclusion is of two models namely full and partial. In full inclusion model, specialized services are provided within a regular classroom by sending the service worker to work with one or more students in the regular classroom setting, while in the partial model, specialized services are provided outside a regular classroom.

Exclusion: This is a strategy, whereby students with special needs are educated or taught using special techniques and equipment by specialist personnel (Osake, 2010). In this model, students are placed in special schools and classrooms so as to cater for their specific educational needs, aspirations and challenges that will enable them learn at their own pace.

Challenges Confronting the Education of Students with Disabilities

There are several challenges facing students with disabilities, and these challenges hinder their personal, vocational, academic and social adjustment.

First, is the challenge of general inadequacy of educational funding. Nigerian education is not adequately funded, and this also has effects on the education of students with disabilities.

Certain educational materials, facilities and equipment which could have enabled them to learn without tears are not adequately provided.

Another challenge, which is closely related to the just discussed one has to do with the high cost of the educational materials and equipment such as braille machines and papers, typewriting machines and typing sheets, carbon papers, thermoforming papers, tape recorders and cassettes, earmould, hearing being used by these students, which, of course, many of them cannot afford buying.

Lack of adequate specialists and para-professionals such as the physiotherapists, the pathologists, the braillists, the sign language interpreters, among others constitute a challenge. Those available are not enough to service the population of students with disabilities. Ojerinde(1999) and Ladipo (1999), cited in Oladejo (2001) reported that the total number of secondary school students' enrolment in Nigeria stood at about 20 million, with students and youth with disabilities constituting about 2.4million in Nigerian Schools. The architectural designs of most of the Institutions where the education of students with disabilities take place did not take into consideration, the disability nature of these people. It appears that only the Federal College of Education (Special) takes note of this architectural consideration. This greatly hinders the education of these categories of learners.

Finally, there is the challenge of poor and ineffective implementation of the policies formulated towards the betterment of the education of students with disabilities. This has been the usual case with almost all educational policies in Nigeria.

Policy Implications

The challenges identified above have certain policy implications for the education of students with disabilities. These policy implications include the following:

The policy guidelines and provision in Section 8 as stipulated in the nation's National Policy on Education (2014) should be implemented with immediate effect by setting up an Implementation Action Committee. Admission policy of students with disabilities should not be as strict as the one for the students without disabilities in order to encourage and motivate them towards their education. The employment policy of the Federal Government that at least, 2% of the available positions in all establishments be reserved for the people with disabilities should be immediately implemented. This is to further motivate these categories of disadvantaged people. Special Students' Bursary/ Scholarship policy should be formulated to enhance students with disabilities' easy access to financial supports. Policy for the architectural design of lecture rooms where the education of students with disabilities take place needs to be put in place so as to ease the process of teaching/learning for the special learners.

Conclusion

Oyewo (2019) remarked that the growth of the human society depends almost entirely on the contributions of its members. The disabled persons without any doubt, are members of the Nigerian society that can contribute to its development if they are encouraged properly and adequately. Also, if truly the youths of today are the leaders of tomorrow, then today's students with disabilities, who are part of the today's Youths, should be well taken care of, for them to become the leaders of tomorrow in their respective chosen professions. After all, almost all disabled children can be trained to live productive lives (Olawale, 2010). It is hereby recommended that: The Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo should be upgraded to a full-fledged Degree Awarding Institution to cater for educational advancement of the NCE holder in special education and lead to the production of more academically sound and qualified teachers for the disabled students. In addition, more Departments of Special Education should be created in our nation's Universities in order to address the problem of shortage of teachers and other paraprofessionals for disabled students. Also, private individuals and Non-Governmental Organizations should be encouraged to establish more special schools as well as vocational and rehabilitation centres. Educational materials and facilities that would be needed by students with disabilities should be provided at affordable prices and be within the reach of the poor. The Ministry for the Disabled Affairs or the National Commission for People with Disabilities should be created at the Federal and State levels with disabled person(s) as the Minister/Commissioner/ Chairman of such Ministries/Parastatals. The Federal Government should compel all the three-tiers of government to start giving scholarship and bursary awards to the deserving disabled students in order to alleviate their financial problems. Finally, Federal Government should ensure that reasonable percentage of the Education Trust Fund Allocations is made available for the education of student's with disabilities.

Inclusive education by its conceptions portends a panacea for getting schools and communities to provide learning in an inclusive setting that will guarantee equalization or educational opportunities for all children with and without disabilities irrespective of their learning ability and disability status. This means that children are able to benefit from each other through interaction, stable work, and life skills for achieving desirable behavior for successful life in an inclusive setting in our society. To achieve this, the authors suggest both the Nigerian government and school administrators sit to deliberate on the implementation of the following major issues in relation to the following shortcomings: identification and referral, unbiased assessment, least restrictive environments, funding, IEP, and legal mandates.

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