

**COMMUNITY EFFORT IN REVAMPING EDUCATION SECTOR IN SOKOTO STATE:**

**MOTIVATION THROUGH HISTORY**

**BY**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

"The problem of dying in the North (with particular reference to Sokoto State) like many other problems have been discussed daily in living rooms, offices and at many other occasions. The solutions have been discussed many times over. The only problem is that almost everybody is expecting somebody somewhere to solve these problems. We have to start addressing these problems whether individually or through some associations"<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, education is an important lever towards economic development and social progress and that it is one central activity through which the human resources of a community can be developed<sup>2</sup> Importance of education to a society or community should not be overemphasised. It is in fact a veritable medium through which political, economic and social opportunities could be realised. Hence it continued to be a strong factor in maintaining the dominance of the developed world in the area of science and technology over the developing world.

At the national level (in Nigeria) the question of who dominates who mainly arises as a result of educational disparity among states. Thus, balance and equality at this level in terms of employment and other opportunities could hardly be achieved without proper and qualitative education particularly from the educationally disadvantaged states (which Sokoto State is one).

Education however is an expensive investment so much that is faced with numerous problems, such as financial, cultural, bureaucratic and communal. These problems militating against educational sector especially in Nigeria and moreso in the educationally less developed states like Sokoto made the efforts of the government ineffective in putting education on sound footing and standard. It is thus the opinion of the paper that, for the state to develop and take its rightful position in the committee of

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**(CONCLUDING REMARKS)**

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Somebody may argue that , only Arabic and Islamic studies were encouraged by the Jihadist, therefore any other branch of leaning should be discouraged. These words of encouragement are not restricted to the pursuit of religious education alone . History bears witness to the fact that the scientific and medical contributions made by jihad leaders , particularly Muhammad Bello, Abdullahi Fodio and some of their students are almost unraveled to date by the people of this area. They viewed science as a branch of Islamic learning. C.C Muhammad Bello for example who was said to have authored over one hundred and forty books dedicated fourteen of them to purely sciences and medicine.<sup>7</sup> Abdullahi too contributed literally to this field . So also Nana Asma`u the daughter of shaykh Uthman who was said to have written on subjects like, dental care, piles, the treatment of indigestion and other ailments<sup>8</sup>

Infact Muhammad Bello in his effort to do away with conservatism and to imbibe the sense of rationalisation and science established a University at Salame to provide higher level of education to the people . Different subjects like the religious knowledge , scientific medical knowledge were taught.<sup>9</sup> Today through modern education such scientific legacy left by the jihad leaders could be attained. Some book culture and scientific legacy were followed by the successors of the jihad leaders, particularly the office of the Waziri who became the custodian of history and learning from Waziri Gidado bin Lema to the to the present Waziri Dr. Junaid bin Bukhari who has contributed alot in saving valuable manuscripts produced by the Jihadists and written on various aspects of the history of the caliphate and its international relations. Various individuals and scholars collectively and individually contributed to the education in this region . The establishment of Nizamiya system to provide both Islamic and western education was a wise decision of people like late Sardauna of Sokoto to harmonise between western and Islamic education which he realised this area has been left behind in the former and it is a necessary ingredients for development. In addition he personally persuade people to join and contribute to pursuit of western education in their localities. Thus, various schools were open sponsored and run by the public , for instance Islamic Education Trust (I.E.T) primary schools, Nana Asma`u Secondary school at Runjin Sambo Sokoto. However, some were initiated by the people and run by the government like Ahmadu Bello Academy Sokoto are examples of people response and contribution to the development of western education in this area. From the above, the people of Sokoto has a living legacy with which to mobilise the masses for educational support.

### **EDUCATIONAL POSITION OF SOKOTO STATE: THE NATIONAL PICTURE**

The state of western education in Sokoto state has been very slow from its inception when compared with states in the federation. In terms of enrollment into the primary school for example, Sokoto with a population of over four million (1991 national census) admitted about three hundred and eighty thousand pupils as at 1994 . While children not in school is about 72.3% (National primary education commission)and percentage of unqualified teachers in the primary schools has reached 75.12%. The picture will be clear when compared with some states like Akwa Ibom which has a population of 2.5 million, and an enrollment into primary school at over fifty thousand , and the percentage of unqualified teachers at 0.12% and children not in school at -4.0% (National primary Board 1994). While as per 1992 the number of candidates who sat for JAMB examination from Sokoto State was 748 out of which only 19 candidates scored 200 mark and above, qualified for admission into the Universities. On the other hand state like Edo had about five thousand candidates who scored 200 marks and above. (JAMB Report 1992)

The total enrollment of the students into the federal Universities of Nigeria, in 1989/90 the former Sokoto (Sokoto and Kebbi) State had 1.65% while Bendel was having about 14.01%, and Anambra 11.28% (source: N.U.C. 1989/90 student's enrollment statistics). The situation is pathetic when one sees the percentage of Sokoto State indigenes in the federal civil service. This is the sorry state of education the state. If nothing is done now the future would be very bleak as the domination and the gap between Sokoto and the other states of the country will continue to increase. Jibril Aminu express this fear for the whole of Northern Nigeria including Sokoto State .

He said:

*"The future of this country as it were, lies in the hands of Nigeria citizens hailing from the West, East central, Lagos and Mid west States, since they have enjoyed a long monopoly of highly skilled manpower development in all disciplines and since the situation is not improved."*<sup>9</sup>

The fundamental question however, is . since the government at its own level failed to provide lasting solutions to these problems . why shouldn't the community chip in to assist in revamping this lamentable trail in the educational development of their people? If there is any cog on the wheel or any impediment to their participation must be identified and tackled.

#### **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNITY INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS CONTRIBUTING TO WESTERN EDUCATION IN SOKOTO STATE.**

There are various factors associated to the lack of participation of the members of the community in salvaging the education sector in the state. These include class differences, religion-cultural and economic factors.

(I) **Class differences:** The community itself was polarized, based on economic and social status. Thus some segment of people in the society are quite contented with the situation. This is because they have been enjoying monopoly of education since pre independence when the children of the traditional rulers and other influential persons in the society were exposed more to education than the others . As such they were educated and can sponsor their children to the most expensive schools in overseas, and private schools at home . So they are not affected by the problem. Unfortunately, they are the very people who are suppose to gear people to that direction, coupled with the fact that, the remaining people were either poor and destitute who are battling to feed themselves, or those that have no sympathy for education because they have not tested it, hence not knowing its value. Thus there isn't any effort.

Gunnar Myrdal stated:-

*"In the very poor and educationally backward countries (and states) we have in mind, the dominating upper class are already 'educated' and get their children educated. They feel no urgent need for the reforms."*<sup>10</sup>

Since they want to maintain status quo, therefore, all the efforts would be frustrated by this group since with education the 'commoner' will replace them and their children.

Education being the only weapon for the poor. Unless this attitude which is currently happening is checked the efforts would be fruitless.

(ii). **Religion - Cultural factor:** Culture could be defined as all the arts, beliefs, social institutions, etc., characteristic of a community, race, etc.<sup>11</sup> Since no community exists without culture, and every society cherishes its own culture and as much as possible resists alien culture different from theirs, the people of Sokoto resisted Western type of Education from the time of its introduction and still some see any contribution to develop it will tantamount to extinction of their culture by themselves in favour of the whiteman's.<sup>12</sup> In reaction to the criticisms of this type the late Isa Kaita was quoted to have said that "We are proud of our traditions... and before we destroy any of them we want quite sure we are putting something better in their place."<sup>13</sup> This became clear when one realises the fact that, western education was brought and pioneered by the Christian missionaries, and since then government commented that the schools have failed to inculcate respect for native customs and the institutions were at variance with high standard of morality. Therefore the people of Sokoto must be skeptical about western education particularly the mode and manner it is imparted since it does not conform to their expectations or religious values, beliefs and norms the main components of their culture."<sup>14</sup> It is specifically noted that, those who undergo the system abhor the culture of their people, they preferred the culture and values of the Europeans and looked down upon their people who are not in the system with contempt. Thus making the popular saying "Dan Boko mai ganin uba nai wawa." "A westernly educated person considers himself clever than his parents." a reality. The dress, behavior, aspiration and motivation towards life by these people are highly more European than any other culture. Fafunwa confirmed that, the Muslim parents in the North generally did not wholly approve of such western education since in the beginning it was merely a Christian education in a Christian environment. They were afraid that their children would be converted to Christianity (or at least lost Islamic ideals) by such an education.<sup>15</sup> Thus, their support towards its progress is generally sluggish.

(iii). **Misappropriation of fund for Education** . The community in view of the extravagant and ostentatious life style of some educational management, would be reluctant to invest in the sector. The people consider the civil servants as a class who control government treasury and can do anything they like with the money without question. They are frequently seen with gorgeous attires, building and owning the most expensive houses in their locality and driving the latest model of cars which were believed not acquired from their salaries. With this trend it would be difficult to convince the economically well to do individuals to donate generously for a viable educational setting. But if people are convinced that, whatever they contribute would be judiciously and fairly utilised would not fail to contribute, since they contribute in building mosques and Islamiyya schools worth millions of Naira through self-help by the community.

On current mismanagement of government fund to education the first civilian governor of Kaduna state Alhaji Balarabe Musa stated that:-

*What was ostensibly spent on education by government was not at all used for education but for making profit for Nigerian businessmen and political partners and agents, and as commissions, /kick-backs, bribes and other legal, semi-legal and criminal earning for those who control the very lucrative Nigerian education industry.<sup>16</sup>*

(iv). **Alienation of community in Education management.** Now, the entire education management in Nigeria at various levels of government is hundred percent in control of the government. The people are rarely involved in decision making to enhance a better future in the sector, perhaps only when there is need for their contribution then would be contacted.

Some notable members of the community should be incorporated in managing particularly the finances, so that they know the real situation and as well appeal to the community for assistance. Fundamentally, the paper laments, the serious factors for non participation in aiding education by the community is their perception that it is governments' no more no less.

**Ways to communal support for Education.**

It is our opinion that, no educational development could be attained without assistance from various segments of the community at whatever capacity. To achieve this, the following should be considered.

1. The government should use all medium of communication, the radio, television and news papers to publicise the poor condition of education as well as the huge amount needed so as to get the sympathy of the people. The community must be informed and alerted of all the consequences, of educational backwardness the most prominent in the issue of marginalisation and alienation of a person in his home state due to the lack of qualification. The people should also be made to understand that the most effective way of resisting western culture and imperialism, is not to run away from it but learning it and turning it a weapon against Euro-American cultural hegemony.
2. The clear position of Islam with regard to knowledge, (any knowledge) should be clearly presented to the people. This is because Islam is never against any branch of learning as far as it does not contradict the tenets of Islam. Competent scholars should carry out programmes in the radio and televisions' with a view to showing the glorious past of Islam and muslim scholars being the founding fathers of today's scientific and technological advances of Europe. Special references should be given to the efforts made by the Sokoto jihad leaders in the field.  
Moreover, the society can in conjunction with the government restructure the existing educational system to conform with the teachings of Islam, its culture and ideals for total support of the community to the sector.
3. Henceforth the government should make it a condition for any contractor before given any contract worth hundreds of thousands or a million to produce an evidence of assisting education in his community. Same should also be applied to aspiring politician contesting any political office. The situation in the south where economically well to do individuals ventured on awarding scholarships and educational grants to members of their community should be made known to our business elite who have no feeling for the progress of education but to exploit the best of it. Those guilty in mismanaging public fund, especially in the educational institutions and parastatals should be severely and publicly dealt with, and the fund retrieved.

4. Members of the community should be fully engaged in the management of education affairs. It should cease to be government affair only if the support of the society is needed. Parent teachers Associations should be encouraged not only in generating the funds for schools but for the management and supervision of the expenditure of the schools. This will boost their morale toward donating generously to the fund.<sup>17</sup>
5. Associations and Clubs should be evolved. Various community development Associations, clubs and unions should also be encouraged to that direction. Their contribution is supplying learning materials in form of books, chalk, furniture etc., or construction of classes and hostels for students. And the government should make it competitive among them. Instead of supporting and financing in teams the resources could be directed to education, both by the government and individuals of players. Also old boys associations of various colleges and institutions should be encouraged to contribute in providing books and other amenities for their alma mater. The best example is the college of Arts and Arabic studies Sokoto old boys association who recently launched an appeal fund for the construction of well furnished Library for the college. This is an idea worth emulating by the other similar associations.
6. Islamiyya schools should incorporate instructions from western education. In short let the Islamiyya schools incorporate these disciplines and teach them to their pupils based on Islamic model or even in Arabic language. In countries like Saudi Arabia people graduate as medical doctors and engineers but the language of instruction is Arabic and they contribute to the welfare of their community.
7. Established companies and factories in Sokoto state should earmark a certain percentage for education endowment, in providing scholarships to the indigees, and supplying learning materials to the schools. Similar to what is obtained in the petroleum producing communities in the south. The effort of the cement company of Northern Nigeria Sokoto, in taking the affairs of Wurno road model primary school is worth noting and commendable, but more is expected from such Multinational cooperation in the state, and similar establishments should be encouraged to follow suit.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Sokoto being once the centre of learning and science in the pre-colonial west Africa, which was basically attained through communal commitment and dedication to improve the standard of their people, should not be a different story today despite the troubles and tribulations incurred by colonialism on the society. The community should wake up to assist themselves, as any delay on that direction will mean a perpetual domination on national and international scenes. It must be borne in mind that, education is one social service that is extremely expensive. But it is one social service that cannot be ignored. Children must be educated to takeover from their parents generation. Education provides employment opportunities, political opportunities and development opportunities.<sup>18</sup> Therefore no amount on education would be too great, the

community factor in resuscitating education in Sokoto State is very fundamental to educational progress, as the case was before colonial conquest.

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2. Mchiboo M.A. & Abou A. "Education and Political Instability in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects" (in Odeh, Odeh) *Nigerian Almanac* 1987, p. 68.
3. Sokoto A. A. "The impact of European conquest of the Sokoto caliphate on Islamic Education: A critical overview" paper presented at the international conference on Sokoto Caliphate and European Islam, 1996 at UDUS 11-13-95-97, p. 4.
4. Many traditions of the Holy prophet encouraged that see for example Bukhari Vol. 1 p. 60.
5. Al-Qadh Al-Hadi, A. *Islamic Education in 19th century in Nigeria* (Tamil) Muzahib al-Torod, Umar Bello (trans & ed) Sokoto 1994 p. 2.
6. For more accounts for detail see Makhtar U. Bunza, "The contribution of Sultan Muhammad Bello to the development of medicine in 19th century Hausaland" M.A. Thesis History UDUS Sokoto 1992.
7. *Sunday Triumph* 1 July 1984.
8. Sokoto A. A. *Op-cit* p. 6.
9. Mchiboo M.A. & Abou A. *Op-cit* p. 88.
10. Myrdal G. *The challenge of world poverty: A world anti-poverty program in outline* USA 1970 p. 204.
11. Hornby A. S. *The advanced learners dictionary of current English* Oxford University Press 1968.
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13. Cited by Junaid S. U. "An overview of the situation of Girls education in Nigeria" Paper presented at zonal seminar on Girls education in Nigeria at Sokoto 22-24th August 1995, p. 20.
14. Ibid. p. 20.
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16. Quoted by M.M. Bunza; Re-evaluating post primary education in the Northern States. Paper presented at conference on bridging the educational gap in Nigeria organised by ASUU at A.B.U. 30-3-95, p. 4.
17. Communique of the conference on bridging the educational gap in Nigeria organised by ASUU, Northern zone, at A.B.U. from 29th-31st March 1995 p. 20.
18. Sando, A. "Re-evaluating Primary education in Northern Nigeria" Paper presented at conference on bridging the educational gap in Nigeria at A.B.U. 29th-31st March 1995, pp. 14-15.

**END NOTES:**

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2. Modibbo, M.A. & Abbas A. "Education and National integration in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects". In Oculi, O(ed) Nigerian Alternatives: Gaskiya corporation Zaria. 1987.p.68.
3. Sokoto A. A. "The impacts of European conquest of the Sokoto caliphate on Islamic Education : A critical over view" paper presented at the international conference on Sokoto Caliphate and Europeans 1890-1906 at UDUS 11-2-93-13-2-93, p.4.
4. Many traditions of the Holy prophet encouraged that, see for example Bukhari Vol. 1. p.66.
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6. For detail see Mukhtar U. Bunza, "The contribution of Sultan Muhammad Bello to the development of medicine in 19th century Hausaland" M.A. Thesis History UDUS Sokoto 1995.
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