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ILLITERACY: A NEGLECTED PROBLEM IN NIGERIA.

Education is the bedrock of any country's development and any country that does not educate its populace is bound to fail. Unfortunately, Nigeria has a high number of illiterates in basically as a result of the inflated rate of poverty. As of 2018, the statistics of Nigeria's poverty was 70% majorly characterized by Northerners.

Illiteracy is an undermining factor that has contributed to the constitutional loopholes in Nigeria. Citizens of this country tend to blame our political leaders for bad governance neglecting the fact that there are also at fault. The ignorance of some Nigerians caused by illiteracy has contributed to the problems of the country retarding the flourish of democracy in Nigeria. Well, Poverty also accounts for ignorance and lack of political education, an abridgment of political rights and duties, and a lack of an appropriate political culture. In Nigeria where political culture is not well developed, there is limited emphasis on political participation, voter's education, respect of the rule of law, tolerance of opposition, and supremacy of the will of the people, as expressed in a free and fair electoral process. In Nigeria, the civic culture or political efficacy, which is most likely to ensure political stability is either low or even absent. In a parochial political culture of Africa, citizens see themselves as distant from the government, and not a participant. This problem, in turn, accounts for a lack of patriotism among the citizens because of the disconnect between power and responsibility.

Asides its effects on the political structure, illiteracy has greatly affected the society. The society dwells in chaos as idle youths create disrupting activities. Illiteracy has resulted to a lot of unemployed youths leaving them idle which mostly results in violence. It would be a fallacious statement to say that all illiterates are criminals. It would be what is termed fallacy of hasty generalization. Not all illiterates are involved in crimes and not all illiterates involved in crime do so volitionally. As often said that ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Illiterates who are not well informed find their selves caught in an incriminating situation. An illiterate person who is unable to read the written warning against packing on a restricted area ends up getting arrested or sued for the trespass. It is also credible when an illiterate earning measly amount of money amounts to arm robbery, kidnapping, rituals, or other sorts of social vices just to supplement his or her low income. Although the aim is to liberate the family from poverty or send the children to school; the means are not justifiable by law.

Regardful of the fact illiteracy has affected the society at large, it has also affected the illiterates individually. Illiteracy confers low standard of living on an individual in such a way illiterate find it hard to provide their basic needs A low-income earner with children in school which he has to support and feed will undoubtedly experience a low standard of living. The low standard of living entails that he or she will struggle to get by each day and people who are struggling do not have much to spare which will contribute to national development. Illiteracy impedes national development and that is why Nigeria is still stagnant in its development because illiteracy has been neglected.

However, Nothern Nigeria has a greater percentage of illiterates in the country. The roads in the Northern part of Nigeria are not only dominated by cars but Almajiris too (beggars).

Almajiris are homeless citizens that wander around the streets of Northern Nigeria especially Kano and most of them are children. These Almajiris are dropouts, orphans, and poor individuals that hope to find a living on the streets. It's quite unfortunate that less privileged humans get to experience the harshness of life.

Anyways, this can be taken care of if some measures are taken. Firstly, the mindset of illiterates needs to change. The transition from illiteracy to literacy begins in the mindset of the individual who is expected to become literate. Such a person is expected to get determined not to remain illiterate. Determination is the driver of this resolution and an illiterate needs to direct his mindset at becoming literate. Secondly, fellow privileged citizens should sponsor the less privileged. The last but not the least, building a literate and inclusive country will take more than the efforts being made only by the government. The education systems in Nigeria need to be rebuilt. UNICEF helps improve planning, budgeting, and monitoring, and assesses learning outcomes and teacher competency. It also helps build the capacity of School-Based Management Committees (SBMC). Additionally, UNICEF helps teachers improve their skills and preparedness. Efforts like these need to gain more traction.

Summarily, I leave you with a quotation from Adamu Adamu which says "Tackling illiteracy should be on everyone's agenda. The basic education statistics show how much work that remains to be done to achieve some degree of acceptable equity in access to education and the improvement in the quality of education in general".

