

## **Rural Dwellers and Access to Sound Education; Fate or Negligence?**

**By**  
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“We have a very young population, our population is estimated conservatively to be 180 million... more than **60% of the population is below the age of 30, a lot of them haven't been to school**, and they are claiming that Nigeria has been an oil producing country, therefore they should sit and do nothing and get housing, health care, education free...” – Muhammadu Buhari (my own emphasis in bold).

Before the above statement by the president, I have attempted to ask few questions about Nigeria's growing population and the standard of education from the foundational stages (Primary and Secondary levels) down to the tertiary institutions of learning. Particularly, the state of foundational education for rural dwellers in some parts of Nigeria will only keep the percentage of uneducated Nigerian youths higher in future. (Unless there is an improvement).

From a fatalistic perspective, it will seem that life is somewhat unfair. Somehow, this view does not swim in the pool of religious sentiments.

From a great deal of interaction with common people; children and youths in rural areas, fundamental and somewhat 'innocent' concerns are raised as to why one child is born into plenty opportunities and another into abject low life.

More pathetic is the fact that the poor child wields equal intelligence/brainpower or even more than his 'silver-spoon' contemporary. With time and other factors beyond the poor child's control, he is made to see himself as less than his worth.

Most times, poor standard of education is one of these factors. I have seen children who could answer some of the mathematics questions failed by other opportune and 'bright children' on the cowbellpedia but cannot get there because; their parents work under systems that does not pay, or pay them inadequate salaries. As a result, the child attends a school that is not aware of the existence of such programs, the school does not dare invest in any of such programs or pursue academic growth since any extra fee should augment salaries that are grossly inadequate, the child then tends to see such programs as some ivory tower, seen just on the television where he is a constant seer, but never to be seen.

This is just one example of the wide gap of societal status extremes. My earlier use of fate however does not imply that every man should be comfortable with the statusquo, even when the result of every struggle; Success or failure seems to be fate at the end of the day.

Where and how do we come in? Individuals, organizations and government should intensify focus on education in rural areas as brain drain at the childhood stage spells danger. More attention should be placed on these children who seem to be naturally disadvantaged (location and resource wise).

A whole lot of potentials are untapped, undeveloped and some sadly undiscovered. It is only this that can guarantee a future where there may be no element of truth to state that a great percentage of our population “haven’t been to school” or constitute lazy/jobless youths.