

**THE STATE OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION IN IKALAND:
ARE WE ALL GUILTY?**

BY

The Revd Canon Professor Mon Nwadiani. Mnae; FIIA
B.Ed Hon (Benin); ME.d; Ph.D (Ibadan); PG.Dip. Th. (Nig); Dip. Th.
(Akure)
Professor of Educational Planning
University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo State.

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Introduction

I feel highly humbled with honour to be nominated to deliver the 9th IKAKA MMA 2008 ANNUAL LECTURE. The central mission of this lecture is to X ray the state of contemporary education in Ikaland and to put forward realistic policy options to redress the growing unintended but undesirable dystrophies. This has become very imperative because Ika ethnic nationality can not be left behind or remain a *bye-stander* in a technological advancing world. We must make progress!

One of the natural gifts of Ika people is their geo-locational-situation. Ika nation is situated in what is known as the rainforest region which lies between latitude 6.15 °N and longitude 6.12° E which is free from natural hazards, with an annual rainfall of about 2,400mm and estimated population of 346,251 Ikaland is bounded on the East by the Aniochas, west by Benin, North by Ishans and South by the Ndokwas and Urhobos. So *abinitio* God has been kind to us as a people. As individuals are we kind?

Contemporary education in Ikaland is at a *Crossroad* suffering from *Partial stroke*. This is why this day calls for a deep sober reflection on the unfortunate dilemma and declined quality state of education in Ikaland. This day could be described with the words of *Lucretius* in *De-Rerum Natura* which are here anglicized because our schools no longer teach latin.

Sweet it is when on the great sea the winds are buffeting the waters to gaze from the land on another's struggle not because it is a pleasure or joy that anyone should be distressed, but because it is sweeter to perceive from what misfortune you yourself are free from... But nothing is more gladdening than to dwell in the calm high places firmly embattle on the heights by the teaching of the wise, when you can look down on others, see them wandering hither and thither going astray as they seek the way of life.. struggling day and night by surpassing efforts to rise to the height of power and gain possession of the world.

Nigeria as a nation has accepted and adopted education as an instrument *per excellence* for effecting national development and technological advancement. Consequently the Federal, state and Local Governments have stupendously expanded the educational system with some unrealistic reforms but unfortunately the outcome has turned out to be very low and questionable quality.

Quotations

The following are some quotation's for our reflection, meditation and perhaps inspirational challenges as a people concerning where we are and where we ought to be in the realm of education.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, the nineteenth century American Philosopher, laid down the rule that friends who meet after a time apart should greet each other by asking one question: “*Has anything become clear to you since we were last together*”?
- “Crisis conditions are encroaching on educational systems everywhere and already hold many countries in their grip” *Philip coombs (1968)*- International Scholar and leader in education.
- The aura of euphoria that had surrounded all things educational in the early Age of innocence had by now been transmuted into a crisis of confidence”- *Coombs 1985:14*)
- I have engaged in a good, just and glorious cause- a cause which sooner or later, must and will prevail, and by timely reform save this country from destruction. History is my witness *Ken Logue (1976)* Scottish Scholar lamenting.
- The teacher makes the difference. However none can teach what he or she does not know. He (the teacher) becomes a functional illiterate with no regenerative encounter exacerbated by love for *Okete nnumi . Nwadiani (1988)*
- In the knowledge driven 21st century, education must be the key driver of socio-economic transformation. If there is one thing most Nigerians agree on, it is the fact that our educational system is in crises- *Soludo (2006)* Governor of Central bank, Nigeria.

- God alone know our future! But a hopeful future in a competitive and changing economy is facilitated by a good education well planned and delivered to mankind *apolitically*. – *Nwadiani (1999)*- Professor of Education Planning.
- Train up a child in the way he should go; and when is old, her will not depart from it - (*Proverbs 22:6*).

In one way or the other, these quotations have their relevance to our discussion on the state of contemporary education in Ikaland as would be shown later in the lecture

Meaning and Nature of Education

Education hitherto, particularly in the early chapter of man's existence on earth was perceived as a way of life. Suddenly it became a major development concern of leaders of contemporary societies. Largely education is seen as both a powerful and inter-linking component of value and technological cultures across ages and space. The power of education lies in its role in cultural preservation, promotion and sometimes the selective modification of society's cherished values of old. Plural societies, both those behind history and the modern ones properly so called have used education as an instrument for social change, political socialization, national integration and development.

The system view of education consequent upon its formalization, stepped up the dialectical relationship between education and society. Inturn education occupies a focal position that is subject and sensitive to society.

What seem to be less amplified in the management of education in may countries is the narrow view of educational system. The major focus of educational thoughts of third world 'leaders' has been the formal aspect of education thereby playing down other agencies and forms of learning. This over emphasis on formal education as educational policy statements of nations have shown over the years, has created unintended consequences and hidden dysfunctions. This is a development that has turned averse the aspirations of newly independent states. What is still very, true and perhaps it could be argued to be the mediating cause of education-society's subtle divorce is the 'non-system' view of education

for a very long time after the popularization of the concept of system in the sciences and lately in social science disciplines.

What is Education?

Although education is a catholic social service, its meaning varies from time to time, from people to people and from place to place. Societies all over the world are dynamic. Consequently, the socio-cultural and political changes sweeping across modern societies have made the universal conceptualization of education notwithstanding, it bestows on the client wherever they maybe and their milieux, the freedom from ignorance and symbolic poverty. Commenting on freedom –a product of real education and its attendant role in the search for the elusive meaning of life, Thomas asserted that: “ if a nation expects its people to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and what never will be”

Bye and bye, as people come and go, particularly gate keepers of vested interest, education loses its meaning and original functions on one hand and on the other hand assumes other roles altogether. This is why it is misleading to subject education to one single definition at all times. Lester (1961:7) once noted that;

Education not only changes with years, it is as sensitive to place as it is to time. It bears a different meaning in different countries, and it's never quite the same thing in rural surrounding as it is in a crowded industrial areas.

Every nation has its unique pattern of providing education services. The universal belief is that it is an agent of social change. In bye-gone days particularly south of Sahara desert and north of river Limpopo, the purpose of education although unwritten, was clear in the minds of men and generations a come inherited same. It was geared toward the preparation and making of the ideal man. According to Babs-Fafunwa (1974:15) “ in old Africa, the warrior, the hunter, the noble man, the man of character or any one who combined the later feature with a specific skill was adjudged to be well-educated and well integrated citizen of his environment”.

In recent times, the above attributes have gained less emphasis in policy statements. The monetization and the technological dream of contemporary societies devalued such people of old education culture. The social, economic political and moral values of most societies are undergoing unprecedented metamorphosis. Consequently education which is a subset of societal ecology becomes the major empirical expression of those changes in the cult of modern civilization.

According to Mills (1967), “ education embraces not only the deliberate processes of schooling but it includes even indirect and incidental influences. The core of education is the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising the level of improvement which has been attained”. Mills combined formal and informal education in his definition.

Education in the real sense of it is much more than mere schooling. In modern societies, much of the learning needs of those who seek for knowledge are outside the territories of schools. How much learning takes place in the school? Have schools been able to meet the increasing needs of society? Are the required resources available? Have schools the real time for education? These are some of the fundamental questions that seemed to be unanswered in educational management. Jefferey asserted that: “ education is the direct means by which a people seek to share its own destiny and to transform itself from what it knows itself to be into what it would hope to become. The form of education will therefore be determined by the deepest feeling of a people about itself and about its future”.

From the above views, Education according to Nwadiani (1990) therefore is conceptualized as the constant transmission of *ideas of value* for the development of the whole man in relation to the dynamic needs of any particular society. This education properly so called goes beyond the formal school system. It also include informal and non-formal education which makes the whole process of learning a continuous one: terminating only at death! This is more of life-lone education. Hence it becomes necessary to point out that, this education in question is not a gift to the people by man made bureaucracies characterized by power with transient euphoric gains. It should be an outgrowth from the needs and values of the

people aimed at their common good. Unfortunately education as it is practiced particularly in emerging nations seem to be far away from what it ought to be. The sequel is troubled partnership between education and society.

Typology of Educational System

Basically there are three types of education system which are not mutually exclusive. Rather they overlap. They are formal, non formal and informal education. What constitutes any form of educational system depends on the level of development, needs of any particular society and the time in question. For example according to Kempner and Castor (1988:479)

In a country like the United States, an overwhelming proportion of children can acquire at home a level of familiarity with mechanical and electrical technologies that in other countries only teaching institutions can provide

In Brazil for example, institutions have to plan carefully to teach skills that can be acquired informally in the garages and backyards of middle class Americas. The misconception in most societies hitherto was and still is, that formal education is the main system of providing learning opportunities. This erroneous belief tends to play down on non-formal and informal education. However the general picture of events has changed for the better today in most socio-cultural settings.

Formal Education (FE)

This is the education that is organized and structured servicing a particular age group. It takes place within the four walls of the schools. The institutionalization of formal education requires that teachers be appointed based on tenure to direct the teaching- learning process. The system has interrelated sub-systems or levels. For example there are the pre-school primary, secondary (grammar, technical, commercial, teacher training and comprehensive), and tertiary institutions. They are related in such a way that the products of one system turns out to be the input into another system. What goes on in the classroom system is not determined by the participants. The curriculum is designed for learners while the teachers are appointed by a higher bureaucracy. The formal school system depends on one single public budget which is politically allocated.

The formal school system differs from informal and non-formal systems in the following ways: the duration extends over a length of time making the production cycle relatively very long; it is full-time in most cases particularly in developing worlds; the structure is sequentially operated within an umbrella of defined curriculum for a specified age group designed by a central authority that also ensures system planning, administration and financing, perceiving formal education as a 'gift' to the people. There is over emphasis on age making formal education less democratic. The greatest pitfall of formal school learning efforts in Nigeria is the fact that the non-formal school learning going age groups are left out with the result that two societies are created in a single social entity. That is a society of formal learners and illiterates which has remained one of the major root causes of the socio-economic gap and mistrust in contemporary Nigeria.

The practice of denying non-school goes learning opportunities reduces to a very low ebb the aggregate effect of formal education as a precondition for overall economic and national development of emerging societies. While formal education has stagnated in developed nations, the momentum of its expansion which characterized the early years of newly independent nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America in the 60's and the first half of the 70's has declined beyond policy targets. Consequently in the face of declining formal education effort and demand worldwide, non-formal education was given a new but vigorous attention more than ever before in contemporary times.

Non-Formal Education (NFE)

The rapid decline in formal education enrolment and participation world over in the seventies led to the popularization of non formal education. The attention and support given to it by the World Bank, UNICEF and other international agencies helped in the fast pace in the spread to both the rich and disadvantaged urban poor; and the neglected rural majority Non-formal education according to Ahmed (1975) is: .

any organized, systematic, educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined non formal education includes for example agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purpose, and various community programmes of instruction in health nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like.

One disturbing fact is that educators, parents, policy makers and learners have fatally neglected non formal education (NFE). This situation has a darker image in developing countries where the euphoria of the faith in formal education as the panacea to the yawning problems of underdevelopment has not really subsided. Though nations have recently recognized the complementary role of NFE to formal education, there are no concrete data with which to express mathematically its growth and expansion. The initial efforts by nations to supply NFE were in form of adult education programmes very much under the monopolistic bureaucracy of the ministry of education. Attempts by education ministries to monopolise and centralize NFE programmes resulted in the slow progress recorded in this 'new' education direction in emerging nations. Although NFE is 'outside' the formal school system, it is more than mere adults education activities as was initially misconceived.

Unlike formal education which is interdependent, NFE learning systems are not only scattered but heterogeneous with very poor communication systems. However as Nwagwu (1978:9) asserted: "non formal education is voluntary. It is less specific about the ages of its participants but is usually more concerned with adults, school leavers and drop-outs, and all those who are no longer or have never been in the formal system". The finance sources are multiple. Despite the 'buoyant' financial status of NFE programmes, it is not easy to render any meaningful professional services to them. For this reason, the cycle of event in input processing as in formal education is almost non-existent or at best, poorly operated. On the whole, the life span of NFE is very limited. There is in most cases no fixed curriculum with inbuilt duration.

Atimes the clients determine what they would want to learn, the duration and whether to continue to do so. Self evaluation seem dominant utilizing spare-time and part-time attendance strategies.

Formal school system seem incapable in meeting the learning needs of most societies. Clients are prepared for tomorrow's world when they can not really 'survive' today. In terms of immediate value, NFE appears to be more popular. According to Thompson (1981:220) " non formal education seeks to provide clients specific and immediate needs. NFE may be focused on the specific task or skill which is needed and will be able to deal with modular units of learning derived not from some accepted concept of the way knowledge is structured but for the problems which is being faced"

Ironically, the very high enthusiasm which greeted non formal education programmes. In the 1970s lost its momentum in the first half of the eighties. The same critics of formal education did not spare NFE This time, they seem more fatal and louder in their criticisms. As observed by an international educator, " the leftist critics who had roundly condemned western style formal education as "as conspiracy of capitalists of retain their power by training docile and obedient workers who could be exploited, now condemned non formal education as a hoax designed to delude the poor into thinking they were getting the real thing" as things stand, it does appear than non formal education will continue to occupy a complementary position to formal education in many contemporary societies. This is not however to under rate the value of non formal education

Informal Education

This is the incidental learning that goes on the society all through the span of human existence. Though catholic, the amount and form of learning are contingent on the dynamics and potentials of the particular environment. Informal educational overlap both formal and non-formal education. It is continuous akin to *life long education*. Interms of spatial impact, informal education appears to affect the lives of all members of society for, it is most democratic. Quantitatively, informal education constitutes a very high proportion of human learning. Because its acquisition is less demanding and free; people in some quarters look down on this form of learning.

Central to all forms of education is learning. Throughout the lifetime of an individual, learning goes on until the end of the day. Basically, there are three types of learning which include: *maintenance, innovative and learning by shock*. The acquire body of knowledge that enable the individual to function in any given society is known as *maintenance learning*. Whereas the ability to anticipate and/or adapt to environmental changes is called *innovative learning*. *Learning by shock* is that which is acquired when the socialization of individual into maintenance learning is devoid of adaptive skills at unfortunate times.

Informal education is defined as the type of daily learning experiences that are acquired from birth till death-beyond the compartment of formal structures. It is by no means inferior to formal and non formal education. Informal education can occur at any place such as the home, school church, market place through the mass media (radio, and TV, Newspapers), and training. Human body malfunctioning, unplanned and undesirable events such as wars, riots, coups, failures and natural disasters could be sources of informal learning-Nobody, not even the so called 'educated' people can claim to have put an end to learning while still alive! Since the study life span of clients in formal school environment is fixed, and not enough to acquire most of the learning needs of society, informal education thus provides most of the things that are not taught at school. For example in most societies particularly in old Africa, children are taught informally time honoured virtues and those who possess them. Consequently, children grow up very confused in contemporary environments of mixed learning needs.

Because of the promise informal education holds for mankind, the hope of any society lies on informal education when perhaps formal and non formal education must have lost their value or are too costly for human consumption. There is therefore increasing need to enrich the forms and agencies of informal learning opportunities and by stepping up the overlaps with formal and non formal education.

The Growing Echoes of Misconceptions

Many people have hitherto criticised formal education for lack of relevance and its anti development tendencies. The sequel is a call so strong everywhere for the dismantling of formal education structures.

Informal education too did not escape from the wave of criticisms. To these educational leftists, informal education is simplistic, traditionalistic and less challenging. Above all it can not promote development in the context of the global race towards scientific and technological revolutions.

What is however current and yet disturbing despite the renewed attention to and increasing support of non formal education, is the growing echo of western misconceptions about non formal education. Ironically the same school of thought that saw the missing pivotal elements of formal education potentially hidden in non formal education were the first to shout crucify it. The myriads of misconceptions which were directed on the developing nations, were of high Eurocentric bias. To these critics, any feat demonstrated in the developing world no matter the field of human endeavour is closely perceived as magic. The misconceptions are that non formal education is cheap; designed for the poor and above all it is suited for developing countries. These misconceptions are fallacious with endemic-Euro-bias.

Emergence and growth of Western Education in Ikaland.

The emergence of western form of education in Ikaland like other parts of southern Nigeria before Amalgamation 1914 was a *historical accident*. The white man introduced and superimposed his form of education on the hitherto realistic and functional indigenous education. Be that as it may, Ika ethnic nationality did n't embrace formal education early enough. By the time they realize the need for western education, "much water had passed under the bridge" Akwukwuma (2004) had earlier given a detail presentation of education in Ikaland. I don't intend to duplication efforts.

This section is aimed at highlighting the quantitative growth of contemporary education in Ika Land so as to appreciate the matters arising. These matters form the background to the present dilemma of the people because contemporary education in Ikaland has not been able to keep pace with development and urbanization related changes. Hence there is *dissonance*, *mismarch* and *incongruous* relationship between contemporary education and Ikaland.

The church Missionaries brought western cum Christian education to Ikaland. According to Boyd (1961: 99).

... it must be noted that the Church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not do its own proper work without giving its adherents, and especially its clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and for the performance of their religious duties.

This type of education which was centred on 3R^s Reading, writing and Arithmetic was an extension of post Dark Age Era mode of learning. Vocational education was absent. All the same Ika people will ever remain grateful to these selfless Christian Missionaries.

The whole enterprise started like a mustard seed when with the help of *Mr. Golden Wikks, Government (now Erigbe) Primary School was established at Agbor in 1960.* Many primary schools were established by the Missions in various parts of Ika land. Most of the primary schools were largely “infant or Junior primaries” because pupils in these schools terminated their classes less than standard six. They acted as feeder schools to the very few “central or senior primary schools”. These senior primary schools were very few apart and located at the emerging towns of Boji,Boji and Agbor. These were Government schools Agbor, St John’s Catholic School and St John’s C.M.S school Boji-Boji Agbor. Before 1940, apart from these three senior primary schools, only St. George’s C.M.S school, Igbodo prepared pupils up to standard six. According to Akwukmma (2004: 212), “ In 1954, in the whole of the owa clan, there were only two primary schools, both C.M.S schools, with classes up to standard six in Owa Alero and Owa Oyibu” A major problem faced by products of primary education in Ika land in the early years of western education provision was the *unplanned wastages*. That is over 95 percent of primary school leavers had no placement in secondary education largely because of the *total absence* of secondary schools in the entire Ika land. This affected us as a people. Many Ika people who should have been great men and women in Nigeria took to subsistence farming, trading and artisanry. *What waste of human talents!*

According to Nwadiani (2007) “ These untapped talents in Ikaland wasted away like the sweet smell of desert flowers because of poverty, ignorance and lack of opportunities in their time”

Only very few rich, sent their children to schools in far away towns then.

Secondary education

In Ikaland secondary education was highly delayed. The Missions were not too interested. But have they not tried? What efforts did we as a people make then? Our people were hunting games and resting ! For example the data in table I will assist us to appreciate how late secondary education initiative was in Ikaland.

Table 1
Secondary Education in Southern Nigeria.

Mission/Agency	Name of School	Location	Date founded
C.M.S	C.M.S Grammar School	Lagos	1859
R.C.M.	St. Gregor’s College	Lagos	1876
Methodist	Methodist Baptist High School	Lagos	1879
Baptist	Baptist Boys’ High School	Lagos	1885
Church of Scotland	Hope Waddell Institute	Calabar	1895
C.M.S	Abeokuta Grammar School	Abeokuta	1908
Government	King’s College	Lagos	1909
Private African Initiative	Eko Boys’ High School	Lagos	1913

C.M.S	Ibadan Grammar School	Ibadan	1913
C.M.S	Ijebu-Ode Grammar School	Ijebu-Ode	1913
R.C.M	St. Mary's Convent	Lagos	1913
C.M.S	Denis Memorial Gov. secondary school	Onitsha	1925
Baptist	Baptist Girls High school	Agbor	1946
Agbor District Council/CMS	Ika Grammar School	Agbor	1960
RCM	Mary Mount College	Boji Bojiowa	1954
RCM	St Columbas TTC	Agbor	1952
RCM	St Charles College	Abavo	1963
Government:	Agbor Technical College	Agbor	
Government	Army Command Secondary School	Mbiri	2005

Source: Author's Fieldwork

While C.M.S Grammar School Lagos was founded in 1859, Hope Waddell Institute Calabar was established on March 8, 1895 Abeokuta Grammar school in 1908; Ibadan Grammar school in 1913; D.M.G.S. Onitsha in 1925. The Baptist Missions' benevolence saw the birth of Baptist Girls High school Agbor in 1946 with the hand work and inspiration of Miss Ruth Walden. The school took off with nine girls. In 1952 St Columbas. T.T.C was founded followed by Mary Mount College in 1954 by the Roman Catholic Mission. Ika Grammar school Agbor was founded by Agbor District council but later handed over to C.M.S (Anglican Church) for Management. It was later in 1963 St Charles College Abavo as established.

The major feature of these missions and early schools was the "grammar" content. They were bookish and literary devoid of vocational and technical skills. It was in the early 1980 that the only technical (Agbor Technical)

college was established. It's mandate is to produce vocational and technical oriented school leavers for the world of work and self reliance. In 2005, army command secondary school was established by Federal Government at Mbiri.

Between 1970 and 1973, government take over of secondary schools from missions and voluntary agencies was completed. The U.P.E of 1976, prepared the ground for the boom in the expansion and spread of secondary education.

With the era of free secondary education in old Bendel State under the leadership of Governor Prof Ambrose Ali in the 1980's every community that requested secondary schools got approval. They were all *day schools*. There are 60 primary schools with 17,084 pupils in Ika south LGA.

With only one secondary school in the 1940s; there are 34 junior and senior secondary schools in Ika south LGA with 10,508 students enrolled (Ministry of Education Agbor , 2008) .There are 61 primary schools with 21,266 pupils; 20 JS and 18 SS schools with 7517 and 5231 students respectively in Ika North East (Ministry of education, Owa oyibu 2008). So on the whole there are as at July 2008, 121 primary schools with 38,350 pupils ; 37 Junior and 35 senior secondary schools, (75) with total student enrolment of 23,256. Quantitatively, these figures are impressive as to the demand for education in Ikaland at pre-tertiary level.

EXPECTED ROLES OF EDUCATION

The entire life of a people like in Ikaland is intricately tied to its educational practices. Education plays several roles. Consequently, nations and communities as well as agencies invest in the education of its citizenry because of economic, social and political benefits derivable. This is why as noted by Nwadiani (2000:128) "when governments and communities fail to support the people's education, individuals do allocate their scarce resources to the enterprise even when they have to borrow". There are however some unintended yet undesirable outcomes of schooling.

FRN(2004:6-7) in the National Policy on Education declared with the belief that:

- education is an instrument for national development; to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education;
- education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society;
- every Nigerian (indeed Ika) child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability;
- there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria (and Ikaland); to this end school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education.

The hope is that educated people of Ika ethnic nationality who are the products of schooling like other Nigerians will be equipped with the philosophy of the nation rapped in the education services being provided. That is the *inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for survival of individual and the acquisition of skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society*

Having adopted education as an instrument *per excellence* for affecting national and technological development, both Federal, State and local governments like those in Ikaland have stupendously expanded the education system without a corresponding match with *quality*. It must be noted that the acceleration of social and information changes in contemporary times now place so much pressure on quality assurance in education.

As a people with a passionate drive towards development, several changes have occurred which must be responded to in a quality context. These are the rise of:

- Individualization\ Independent humanization
- Informationalization\ Lifelong learning
- Internationalization\ Globalization

Those developments need to be accommodated in our quest for the provision of education and the expectations therefrom. Cardinaly, the expected role of education is the training and production of skilled and knowledgeable manpower for both the world of work and overall national development. That was why Harbison(1973) declared that :

Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of a nation. Capital and natural resources are active agents of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development; clearly a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people, utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop any thing else.

In Ikaland as it were in many parts of southern Nigeria in the early years of formal education enterprise, largely *sturbon and or lazy children* were those released by their parents to the missionaries for schooling. The loved ones were kept at home or taken to the farm. When suddenly and overtime, the benefits of schooling began to show, many parents became interested in sending their children to school.

The outcome of schooling in Ikaland has become undesirable on one hand and on the other hand very shameful “ Formal education has relatively come a long way in Ikaland yet its future is not too clear, in a context in which the euphoria therefrom the provision of the service as the panacea to the growing problems of underdevelopment appear to be in serious doubt” Nwadiani (2001). Education in Ikaland is like a failed or failing project. *It does appear that contemporary education in Ikaland is in a state of coma!*

THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN IKALAND

To discuss the state of education is to recognize the organistic nature of the “industry” That is, we are concerned with the observable and at some levels the intangible *condition* of educational provisions and practices. In otherwords, “ *How does education enterprise stand*” in relation to its role expectations? It could mean the *state of affairs* of education, the *crises elements* of the system or sector and the *unintended and undesirable matters arising*. It maybe referred to as *schooling or learning shock; education system failure; and the rots; dystrophies*” and *dysfunctions* of the sector. The state of education could be assessed interms of the relationship between the system and society. Is it a *Mismatch, dissonance or incongruous relationship*? Is education playing *ambivalent* roles? Let us identify and discuss these *rots* in contemporary education in Ikaland.

Infrastructural decay

What makes education a valued and meaningful commodity is teaching-leaning facility (the availability, adequacy maintenance and relevance). School buildings add colour to schooling with its esthetic inspiration and motivation in attraction. Unfortunately learning facilities in Ikaland and possibly in other parts of the state are not only deteriorated but highly dilapidated making schools very unsafe for children’s learning pictures 1-3 are testimonies of the state of school buildings in some parts of Ikaland. These are death traps for both school children and staff. How did they get to these levels of dilapidation? Indeed some school buildings in Ikaland got to this level of neglect, decay and deprivation largely because of poor maintenance culture in our society

P1

P2

P3

Nwadiani (1989-1999) carried out several studies on the state of learning facilities in Bendel (Edo-Delta), Imo, Plateau, Bauchi and Sokoto States and recently (2008) in Ikaland specifically. The studies showed that learning environment in Nigeria and Ikaland are uncondusive for and inhibitive to learning particularly in rural and old schools. Classrooms are dilapidated, overcrowded, uncompleted, without doors and widows; no enough chairs and desks for both learners and teachers as most students sit on uncemented floors, uncemented blocks, bamboo sticks . The available chairs and desks are shared. For example a desk that is meant for a learner could be found in some schools being shared by the children see (Pi x.4)

P 4

Private schools in the land are worse hit as a large proportion of them are in incompleted buildings yet approved by Government! To lend support to the degree of infrastructural shortage and decay in schools, during the recent *Primary Education Summit* organized by Delta State. Mrs. Elizabeth Uvo-Gardner the Commissioner for Education (vanguard July 19, 2008)

disclosed that with a total of 1,171 primary schools and pupils enrolment of 391,489, the state requires at least 15,050 classrooms with 3, 998 requiring renovation. Only 85,895 desks are in good condition

With respect to *school fence*, some schools in Ikaland have enjoyed this *miracle*. But does fence promote teaching and learning? Within the façade of school fences are absence or shortage of science laboratories for the teaching of sciences. In Ikaland, apart from the *first generation secondary schools* in the main towns such as Baptist model secondary school; Ika Grammar schools; Mary mount college and Gbenoba Grammar school, laboratories are only by imagination. What is in vogue is *Alternative to practicals*

This is the age of computers and information Technology (IT). It is expected that every school both primary and secondary should have a computer cum information Technology lab. For now, not for our schools. The result is that we are producing *modern day functional illiterates* from our schools in Ikaland. This is sad! Who should be held accountable for this dilemma?

Teaching personnel crisis

The teacher makes the difference in the educational process for you cannot teach what you don't know! In the past the teaching problem was that of number. There were very few qualified (graduates) in schools in Ikaland until the late 1970s. In some schools only the principal and probably the vice Principals were university graduates.

Today the crisis is that of *quality* of teachers and not number. Their training is poor in most cases through the institutionalized part-time programmes that are *commercially organized*. The teacher graduates obtaining big *certificates with little knowledge* in his/her academic field of training. In our schools, some teachers exhibit intellectual Ignorance, masquerading incompetence and low imaginative thought. These class of teachers could be a curse than a blessing. They end up *compulsorily miseducating* our children.

The level of commitment to work by many teachers in our schools is very unsatisfactory. Many have deadened their consciences such that the primary job of teaching has become “part-time” with divided loyalty. Many of them don't go to school yet at the end of the month they collect their salaries with the collusion of criminal based school heads. Many teachers either take to *Okada riding* or *trading* or *farming*. What a

shame for the contemporary teacher in Ikaland to loose their integrity as they pursue *pedestrian values*. That is not the way to make ends meet.

The crises of Teaching and Learning

In the past, teachers taught with zeal, interest and unalloyed commitment. Students were eager with excitement to drink from the *pot of knowledge of the teacher*. Teachers demonstrated some high degree of versatility trying to win the hearts of young students. Many students offered certain subjects largely because of the teacher. They delivered their intellectual goods well. They were very resourceful

The crisis of contemporary teaching- learning process is not only knowledge delivery but the use of old fashioned and outdated modes of impacting knowledge and information to learners. The contemporary world of teaching has gone *pedagotronic with computer assisted simulative systems*. Unfortunately because of poor training; no-retraining opportunities, lack of modern teaching resources, in inhibitive learning environments, the teacher in our land still and continues to rely on the *mechanical, primitive, oppressive and rote-learning approaches* in a what is called *knowledge banking*. This is a product of the *pedagogy of the oppressed* which is no longer fashionable . The result of this approach to teaching the learner is *mere certification rather than knowledge acquisition*. This is the bane of our time. Because the labour market emphasises *certificate as employment instrument*, our children go out by all means to obtain certificates.

The crisis of studentship

One of the ills in contemporary education in Ikaland is students schooling behaviour. When schools emerged in Ikaland in the early days, studentship was celebrated with hope and hardwork not by force but self induced. Those were the good old days. These days, studentship is seen by learners not as a *privileged nor investment into the future but a burden and punishment by their parents*. Schools are seen as joyless places. Parents now beg them to go to school. They are lucky!

Many children are not prepared for schooling. They take off from home but never get to school. They get trapped in what I call the *lost world*- a world that is neither a home nor school. Here all *manner of sinful* activities are carried out freely. Commitment to teaching and learning is low with abnormal studying habits. They study only during examination and for few hours. *If you want to hide a treasure from modern day students, keep it in a book!* They will not get there. On the whole the level of *intellectual readiness* of our children remain very close to zero. This is also because many of the students don't have education materials. Some sell their textbooks back to booksellers or their classmates at *recharge card* prices and then school without learning materials.

The future development of Ikaland rests squarely in the hands of students of today. Are these the people that will be able to stimulate and sustain development in the land? No society has ever developed with an army of *educated illiterates and failures*. This is a potential risk that should be a source of concern to all

Examination Malpractice

Examination which is for now a means of assessing the level of students' understanding and performance ought to be a serious academic business to reward hardwork and excellence. Therefore both the students and educators prepare for the activity in the past. In contemporary times and indeed Ikaland like other parts of the nation examination is a *joke*. It has lost its meaning and relevance.

What has damaged the value of schooling is *examination malpractice* which has become endemic, widespread and a *cankerworm* in our school system. The modes of malpractice have become both crude

and sophisticated. It's prevalence is largely because the culture of success without work has gradually become institutionalized and complex. This is because both *students, educators, parents, school heads, members examination officers and sometimes community members are openly involved by way of support and funding the sinful activity*. This is unfortunate.

Consequently examination grades are sold even in primary schools. The quality of students' grades depends on how much they offer to those in change either in cash or kind, sometimes both. Because of this development, hardwork, merit and scholarship are dethroned in our schools. The colleges of education, universities are serious cuprits. Delta State government should be commended for its' stand and fight against examination malpractice. The war will be won in no distant future if all stakeholders genuinely cooperate. The level of leakage and cancellation of subjects such as Mathematics, Physics and English show a nation that can not organize an ordinary level examination for Secondary School children. The results students obtain don't correlate with their acquired knowledge. Inshort they possess certificates that are not theirs.

A very *funny phenomenon* gradually developing is the movement of rural school students to good and urban schools for teaching and learning. But at SS3 they migrate back to rural schools in Ikaland and neighbouring and remote village schools in Edo state where examination malpractice is "freely" carried out (Nwadiani 2007)

It must be noted that some of our children are not performing well in external examinations out side Ikaland. This is largely because of poor teaching; wrong and inverted learning values and the aftermat of examination malpractice. The information contained in Table 3 show how well Ika ethnic nationality children performed in the Post JAMB screening test in University of Benin. These include both UME and Direct Entry applicants.

Table 3 PUME & PUDE Scores of some Ika Children University of Benin 2007

S/N	Course Applied for	PUME/ PUDE Score	Remark
1	Medicine	37	Failed and Not Admitted
2	Economics and Statistics	43	Failed and Not Admitted
3	Political Science & Pub Adm.	43	Failed and Not Admitted
4	Electrical Engineering	34	Failed and Not Admitted
5	Medicine	51	Passed but Admitted for Biochemistry
6	Education. Pol. Science	33	Failed and Not Admitted to study
7	Pharmacy	30	Failed and Not Admitted
8	Medicine	58	Passed but admitted to study optometry
9	Petroleum Engineering	30	Failed and Not Admitted
10	Chemical Engineering	34	Failed and Not Admitted
11	Education/Chemistry	38	Failed and Not Admitted
12	English & Literature	36	Failed and Not Admitted
13	Accounting	38	Failed and Not Admitted
14	Sociology & Anthropology	40	Failed and Not Admitted
15	Business Education	51	Passed but not Qualified

Source: compiled by the author from PUME & PUDE records, Uniben, 2007.

Out of the sampled fifteen candidates, only three passed the PUME/PUDE with baseline scores. Two of them though they passed, they didn't meet the cut off points of the course applied for hence were admitted to study related courses. The candidate No. 15 with a score of 51 couldn't be admitted because of qualification deficiency. This pattern of performance is not good enough for Ika ethnic nationality if we are to develop fast in this knowledge driver economy.

Cultism and youth militancy

Of the ills therefrom contemporary education in Ikaland the most life threatening is the rise of *cultism and youth militancy*. All of a sudden, *Satan and its agents* invaded our educational Institutions as the evil has spread to primary schools.

In the past cults were for people of exoteric knowledge, high and discipline minds who secretly came together for their own good and that of their immediate environment. They were not harmful. It has been hijacked by criminals who now hide under the cloak of cultism to unleash terror on their innocent victims and immediate environment. Parents unfortunately take sides with their children and wards. Members of these cults are children of rich and well placed parents. Area boys, Okada riders, butchers, mechanics and all manner of human beings are now members. They *rape, maim, kill, rob and kidnap*. The general fear as Orewa (1997) rightly puts it, “It must be a nightmare for Nigerians and indeed Ika people to feel that in the future these students who have a culture of eliminating others will become the nations political and community leaders and top managers in our private sector. They will certainly be involved in hiring assassins to eliminate political opponents and those who are on their way in their ascension to the ladder of leadership”.

What is uninteresting is that some parents are cult members. It is therefore no news if their children are members.

To appreciate the enormity of the risk therefrom secret cult activities in out land, there are over sixty (60) cult groups in our educational institutions. Some of them are listed.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| (1) Buccaneers (Sea Lords) | (21) Nation Association of Adventures |
| (2) Black axe | (22) Black Scorpion |
| (3) Black cat | (23) Eagle Club |
| (4) Maphite | (24) The termites |
| (5) Vikings | (25) Fraternity of Friends |
| (6) Mgba Magba Brothers | (26) Red sea Horse |
| (7) Temple of Edem | (27) National Association
Airs Lord |
| (8) Trojan Horse | (28) Knight cadet |

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (9) Eiyе Confraternity | (29) Black Brassiere |
| (10) The Jurists | (30) Daughters of Jezebel |
| (11) Gentlemen’s club | (31) Sonmen |
| (12) The Fame | (33) Notorious 14 |
| (13) The Amazon (for females only) | (34) 11 Hard |
| (14) KKK (Klu Klu Klan) | (34) Death Row |
| (15) Royal Queen | (35) Black Pyrates |
| (16) Mafia | (36) Infadum (for Teachers only) |
| (17) Neo-Black Movement | (37) Royal Maffs |
| (18) Executioners | (38) Cappa Veridetta |
| (19) Black Beret | (39) Saint Lunatic Confraternity |
| (20) Dreaded Friends of Friends | (40) Egbe- Dudu. |

If some of these cult groups are found in schools in Ikaland, then the entire Ika Ethnic Nationality both at home and away are sitting on a time bomb! As recorded in (Deut 27:25)

“ curse be he that taketh reward
to slay an innocent person”

ARE WE ALL GUILTY FOR THE EDUCATION ROTS?

I don’t intend to answer this question. It is better to allow individuals or groups to respond to it. Be that as it way, when things go wrong, three groups of individuals are held accountable. These are those who plan it; those who implement it, and those who neither plan nor implement but they watch the unpleasant event happen. Put in another way, Why did the rots in contemporary education in Ikaland get to this state? Some forces or variables are implicated. Let us briefly highlight them.

- **Government Policy Inconsistency and weak political will**

It does appear that ineffective functional differentiation of education policy plans; inconsistency and weak political will to support education account for the sector rots. Educational policy change so rapidly. The Universal Basic (UBE) policy is still postrate at the level of implementation.

Government should demonstrate some measure of sincerely, strong political will involving relevant stakeholders in the planning and delivery of educational policies.

- **Underfunding**

What stands at the centre of the ills in contemporary education in Ikaland in particular and in Nigeria in general is *underfunding* of the sector. This is why all other education resources are in short supply except students. There is an International Baseline Funding of Education which is 26% of GNP of a nation as recommended by Unesco. The attainment of this level of funding is like a mirage in Nigeria. In Delta State, N9,272, 500,000 was budgeted for education in 2006 fiscal year. This figure declined in 2007 to N7,600,867,1141 (DSG 2007: 140).

The only way functional and quality education could take place is through adequate financing and utilization for the provision of required education inputs. All concerned should embrace and promote maintenance culture to avoid decay like is the case with educational infrastructure and equipment.

- **The travails of the teacher**

Teachers are often times told that their rewards is in heaven therefore they should endure their earthly sufferings! Is this fair?

Teachers are the sainted pioneers of civilization,
the nursing mothers unto whom the future of
generations is won. The torch bearers yet it
does appear that they are sentenced to a perpetual
life of **decent poverty**

The teacher in Ikaland, like his colleagues in most parts of Africa of all professional workers one of most poorly remunerated. In most societies the labouring class seem to enjoy than the teacher greater security. His dilemmas notwithstanding, his services are indispensable. If he does not go on *strike*, his leave allowance, and salaries will not be paid. This is why they are not too committed to their job any longer. What portends great danger is that those who go into teacher training are *frustrated candidates* who couldn't get their courses of choice. Any slightest opportunity they leave. *Who will teach our grand Children?*

Ika ethnic nationality must develop. This will be stimulated by good products of quality teachers. Therefore, those who will teach in our schools must be employed by *merit* and not by *Imammadu*-; professionally retrained, encouraged through on-the-job training on a regular basis, well motivated and valued for the work they do.

- **The Dilemmas of Parents**

Parents are highly implicated as being responsible to a large extent for the education rots in the land. They are enveloped with some dilemmas.

Many parents can not be said to be rich and economically viable in Ikaland. There is increasing poverty these days than in the past. The land on which they depend on for subsistence farming is no longer fertile. Many now migrate to Edo state villages. For this reason, they are unable to *invest in and fund* their children's education. This accounts for the increasing *school dropout phenomenon*.

Some parents have *lost control over their children because of centrifugal forces of history*. Hence the level of moral decay, indiscipline and their involvement in cult activities.

- **Community Disinterest**

There is what seem like *community disinterest* in contemporary schooling. When community schools were being established in the early 1980s, they were greeted with very high enthusiasm and excitement. Communities freely gave out large expanse of land that can house a tertiary institution. With cooperation and sacrifice they built and equipped these schools before handing them over to government.

This is not the case in contemporary Ikaland. The communities watch the schools they build decay, collapse and vandalized. In some communities they have encroached on the lands they gave out for schooling in running battles with school heads over boundary adjustments. Perhaps not to really blame them. The villagers had high hopes that the schools and their products would transform their places *ceteris paribus*. Rather the schools they built are now the source of their frustration. Schooling has failed them and their children!

- **Unemployment of School leavers**

The travellers are back and covered with debts! This is the situation among very many school leavers in Ikaland. The investment of parents hard earned and atimes borrowed money in the children and wards is because they hoped that at their graduation they would be employed expecting the benefits as *old age insurance*. This hope is dashed as their children remain unemployed with frustration. They see their years of schooling as a waste since some of them may never get a government paid job.

Apart from what it takes to get a job these days, but because most of these school leavers *acquired only certificates without knowledge* through examination malpractice, some of them are not *employable*. This is the crux of the matter. These are the people who put society and its members *at risk*.

- **Inverted values of society**

The value that people pursue this day is *inverted*. What matter now is material wealth. Therefore there is this craze for money. What is important is not how you acquire your wealth-whether by *stealing, ritual killing, negative intelligence* but what you have. The ways these ill-gotten wealth are used around us get the youths confused. Students become distracted and impatient. Some of them abandon their education in search of money either in Nigeria or outside the country.

Contentment has eluded our people. The rat race has brought in so much unhealthy competition and rivalry. Because of money people have lost such virtues as honesty, patience, integrity and contentment. The love of money has brought so much *evil and Sorrow* to our land. After acquiring sinful money, what next?. As we craze for and worship money and those who have it, let us be reminded as recorded in (1 Timothy 6: 6-7) that

Godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world,

and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

“Vanity of vanities, said the preacher, all is vanity” (Eccl.:12:8)

CONCLUSION

In this lecture the author has presented graphically the *rots* in contemporary education in Ikaland. Consequently the quality of education being delivered to the people is in serious doubt. There is no alternative to quality education.

Quality education is a product of adequate teaching and learning inputs *apolitically* provided and utilized in a conducive environment manned by school heads who understand leadership, well trained and retrained, motivated, remunerated, and valued teachers; well supervised by honest Inspectorate of the Ministry of education and supported by other stakeholders on continuous basis.

Ika sons and daughters both alumni and non alumni of our schools who are well placed should be able to attract resources to boost education dethroning *clannish and primitive politicking*. Ika must be seen in reality as one entity - *our own ethnic nationalit*. *Those things that tend to divide us must be left to history*.

Ika Ethnic Nationality can not be left behind in the cult of modern civilization that is knowledge driven. Our children in school should be encouraged to be knowledge acquisition conscious rather than mere certificates. Ikaland must rise! Ikaland must develop God on our side positioning people of good will and not local *imperialists and opressors*.

From now on, we must all serve Ikaland and its people as *menials* and not as overlords, collecting and dissemination the facts we ought to desire. We must also be torch-bearers of our ethnic nationality, and the *protectors of the flame* in the spirits of **Ibuanyinndandan** and **erurukpu eku** should we in our urgency endanger its brightness. We must all work together to build an Ika ethnic nationality of our dream for the incoming generation.

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