

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 317

SO 008 175

AUTHOR Madu, Oliver V. A.  
TITLE The School System and the Social Development of Nigeria.  
PUB DATE 74  
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the World Conference of Sociology, Round Table 10: Functions of School Systems (8th, Toronto, Ontario, August 1974)  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC-\$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE  
DESCRIPTORS \*African History; Colonialism; Comparative Education; \*Developing Nations; Economic Development; \*Educational Development; Educational History; Institutional Role; \*Manpower Utilization; \*Productivity; Social Influences; Social Stratification; Social Values; Universal Education  
IDENTIFIERS \*Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The goal of the Nigerian school system in the context of national integration, modernization, and stability is social equalitarianism and welfare. Also, historically, Nigerian schools have been competitive and Western because of the colonial regime and missionary schools. The pattern remains in independent Nigeria with English literacy and Western education the means for upward social mobility. In recognition of this social order Universal Primary Education (UPE) was instituted in 1957. The system, quickly overburdened, produced greater social differentiation and unemployed literates and then collapsed. Land reforms and the availability of capital through the government are helping to create a rising rural middle class as one means of meeting these manpower problems. Also, a new UPE for 1975 is being introduced within a national development plan where the role of education is to create and improve "human capital." Recommendations to help avoid the problems of an educated unemployed population produced by the first UPE include the recruitment of an adequate number of teachers, curricula oriented toward the developmental needs of the society and based on the nuclear family as a pre-elementary socializing agent, quality standards for the rural schools, in particular, and retraining in agriculture or small business for those who leave school. (JH)

ED103317

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-  
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM  
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN-  
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS  
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT  
OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

VIIth WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY

Toronto 19-24 August 1974

Round Table 10

FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Paper  
by

OLIVER V. A. MADU

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

1974

Sociology & Anthropology Department,  
St. John's University,  
New York, U.S.A.

S0008175

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

Introduction

As a society evolves toward greater technological complexity, and as it achieves a standard of living that permits at least some people to think reflectively about the society and its future, it creates a major educational institution which is a set of schools, colleges, and universities. These serve the society by teaching skills, knowledge and loyalties which make children and adults more competent and better satisfied participants in the major institutions.

Essentially then, the school system is that institution which educates people for the participation in society and for living in general. Beyond this, it can be said that the school system in Nigeria has role specificity; namely, national integration, modernization and stability. As will become clear, it has been Nigeria's educational goal to achieve social equalitarianism and welfare. But on the contrary there are unintended consequences. Thus, the provision of free primary education in some parts of Nigeria has resulted naturally in the education of a large number of children with advantageous effects on productivity, in the markets and workshops on farming, trade and business

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

enterprise. One very important effect of free primary education is also the increasing number of girls who complete primary education. Since the primary system lays the foundation for secondary and post-secondary education, it has become the crucial ladder of ascent to upward social mobility. However, in the process of upward social mobility, there has developed inconsistencies and social contradictions which it is the object of this paper to explore.

The Structure of Educational System in Nigeria

For the purposes outlined above, Nigeria's school structure has not been the same over the past three decades or so. One common factor is that no matter which region one is talking about, points of entry do not strongly depend upon age. The reasons for this are obvious. Education has been a matter of private investment. The free educational system first introduced in Eastern Nigeria in the 1950s, and in the Western Region among other states, were experimental. Besides this, individuals could start school only at the time and age that money was made available by the family.

Thus, the structure presented here could be considered arbitrary.

Eastern Region

Elementary education

Entry age: 6 years

Language of instruction: I through III, vernacular  
IV through VI, English

Length of programme: 8 years through 1962

(Infant schools I and II, ages 5-7,  
abolished January 1, 1961)

7 years, 1963

6 years, 1964 (not fully  
effective until 1966)

Through 1961, primary classes were called "Standards";  
as of 1962 they were changed to "Elementary."

Classes: Elementary I through VI (class VII through  
1965)

Curriculum: English (stress on both written and  
spoken English), Arithmetic, History,  
Geography, Handwriting, Health, Religious  
Knowledge, Physical Education, Nature Study,  
Gardening, Singing and Handwork.

In some areas Civics, Domestic Science and simple  
General Science are offered. A Nigerian language, Science  
and Agriculture have been recently made required subjects.

The First School Leaving Certificate is awarded at  
the close of the programme.

#### Secondary system

The language of instruction is English.

Types of secondary schools

	<u>Length of course in years</u>
Grammar schools	5
Commercial secondary schools	5
Modern schools (girls)	2
Trade centres	3
Junior agriculture schools	2-5
Technical institutions	3
Comprehensive secondary schools	6
Teaching training colleges	2-4

The entrance requirements for all secondary schools are the First School Leaving Certificate or the completion of elementary education, plus a competitive entrance examinations in English, Arithmetic and a general paper. The general paper is designed to test the general knowledge of incoming students on a variety of subjects. In general, students finishing the 'regular secondary' school successfully earn the West African School Certificate. For those who pursue the vocational courses, in trade schools, gain Certificates of Proficiency. It is true however that since 1965 a secondary school student could gain the Ordinary Level General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.)<sup>1</sup> on some papers, while failing to gain the West African School Certificate.

The secondary system performs two basic functions.

---

<sup>1</sup>G.C.E. is organized and administered by the London University, at both ordinary and at advanced levels, for external students.

First, it is a terminal qualification. This is to say that students can start to earn a living with this training. This is more so where the parents cannot support the child any further. More importantly, the admission to the entrance examination into a university in Nigeria depended on how successful a student was at the School Certificate.<sup>2</sup> This means that the student does not only pass the School Certificate but must demonstrate that he passed with distinction or in grade II. Once he achieves any of this he is on his ladder to academic mobility. In place of passing with distinction or earning sufficient credits, a student could enter the post-secondary colleges. Once more the entry is competitive and the course lasts for two or three years. The completion of the post-secondary system assures the student direct entry into the university system.

The model described here prevailed in the former southern region of Nigeria. It is important however to mention that the model can be said to be essentially the same throughout Nigeria, with minor variations. The structure of the educational system reflects the unity in diversity in Nigerian

---

<sup>2</sup>School Certificate is the same as the Cambridge School Certificate, which later became West African School Certificate. It is not enough to pass the School Certificate, but the grade at which the student passes it is of the utmost significance. The British introduced the grade system into the examination results, i.e., Distinction, or grade I, grade II, grade III. Beyond this are awards of G.C.E. Certificates on single subjects, where credits are obtained; then there is the fail grade.



society. The structure is competitively-oriented. More than this, it is geared towards nation-building strategy with its attendant function of providing the country with the required manpower. Beyond this, before the civil hostilities in Nigeria there were four competing proprietors of schools in this country. These were the Government; they built, equipped and sponsored the Government Schools, mainly the secondary schools. Another were the Voluntary Agency Schools. These schools were mainly the Catholic-built primary and secondary schools. Then there were the private schools, built by private citizens. These were designated as private schools. In the Western Region, there were also Local Authority-owned schools. Since the Civil War the schools in the Eastern Region are now known as Community Schools. The state government runs and owns them, but this does not mean that they have become non-fee paying schools. This structure owes much to the missionaries who laid the foundation for the mushrooming of what was known as Voluntary Agency Schools. They introduced Western system of education.

#### Western Education and Social Values

It has been the position that from the very beginning education was a virtual monopoly of the Christian missionaries in West Africa.

Murray had put it succinctly thus: that, "to all intents and purposes the school is the church. Right away in the bush or in the forest the two are one, and the village



teacher is also the village evangelist. An appreciation of this fact is cardinal in all consideration of African education."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, by 1945 there were comparatively few literate Nigerians who had not received all or part of their education in mission schools.<sup>4</sup>

The schools taught young Nigerians to aspire to the values of the Western culture and standards. At the same time the missionary training fostered disdainful feelings toward traditional forms of worship and ritualism. They also ignored 'African' forms of education because they considered them either evil or non-existent.<sup>5</sup> However, the extensive use of the English language in the school curricula greatly enhanced Nigerians' aspiration to emulate Western values. At the same time, the individual who spoke and wrote English was regarded in Nigeria as literate. Thus the language did not only open up avenues to social mobility, it tended to stand as a unifying factor for a country with diverse ethnic divisions as Nigeria.

However, conversion to Christianity, knowledge of and preference for English, imitation of European behaviour, and post-school employment in an urban milieu, heightened

---

<sup>3</sup>A. Victor Murray, The School in the Bush (London, 1929), p. 65.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Ten-year Educational Plan, Nigeria Sessional Paper No. 6/1944, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), p. 114.

by concentrated and institutionalized indoctrination, helped in the creation of a new class in Nigeria. This was the collective expectation of members of the Nigerian society.

Literary education with special emphasis upon the English language bestowed prestige and status in the eyes of fellow Nigerians. Beyond this, the Nigerian, who could read and write English, at the heyday of British consolidation in Nigeria could easily be employed as a clerk. He was literally and figuratively closest to the European; he was able to approximate the European's manner of living, speech and dress, and behaviour; he was the most highly paid in the new medium of exchange; and he was the most educated.<sup>6</sup>

It is doubtless that the above statement is a bit of an exaggeration. However, in part it bears testimony to the normative values prevalent at the time of initial establishment of Western education in Nigeria.

Since Western education became the index for social upward mobility it is no wonder why enrollment soared. Thus, the first English speaking Christian missionary arrived in what was to become Nigeria in 1842. By 1921, 130,000 Southern Nigerian children were attending mission-managed primary and secondary schools, and a decade later the enrollment rose to about 200,000.

In Southern Nigeria, in particular, the Catholic drive for educational predominance, and the divisive effect of religious differences on the social life of these politically decentralized people was enormous. The Catholics expanded their activities more rapidly than the various Protestant denominations in the 1940s, trend that was even

---

<sup>6</sup>Op. cit., p. 32.

## BEST COPY AVAILABLE

more pronounced in the 1950s. Between 1950 and 1955, for example, the number of Catholics claimed by the South-Eastern Archdiocese increased 64 percent to 640,000 and enrollment in Catholic schools rose 85 percent to 287,000. By the mid-1950s the Catholics were proprietors of about half the region's primary schools, and they were expanding rapidly in the secondary and teaching-training fields where they had previously been weak.<sup>7</sup>

In perspective the rapid expansion in enrollment in schools in the South outstripped that of the North,<sup>8</sup> as Table 1 shows.

The consequences of this enrollment expansion were as follows. First, the degree of literacy was being increased. However, education remained the elite preserve. But in time, the Nigerian Nationalist leaders began to find 'informed' recruits from whom they could gain much needed legitimacy. Second, the increased enrollment was a strong stimulus to the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Southern Nigeria.

#### U.P.E.: The Southern Nigerian Experience

Southern Nigeria had the belief that popular education should be given high priority as a means towards political and economic development. As David Abernathy pointed

---

<sup>7</sup> Eastern Region (6) Annual Report, 1956, pp. 24-25.

<sup>8</sup> One very important factor in this enrollment differential is religious. The North is predominantly Muslim.

TABLE 1

DIFFERENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA AND NORTHERN NIGERIA

Year	Southern Nigeria (Eastern and Western Nigeria)				Northern Nigeria			
	Schools		Pupils		Schools		Pupils	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
1906 . . .	126	1	11,872	20	1	0	a	0
1912 . . .	150	10	35,716	67	34	0	954	0
1926 . . .	3,828	18	138,249	518	125	0	5,210	0
1937 . . .	3,533	26	218,610	4,285	539	1	20,269	65
1947 . . .	4,984	43	538,391	3,657	1,110	3	70,962	251
1957 . . .	13,473 <sup>b</sup>	176	2,343,317 <sup>b</sup>	28,208	2,080	18	185,484 <sup>c</sup>	3,643

<sup>a</sup>Number unknown.

<sup>b</sup>Figures include 30,602 pupils attending 94 secondary modern schools where post-primary instruction is given for three additional years for pupils who either are academically not up to the standards of full secondary schools or who cannot afford the higher fees.

<sup>c</sup>Figure for 1956.

Sources: Annual Report, Colony of Southern Nigeria, 1906, pp. 199 ff; Annual Reports Northern Nigeria, 1900-1911; African Education (Oxford: Nuffield Foundation, 1953), pp. 47-48; letters to the author from the Ministry of Education in each of the three regions of Nigeria, February-March, 1958.



## BEST COPY AVAILABLE

out: "the missionaries' concern for religious conversion; the perception by individuals and groups that Western schooling was the way to upward mobility; the increased involvement of the colonial government through the grant-in-aid system; competition among villages, ethnic groups, voluntary agencies, political parties and regions, the new political elite's need for a dramatic, far-reaching welfare scheme to win popular support";<sup>9</sup> all these factors were at work during this period of social development. Consequently, Southern Nigerian politicians with the cooperation of the British Government introduced the much needed popular or free primary education in 1957.

In introducing this scheme, Southern Nigeria aimed at meeting the needs of a rapidly developing economy. Next, the scheme was aimed at bringing about social equality. Beyond this, Southern Nigerian leaders wanted to demonstrate their strong populist leanings, and therefore wanted all the people to have the benefits of an educational experience that had enabled a few Nigerians to challenge colonial rule successfully while bestowing legitimacy to those of them who stood on the wings of power at the point of terminal colonialism. In other words, UPE was introduced in Southern Nigeria in the interest of "adaptation to local needs."<sup>10</sup> This point was reinforced

---

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., p. 279.

<sup>10</sup>Martona Sannett and Inez Sepmeyer, eds., Educational Systems of Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. xxxiv.

by the Ashby Report which maintains that "the foundations of technological education must be laid in primary schools if progress is to be ensured . . . ." <sup>11</sup>

However, sooner or later, it was known that rapid expansion of the primary school system could not be achieved without the deterioration of educational standards. This issue together with conflicts which arose over costs of education as well as personality clashes between nationalist leaders and British and local bureaucrats, precipitated the collapse of the system in Southern Nigeria.

However, the UPE was instrumental to the development of social contradictions, as will become clear. As the Nationalist Leaders dwelt almost exclusively on the programme's benefits, the British dwelt on the cost. Moreover, as people grew accustomed to the notion that the Government was responsible for public welfare, their demands on politicians rose rather sharply. These were demands for more post-primary education and the demand for more employment opportunities for the educated.

Thus it can be argued that the two most important factors which led to the collapse of the popular school system were first, the growing social differentiations in society, and second, since the system helped to produce more literates, not all these literates gained employment

---

<sup>11</sup>"Investment in Education," The Report of the Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, 1960.



as opportunities were very limited. Consequently, the school leavers formed a whole bunch of urban proletariat and lumpenproletariate.<sup>12</sup> The picture becomes clear from Table 2.

TABLE 2

EDUCATIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD AGE GROUP AND OF ENTRIES TO THE LABOUR FORCE IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA, 1965

Age and Educational Level	Entries to Labour Force	Non-Entries to Labour Force	Total
Age 15:			
No schooling . . .	26,000	13,000	39,000
Some primary schooling . . .	255,000	130,000	385,000
Completed primary school:			
No primary cert.	55,000	22,000	78,000
Primary cert.	64,000	59,000	123,000
Total over age 15:			
Some post-primary schooling . . .	52,000		
Grand total . . .	452,000		

Source: Figures computed from Education and World Affairs, Nigeria Project Task Force Committee on Education and Human Resources Development, Nigerian Human Resource Development and Utilization (N.Y.), 1967, pp. 144-55.

Approximately 625,000 Southern Nigerians reached the age of fifteen in 1965. Table 2 shows among other things that 94 percent had at least one year of primary education and

<sup>12</sup>These are members of commercial and industrial working classes who are solely dependent for their livelihood on their ability to sell their labour power to labour market. Lumpenproletariats include urban and rural proletariats and is a repository for failures from other classes.



32 percent had completed the primary course. In the years 1965 in the Eastern Region and 1963 for the Western Region there was a plateau reached. As time went on, it became clear that the sheer magnitude of unemployment eventually overburdened the structures that temporarily absorbed so many of the school leavers.

Thus, if mass education in Southern Nigeria was anything, it was an effort to attain equality by making primary education available to all. Schools were opened in areas that did not have them so that no child who desired an education would be turned away for lack of school space, supplies or teachers. Fees were eliminated in the Western Region of Nigeria, and none were imposed for the initial classes in Eastern Nigeria even after the region's financial crisis of 1957-58, so that as far as possible no child would be denied an education because his parents were too poor to afford it. The best way to see whether these egalitarian aims were in fact realized is to examine the record of five often overlapping groups of young people who did not have an equal chance to attend school prior to universal primary education: poor children, girls, Muslim children in educationally backward areas, and members of minority groups.<sup>13</sup>

However, there are a number of ominous ramifications confronting the modernizing regimes in their struggle for

---

<sup>13</sup>Op. cit., p. 237.

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

expanded education. First, at the present level of Nigeria's development there is a significant intellectual and political gap between the Western educated elite and the masses. Second, the modernizing leaders may have difficulty integrating the newly trained intellectuals into the prevailing social and political order. The recently educated class must be made to feel a part of the new nation.

In this regard, it is therefore true to say that since a school system is one of the chief agents of stratification in any society, the amount of schooling available to the average citizen of Nigeria and the degree to which recruitment to specialized roles is based on academic achievement will determine in large measure the extent to which equality of opportunity is realized in that society.

Social Functions of Education in Nigeria

One can see this function by understanding first, that in an ex-colonial country whose official language is different from its indigenous languages and hence can best be taught in school; second, that in a country with a powerful and prestigious bureaucracy, whose members are recruited on the basis of their performance in examinations; and third, that in a country that starts to modernize relatively late; technical needs and scientific skills can best be acquired through a formal training programme. Nigeria meets all these three social ideals. The consequences are that in Nigerian education more than

anything else has been the index for measuring upward social mobility. More than this, paper qualifications more than technical skills in most cases are the key to status placement. Thus Nigeria has become a strongly achievement-oriented society. In turn, the society is highly stratified. Free primary education enkindled the light for the quest for knowledge. And given relatively weak infrastructure jobs are few and are occupied by those who have achieved the higher necessary educational qualifications.

#### Stratification in Nigeria

Weber describes the social class composition of capitalism as consisting of the following: 1) the manual working class--the existence of skill differentials--especially where they are controlled as monopolies--is a major factor threatening the unity of the working class. But the increasing mechanization of industry is pushing a large proportion of workers into the semi-skilled category. 2) The petty bourgeoisie. 3) Propertyless white-collar workers, technicians and intelligentsia. 4) The dominant entrepreneurial and propertied groups, who also tend to share a privileged access to educational opportunities.<sup>14</sup> For Marx, in bourgeoisie society, class relationships become simplified and universalized. The progressive development of capitalism, once it is established, more and more tends

---

<sup>14</sup>Economy and Society, I, p. 305.

## BEST COPY AVAILABLE

towards the creation of two great classes in direct opposition on the market: bourgeoisie and proletariat. "The other classes--landowners, petty bourgeoisie, and peasantry--are transitional classes which are increasingly swallowed up by one or other of these two major class groupings."<sup>15</sup>

According to Schmoller's theory, class formation (that is, inequality of rank) is based on the fact that occupations are differentiated. In the same way, one may wish to explain the division of labour in terms of the exchange principle.<sup>16</sup> In short, differentiation precedes the stratification of social positions. Precisely therefore, 'class' denotes an aggregate of individuals who thus share the same class situation. In these terms those who are propertyless, and who can only offer services on the market, are divided according to the kind of services they can offer, just as those who own property can be differentiated according to what they own and how they use it for economic ends.

Against this background, it must be contended that the school leavers in Nigeria constitute several classes. The life-style of those who successfully completed the secondary school securing either first or second grades constitute a class of prospective-elite recruits. They

---

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 39.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (London, 1963), p. 76 ff.

are more likely to pursue the academic career preparatory for functional roles as the elite who form the middle class. The drop-outs join forces with the school leavers who have no other asset but their labour to sell. For want of a better word they form the 'working-group,' otherwise designated here as proletariat. This class forms the largest single social group in the modernizing society of Nigeria.

Thus, educational expansion in Nigeria unless sustained by adequate prerequisites, would continue to outstrip economic development where there will be a growing gap between realization and aspirations of school leavers. In this system thus there will always be a growing number of dissatisfied and frustrated youths. "The resolution of these tensions lies not only in seeking more rapid development through educational planning, but also in finding dramatic ways to retrain and utilise unabsorbed primary and secondary school leavers, and by avoiding the problems of the educated unemployed."<sup>17</sup> Unless this is done, there will always exist the several interest groups (classes) in Nigeria, as well as a surviving structure of colossal inequality. As indicated, the worst of social groups is the proletariat.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Sheldon G. Weeks, "Education for the Millions," in Africa Today (1962), p. 10.

<sup>18</sup>So described as the massive number of school leavers who have no permanent jobs, frustrated, anxious, and largely unemployed, whose rising expectations are crumbling.

One significant effect of the lump of the unemployed is the development of a petty-bourgeoisie class developing in the rural areas of Nigeria due to the rise of capitalism and the new land tenure in Southern Nigeria. This process is made possible by two factors: first, the indigenization decree. This decree is aimed at promoting an indigenous entrepreneurial class in Nigerian. In this connection, the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank and other indigenous financial houses are all geared to playing their respective roles in order to ensure that the laudable objectives of the government are not stultified through lack of sufficient investment capital.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, the availability of capital is also enhanced by the land expropriation going on now in Nigeria, particularly in the rural areas; thus also creating the rising middle-class. Most of the unemployed are forming companies in order to benefit from the decree. This is purposely "for the development of agricultural farms where intensive methods are adopted, labour employed, machinery introduced and the products marketed not for mere consumption, but for the capitalist principle of maximization of profits."<sup>20</sup> On this basis developed the now-flourishing plantations and farm settlements and enlarged compound traders and retailers.

---

<sup>19</sup>Adebayo Adedeji, "Challenge of Indigenisation," in Nigerian Tide, Vol. IV, no. 149, pp. 8-9.

<sup>20</sup>Ikenna Nzimiro, "Capitalism and Land Tenure in Igboland," unpublished manuscript, Dakar, November 1973, p. 17.



Those who remain in the cities have only their labour to sell while those in the rural areas have both their labour and some capital to lean on. It is only true to say that those outside these strata so described form two distinct social classes. First is the group in the urban areas which can be called the 'urban proletariat,' while those in the rural periphery of capitalism could be styled the 'lumpenproletariat.'<sup>21</sup> Marx portrayed the lumpenproletariat as "the passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may here, and there, be swept into the movement by a proletariat revolution; its conditions of life however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue."<sup>22</sup> It can be argued that of the 15,000 unemployed primary and secondary school leavers in Nigeria presently, 75 percent of them are struggling with the rural plantations, while the rest are members of the urban proletariat. They are proletariats insofar as they are willing to work, and oftentimes suffer only from seasonal unemployment. Their extended family network also provides a high protective role for these school leavers.

---

<sup>21</sup>Lumpenproletariat is a repository for failures from all classes, although primarily situated in big cities, they are also found among the unemployed and underemployed people in town and country.

<sup>22</sup>Manifesto of the Communist Party, in Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 118.



It is clear that the ideology of equalitarianism through the school system can hardly be achieved through the popular school system. There are complementary imperatives needed in the structure before this collective goal can be achieved.

#### Conditions Necessary for Success of UPE

In Nigeria today there are over 18,000 primary schools attended by more than 400,000 children; 400 teacher training colleges with 38,000 students; 1,500 secondary modern and secondary grammar schools with 180,000 students. The illiteracy rate which used to be as high as 95 percent has now been down to an estimated 60 percent.<sup>23</sup> On the basis of this social progress the Federal Government is introducing the UPE all over the states in the country in 1975. There is great need for this popular aspiration. Firstly, the present census of Nigeria stands at 79.76 percent. More and more people need educational skills, and indeed literacy. This has been specifically made clear in the Second National Development Plan 1970-74. In this plan the concept of education is seen "as a capital good linked with the concept of 'human capital' which attaches high premium to human skills as a factor of production in the development process . . . . Because education plays a most important role in the creation and improvement of 'human capital,' its relevance and importance

---

<sup>23</sup>Nigeria Fact Sheet, Lagos, 1972, p. 4.

to development is now well recognised in development plan."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, before introducing the UPE in 1975, one most important prerequisite is to recruit adequate number of teachers to run the scheme. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 more primary school teachers would be needed. Beyond this there are much needed school buildings, and a strong and capable bureaucracy to run the scheme.

Secondly, the UPE scheme should not be regarded merely as a means to offer legitimacy to politicians. It should not be regarded merely as another social service. Priorities should shift from social services to direct productive scheme. This is to say that the curricula should be reoriented towards the developmental needs of our society. In this connection, Nigeria should plan the pre-elementary school system so that the nuclear family becomes a real agent of primary socialization for the benefit of society.

Thirdly, consequent upon the second the quality of the schools in the rural areas should be raised, and properly equipped. As much as possible, there should be uniformity in the school system in the rural and urban areas.

Fourthly, to achieve some equalitarian ideals, many of the school leavers might be retrained in agriculture, small business, or technical extension agents in

---

<sup>24</sup>Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1970, p. 235.

## BEST COPY AVAILABLE

order to provide services and information to the traditional and transitional sectors. In short, the Government should be aware of the ill-consequences of expansion. This should be counteracted by the provision of folk schools, community development programmes, youth clubs, resettlement of lands now being redistributed. The problems of over-production of school leavers with little or no employment should be keenly handled through planning. These propositions can best be tested and no doubt evidence from research would be most beneficial and illuminating.

In sum, it is easy to aim at reducing or indeed abolishing inequality. This, in my opinion, is better said than done. As one author succinctly put it: "In all times, inequality of nature has unfailingly produced inequality of rights . . . If the negligent, the lazy, the untrained and the ignorant were to enjoy equal rights with those who display the corresponding virtues, this would be as unnatural and unjust as if the child had rights equal to those of the adult, the weak and cowardly woman rights equal to those of the strong and courageous man, the villain the same security and respect as the meritorious citizen."<sup>25</sup> Inequality is an unavoidable dilemma.

---

<sup>25</sup>R. Dahrendorf, Essays in the Theory of Society (Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 151-78.