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Introduction

I deem it necessary for me to start this keynote address by first congratulating the leadership and membership of the Academic Staff Union of Research Institutions on your 2019 annual conference. I am particularly touched by the choice of the theme of this conference which is Educational Research for Sustainable National Development. This is a carefully considered theme to interrogate by a body of experts as yours, who are deeply concerned over the need to evolve a roadmap that will lead us into tackling effectively, various economic, educational, political and social challenges confronting our dear country at this crucial time of her history. Nothing perhaps could be more needful and timelier than this theme calling for the attention of serious minded experts like you. It is therefore my earnest hope that this conference would prove worthy of time, physical, mental and financial resources you have invested in planning it and that its outcomes will satisfactorily meet the objectives it was set to achieve.

In attempt to provide direction for our discussions in this august gathering, I have identified three focal areas to pay attention to. They are:

1. Research,
2. Sustainability and
3. National development.

As briefly as possible, we need to examine what implies to the subject matter of this conference.

Research

Research is what we who are preoccupied with academic activities often claim we know and do. Gatherings like this do offer opportunities to re-examine or to search again [*re-search*] the meanings and purposes of research.

Simply put, research means search again, look into something again, re-examine a stand, position or benchmark and possibly reaffirm their correctness. This *characteristic definition* of research views research first as an infinite exercise, unending search for i. knowledge and ii. Solutions to human, environmental, economic, social or political challenges. Second on this characteristic definition of research is that in view of Joshua [2018] it is a i. conscious, ii. Determined, iii. Painstaking, iv. Systematic and v. critical search specifically beamed on an issue calling for urgent attention because of its perplexing nature.

In another dimension of demystifying research, it is considered as a pursuit of finding answers to some identified puzzles [Gupta and Gupta, 2011]. Yet, research is also perceived as an exercise undertaken to increase knowledge or solutions available on an issue of interest.

Our application of research as an academic preoccupation to our discourse is that we are expected to search or re-search, seek for or reaffirm knowledge and solutions that will facilitate remarkable development of our dear country.

Let me for now crave your indulgence to pause in our quest to unearth the conceptual layers of research. We will surely come back to continue from where we stopped. Now let's consider another focal term-sustainability.

Sustainability

Sustainability implies a process a programme or a resource that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, [<http://ps//simple.org>]. It also means a project, a change programme or an initiative that is capable of yielding its expected dividends to targeted beneficiaries as long as required.

If applied to our focus at this conference, sustainability implies that the national development plan we are evolve should be sustainable, in other word, it must be capable of providing lasting solutions to Nigerian development challenges.

Finally, let us examine the last key word which is national development.

National Development

It would be necessary for me to begin discussing national development by first explaining development as a concept.

Development can be defined differently as situations warrant. For this occasion, I like to define development in reference to the **Sustainable Development Goals** [SDGs]. The reason for this is that the choice of theme for this conference appears to have been influenced by this ongoing global initiative. That be the case, development therefore suggests conscious or concerted efforts made toward improving lives and future prospects of everyone everywhere. This view of development as postulated by Antonio Gutierrez, the Secretary General of United Nations, considered development as a recipe for reducing vulnerability, increasing resilience and averting conflicts locally, nationally or internationally.

Drive for development is often premised on presence of stagnancy or backwardness characterised by disparity of opportunity, wealth and power, bad governance, illiteracy and its attendant plights, health threats, natural disasters, conflicts, crimes, environmental degradation and so on [United Nations, 2015].

Some development activities should therefore revolve round the following;

1. investment in sustainable infrastructure,
2. Provision of quality education,
3. Creating sustainable energy,
4. Ensuring gender equality
5. Evolving good governance,

6. Formulating strong economic reforms.
7. Strengthening capacities to deliver quality services etcetera.

Pointedly, the main aim of development concept is to free humanity from poverty, secure a healthy planet for future generation and build peaceful, inclusive societies [United Nations, 2015].

A new goods and knowledge [Odon,2018]. In this case, a fundamental purpose for undertaking research is to engender development.

Research, if added to development become **research and development** which connote systematic combination of both basic and applied research to discover required solutions to problem or to create new goods and knowledge [Odon, 2018]. In this case, a fundamental purpose for undertaking research is to engender development.

Development as implied in this context is indicative of the progress Or growth plan which our deliberations at this conference should culminate in to promote our country Nigeria to the **league of developed nations**. This is where the development of Nigeria as a nation comes to fore. Directing our educational research efforts towards national development requires research efforts in that specific fields of education must be geared towards solving Nigerian development challenges.

Let us briefly illustrate some areas which educational research should focus on ;

1. **Research in Basic Education.**

Providing solutions to:

- a. enrolling in schools over 10 million Nigerian youth who supposed to be in schools but are out there on streets,
- b. Strengthening policies on basic education to enable it achieve its objectives more satisfactorily,
- c. Providing more funds

2 **Research Secondary Education**

Providing solutions to:

- a. ensuring quality terminal education for poor and weak learners;
- b. providing quality education for learners who are transiting to higher education.

3 **Research In Tertiary Education**

Providing solutions to:

- a. effective funding of higher education,
- b. eliminating incessant strikes;
- c. improving pedagogies etc

4 Research In Special Needs Education

Providing solutions to:

- a. effective implantation of inclusive education;
- b. strengthening advocacy for special needs education,
- c. improving local production of assistive devices,

- d. improving sports and adapted physical education for special needs persons etc.

Conclusion

As I wind down on this keynote address, let me say clearly and emphatically that this conference has what it takes, going by the calibres of its organisers and attendees, to produce outcomes that will guarantee significant national development of our country if only we conduct the affairs of this conference differently from our **usual norms** of organising conferences. I wish you all result oriented deliberations.

References

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