

## **RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HAUSA LANGUAGE EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

*Education remains the key that opens the doors and windows of development locally and globally. Through education process, understanding, knowledge and skills are provided as basis for growth and development. Thus, mind setting and exploitation for national development are best achieved through the education process in both formal and non-formal education system. Since human endeavors are effectively through the instrumentality of people's language, it implies that language education particularly local languages are pedestal for national development. The emphasis in the National Policy on Education 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) recognizing the key role of indigenous languages especially the three major Nigerian languages Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba to national development is understandable. This paper intends to address Hausa language education towards achieving national developmental issues and challenges. Issues addressed are that of: policy funding, infrastructure, resource centres etc. Also, the paper attempts at highlighting Hausa language education challenges for national development based on the issues analysed. The paper adopts secondary data as source of its information. Paper believes with faithful implementation of a restructured education in general, commitment on the part of our leaders (political will) and absence of corruption in our daily activities, Nigeria will achieve the desired national development.*

**Keywords:** *Restructuring, National Development, Issues, Challenges*

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### **Introduction**

In general terms, language constitutes human peculiarity, unique attribute of man's distinctiveness and priceless mandate of superiority over the entire creation and above the globe (Usman, 2011). Thus, language is an important cause and a veritable tool for individual, national and global growth and development. In particular, Hausa language is an indigenous, major Nigerian and an emerging global language. Accordingly, the language is widely spoken within and outside Northern Nigeria, stronger than Swahili (Adamu, 1978) and a second language to Arabic in Africa (Schul, 1983). Hausa language is West African Lingua Franca (Bodman and Fromkin, 1978).

The strength and value of Hausa language as a key player in local and global development have been highlighted at various important fora. According to Amfani (2016), Hausa language has been recognized internationally in various spheres including: Microsoft Hausa Glossary, 2008; Foreign Universities offering Hausa studies in American and European Universities e.g University of Wisconsin, California, Indiana, Stanford (United States of America), London (United Kingdom), Paris Sorbonne (France) and Leiden (Poland); International media broadcasting e.g British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), The Voice of America (VOA), Radio France International and Deutsche Welle (DW); International works in Hausa through translation of holy books

e.g Bible and Qur'an, translation in Hausa of a 400 years old great African story 3 years ago, facebook (Use of Hausa on facebook) etc.

Hausa is indeed a bridge language that allows speakers of different Nigerian languages to workshop together under the same roof. Hausa is a language of national politics, commerce, local and corporate business, advertisement, broadcasting, print and electronic media. A national language among Nigerian armed forces, paramilitary and security agencies (Amfani, 2016).

However, in spite of Hausa language status and value, plus all the policy statements made in the Nigerian Constitution and the National Policy on Education to address indigenous language education for national growth and development, issues and challenges that retards our quest for the overall national development through education in general and Hausa language education in particular still exist. Regetively, due to the existing issues and challenges, most citizens of Nigeria are either illiterate even in their mother tongue or the nation's imposed national language, English, a foreign language. Justifying this, the minister of information and culture stated that, "There is a remarkable decline in the use of our indigenous languages by our children and youths; many of them cannot read or write in their mother tongue" (Daily Trust, 16-11-18)". The truth remains, for Nigeria to assume a realistic national development, our education system must move beyond its current mediocre performance through holistic restructuring that tinkers with the current education system in terms of existing policies, programmes and implementation arrangements for us to attend national development.

No wonder, the quest for restructuring education in Nigeria for national development remains the worthier

topic of discussion and debate today. Restructuring Nigeria's education in general will no doubt address the crisis of nation-building and development.

### **Concept Clarification**

#### **Hausa Language Education**

Hausa language education is a process that, provides understanding, knowledge and skills of its language rich content, unique literature and culture for the purpose of ensuring effective dissemination of information on same and provide basis for unity and meaningful growth and development of individual and the nation that utilizes the language in its daily activities. To achieve these noble objectives, the National Policy on Education 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) provides Hausa language education as a medium of instruction at basic education and core subject at upper primary and secondary schools. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National University Commissions (NUC)'s Minimum Standards provided for Hausa courses at Federal Colleges of Education and Nigerian Universities respectively.

#### **Restructuring**

Restructuring is the act of recognizing a system for the purpose of making it more profitable or better for its purpose

(<https://wikipedia.org>restructuring>).

Bringing about a drastic or fundamental internal change that alters the relationship between different components or elements of an organization or system ([www.businessdictionary](http://www.businessdictionary)). In this regard, restructuring is a type of action we take on the topic of discussion that involves significantly modifying our policies, programmes and operational arrangements as a way of eliminating impediment and

improving output. Restructuring requires a lot of work, sacrifices and political will.

### **National Development**

The term 'National Development' is very broad and comprehensive. It includes all aspect of development of a nation namely; political, social, economic etc. It is a dynamic and revolutionary development of society. It is both qualitative and quantitative.

National development is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals. It includes full growth and expansion of our industries, agriculture, education, social, religious and cultural institutions for the benefits of all in the nation. It is an all-round and a balanced development (<https://www.quora.com>).

In summary, national development involves the simultaneous individual and corporate pursuit of prosperity and equity in life through the provision of needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation.

A country is classified as developed when it is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. Since 1971, United Nation Organization (UNO)'s yardsticks for measuring national development are equal living standard for all, share of all in profit, distribution of income and capital. Expansion of facilities regarding education, health, shelter and social welfare etc (<https://www.quora.com>). Based on Nigeria statistics of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators, the United Nation Development Programme current ranking placed the country as number 152 out of 188 countries in human development index. Nigeria today is below Ghana, Zambia (139), Gabon (109) and Equatorial Guinea (135) (<https://www.premium.com>).

### **Issues**

Issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking, most important in what is being discussed (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>>issue). An issue is an important subject that people are arguing about, discussing (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com>>issue). Issue is an important topic or problem for debate or discussion. Therefore, issues are the current significant topics or subjects attracting people's attention leading to discussion or debate particularly among the stakeholders with the aim of sorting them out and making necessary submission for a way forward. In this regard, issues refers to those sensitive or key problems that require urgent attention to improve Hausa education policy, programme and implementation of same to guarantee learners' understanding, knowledge and skills for national development.

### **Language Policy Issue**

National language policy in our education system started with the British educational strategies in Nigeria which advocated for the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction for the child education. An idea adopted by the successive governments since independence. However, the first positive official statement on language policy is the provision of the 1979 Constitution Chapter 7.51 which states that, English will remain the language of business in the National Assembly but Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo would be used in the Assembly whenever a suitable arrangement is made.

Another constitutional backing to language policy is provided in Chapter 7.91 of the constitution which states "The business in the Houses of Assembly shall be conducted in English in addition to the one or more languages spoken in the state" (Yalwa, 2016). The 1979 constitutional

policy provisions and statements as amended have accorded the three indigenous languages equal rights and the status of major Nigerian languages. Also, the constitutional policy statement has given the Nigerian states an opportunity to formulate their own language policies, develop and use same in legislative proceedings. The two constitutional provisions are subjected to “whenever a suitable arrangement is made” and in addition to the one or more languages spoken in the state”.

Regarding Language Education Policy, the National Policy on Education 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) provided some policy statements and directions for all levels of education in Nigeria. The policy specified goals and objectives of education in Nigeria, defined structures and strategies to realize the goals, provided the language of instructions and quality of instructions. Some of the National Language Education statements are:

Section 1 paragraph 3a states that ‘Education is an instrument for national development and social change’ among other Nigeria’s philosophy and goals of education. This statement has actually recognized the role of education to national development. How to achieve this fundamental goal, is provided in section 1 paragraphs 8b and c which state “teaching shall be practical, activity-based, experiential and IT supported, education shall be related to overall community needs”. As to the language of instruction, section 1 paragraph 8g states “every child shall be taught in the mother tongue or language of the immediate community for the first four years basic education. In addition, it is expected that every child shall learn one Nigerian language”. At primary education level, section 2 paragraph 20d states “the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three

years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject”. However, 20e states, “from the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment, French and Arabic shall be taught as subjects”. The basic education policy objective for post-basic education and career development as in section 3 paragraph 36a is to provide certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background. The language of instruction at post-basic education is obviously English, while indigenous languages are given the least consideration as non-compulsory subject, restricted to individual’s choice.

From the National Policy on Education 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) statements cited, the role of education to national development have been recognized. Also, indigenous languages importance as medium of instructions to national development have been demonstrated but limited to basic education level (Pre-primary – primary 3) while at upper primary, junior and senior secondary school levels, the policy empowered and recognized English language as not only the language of instructions, but a compulsory core subject.

### **Funding Issues**

The major issue to the provision of qualitative education in general and Hausa education in particular for national development is funding. Global effort through Joutein Convention, 1990 recommended at least 26% of member nations’ annual budget to education sector. Nigeria is a signatory to the 1990 Joutein Convention (Usman, 2017). However, the Nigerian governments, past and present since 1990, have not been faithful to the signed global document.

For instance, Federal Government budgeted only 6% for education in 2015, 2016 and 2017 allocating N493bn, N367.73bn and N448bn respectively (Usman, 2017) 2018 and 2019 recorded budgetary increase to education sector with N496.74bn representing 5.77 percent of N8.6tn allocated to education sector in 2018, excluding special allocation N605.79bn to Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (<http://punchng.com> education) and N620.5bn representing 7.05% is allocated to education sector in the 2019 national budget ([punchng.com/2019](http://punchng.com/2019) budget). Available records and statistics show Nigerian budgetary allocation to education has been below 26% as recommended by Joutain Convention since 1990 and 20% minimum recommended for developing countries by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Nigeria budget to education has been per below Ghana, South Africa, Egypt and among other African countries who for the past 10 years have never budgeted less than 20% to education in their national budget ([punchng.com/2019](http://punchng.com/2019) budget). Judging from the low budgetary allocation to education annually, poor releases of funds, abuse of the budget implementation details and lack of transparency and accountability, it is near impossible for the education sector to perform optimally for national development.

### **Infrastructure Issue**

Infrastructure here means facilities, systems and services required to run an effective education in general and Hausa language education in particular. To run an efficient and result oriented Hausa language education that will add value to our national development, we require standard classrooms, lecture halls, workshops, theatres, e-libraries and digital language laboratories, support systems and facilities etc. Provision of these facilities ensure

conducive teaching and learning environment and allows easy access to understanding, knowledge and skills of any subject matter that guarantee national development. However, despite the annual budgetary allocation to education, foreign and international organizations jointly sponsored project interventions on education from World Bank, Nigeria's Tertiary Education Trust Fund and the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) support to education in general, the state of infrastructure in Nigerian schools and tertiary institutions is not satisfying (Usman, 2017).

Usman (2017) further stated that:

*the reality is that, were the educational infrastructural facilities are provided, overcrowding has taken over, hence, the facilities are overstretched with pupils/students using them like refugees. Libraries, learning resources and language laboratories for Hausa language education are mostly not provided or poorly equipped, insufficient enough to cater for the growing student population in schools and for effective training.*

### **Teachers Issue**

Teaching is a noble profession that impact knowledge and skills to learners by a professionally trained teacher. Thus, proper teaching require a trained person, teacher fully equipped with knowledge, skills and techniques for a teaching job. A trained teacher must be certified and seen as qualified, capable, intellectually sound and emotionally ready to teach in the area of his/her training.

Although, National Policy on Education provided that only trained teachers, equipped with the techniques of using Hausa as a medium of instruction at basic educational level should be allowed to teach in catchment areas, however, in the



core Northern states, the issue as Usman (2007) lamented is that:

*it is unfortunate, today we have majority of the subject teachers at pre-primary and primary schools are not trained to teach using Hausa as a medium of instruction in the affected states. Instead, teachers use English language, a language most teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of as medium of instruction at this very important level of education.*

The foregoing is a clear statement of the fact that, we do not have enough qualified professional teachers to handle the provisions of the National Policy on Education quoted in this paper under language education policy issue.

### **Challenges**

Challenge is something new and difficult which require great effort and determination(<https://www.collindictionary.com>dictionary>). A different task or problem is something that puts you to test (<https://www.vocabulary.com> dictionary>). To this paper, challenges refers to the current problems demonstrating the shortcoming associated with issues of our national education system in general and Hausa language education in particular. The shortcomings are common in the nation's policies, programmes and implementation procedures. The time to address the challenges by government, institutions and other stakeholders to meet up with international standard is now. The challenges focus should be on policy and funding for standard infrastructure, facilities, equipment and quality training of teachers.

### **Policy**

There are policies in our constitution and National Policy on Education. The challenges in our language policy in the constitution are the restriction conditions

imposed on the indigenous language roles in running the affairs of the nation, particularly legislation at both national and state assemblies. The restrictions are as stated in chapter 7.51 regarding the use of Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo at national assembly and chapter 7.91 "shall use English in addition to one or more languages spoken in the state at state assemblies". The imposed conditions have not been met up-to-date. This is a great challenge which requires great effort and determination to remove it from the constitution and provide all necessary support to indigenous languages to take their rightful position in the constitution and working of both our national and state assembly proceedings.

The language education policy challenge is the limited use of indigenous languages i.e Hausa language as medium of instruction to basic education level. The catch them young for national development through the instrument of indigenous languages should be extended to other levels of our education.

The most urgent task now is to reduce English language to its rightful position, L2 subject in our National Policy on Education. The foreign language should be a normal subject as in the case of Arabic and French in our education policy. Furthermore, the issue raised in section 1 paragraph 8b and c of our National Policy on Education, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2013) which states "teaching shall be by practical, activity based, experiential and IT supported" is no doubt a great challenge. This is simply because most schools (basic and post basic, and tertiary institutions) find it impossible to adhere to the policy provisions. The reasons are either no qualified teachers, poor infrastructure, learning facilities, overcrowding in classes or lecture and theater halls.

## Funding

Adhering to international standard and agreement signed by Nigeria remain a challenge arising from its poor annual budgetary allocation to education. Records and statistics of funds allocated to education 2015 – 2019 is far below the recommend 26% by Joutein Convention of 1990 and 20% minimum recommended by UNESCO. Nigeria is below some African countries whose annual budgetary allocation to education for the past 10 years have never been less than 20% of their annual budget. With dwindling, poor funding, and associated problems (mentioned under funding issues), financing educational infrastructural needs, provision of facilities and equipment, provision of standard training and retraining of teachers to meet up with our quest for national development through education is impossible. The challenge is for our political leaders and all stakeholders to ensure that, budgetary allocation to education is not below 20% minimum recommended by UNESCO. Nigeria, as a signatory to the agreement, should respect and adhere to its provisions and implementation of same.

## Suggestions/Recommendations

Arising from the issues and challenges discussed in this paper, the following suggestions/recommendations are submitted as a way forward:

- i. Nigerians should keep faith in our indigenous languages' strength and value to deliver our national goal.
- ii. The conditions attached in our constitution restricting the use of indigenous languages in the business of both national and state assemblies should be removed. All the necessary arrangement should be put in place and allow proceedings in our indigenous languages for popular

participation and for the sake of our national development.

- iii. Limitation imposed in the National Policy on Education restricting the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction to basic education level only should be removed. Nigerians should join hand and give maximum support to indigenous languages and allow the languages to serve as medium of instructions in our schools. Hausa should be placed as compulsory subject in post primary, while English language is reverted to its rightful position, L2 subject as in the case of Arabic and French.
- iv. Ensure the training and employment of qualified teachers, training and retraining of teachers. Teachers of indigenous languages or using indigenous languages as medium of instruction should show to the learner that it is a learner friendly language. A special scholarship should be given to student teachers.
- v. Teachers and school administrators must adhere to the provision of section 1 paragraph 8b and c which states "teaching shall be by practical, activity based, experiential and IT supported".
- vi. Annual budgetary allocation to education should not be below 20% of the annual budget as prescribed by International Conventions which Nigeria is a signatory.
- vii. Funding of education should be strictly directed to the provision of infrastructure, facilities, equipment, teachers' welfare, training and retraining of teachers. Education budget implementation details should be followed with transparency and accountability.

viii. Stakeholders in the indigenous language project should intensify effort at producing more literary and cultural works, building resource centres etc to further enhance the languages capacity to deliver etc.

### Conclusion

Submissions made in this paper through concept clarification and analysis of the issues and challenges of restructuring Nigeria through Hausa language education for national development have shown that no development can take place without education in general and indigenous language education in particular as instrument to any desired development. A nation's development is determined by the standard of education of its people. While a country's standard of education is determined by the policy in place, funding, the ability to manage policy and funds, enabling environment, especially willingness of the citizenry to pursue education, availability of qualified and well motivated teaching force, availability of infrastructure, teaching and learning resources etc.

Based on this belief, the Hausa education issues and challenges discussed in this paper centred on National Language Policy as provided in our Constitution where shortcoming were identified and highlighted from statements made in chapter 7.51 and 7.91. The Language Education Policy's provisions in National Policy on Education, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition were examined and challenges bordering on how to achieve national development goal through education as contained in policy statements at section 1 paragraph 8b and c, section 2 paragraphs 20d and e and section 3 paragraph 36a were discussed. Also, the paper made submissions on the issues and challenges of funding education through budgetary allocation (which has been poor), provision of

infrastructure and other teaching and learning resources, training and recruitment of qualified teachers etc. way forward, paper presented some suggestions/recommendations.

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