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Education and Prosperity through Technology - Case of Virtual Education Limited, Nigeria

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Abstract

There is said to be a greater dependency of Education and Culture on each other. Both culture and education have impact on development of individual, community or Nation. Term Culture understood as distinctive ways how people living differently express and conduct things. It translates into the identity of the community. Education system of a nation comprises of learning, teaching, training and research in formal or informal ways. Development in the nation spreads all around including culture and education and era of internet and technology almost every sphere is affected. Use of information and communication technology (ICT) and interactive media in education is referred as e-learning. E learning has extensively affected the way of classroom learning and many schools are using it as pedagogy. This paper is an attempt to present ICT opportunities and challenges in Nigeria with special reference to the case of Virtual Education Ltd (VEL). VEL is among the first few delivering computer based learning and e-learning solutions to schools in Nigeria. VEL has been a success case study in spite of all the challenges it faced of a developing African country.

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1. Introduction

There has been an explosion in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) over recent years this has changed multiple aspects of everyone across globe. The access to information has changed the way people

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communicate, buy, sell, network, save, seek job, work and learn. ICT has largely impacted the learning pedagogy at schools and vocational educational. The relevance of education and training in holistic development process is quite highlighted from the statement “a quality TVET (technical and vocational education training) programme plays an essential role in promoting a country’s economic growth and contributing to poverty reduction as well as ensuring the social and economic inclusion of marginalized communities” (UNESCO 2013). Usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in schools helps in positive learning outcomes. (Sivin-Kachala 1998; Wenglinsky 1998; Mann, Shakeshaft, Becker & Kottkamp 1999; Holmes, Savage & Tangney 2000). The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a country of beauty and blessings. It has 36 states and 1 Federal Capital Territory. These are further grouped into 6 geopolitical zones. Total population is estimated to be 180,000,000.

2. Objective of present study

The present study is an attempt to bring about the issues related to use of ICT in schools of Nigeria. Understanding ICT is relevant and challenging for the development. The study is based on available secondary data through books and websites. The study is presenting a case study of the experiences faced by Virtual Education Ltd Nigeria. There were limitations to the primary data collection in given stipulated time so case study was done to highlight qualitative aspect of ICT and present opportunities and challenges relating to ICT in schools of Nigeria.

3. Opportunities and Challenges of ICT in schools of Nigeria

3.1. Culture and Background:

Nigeria has mainly 3 tribes. Hausa that is very dominant in the north of Nigeria, Yoruba that is around the west and central and Igbo that is in south and east of Nigeria. Every tribe has its own characteristic but by and large they are gentle and subtle. These constitute over 70% of the total population. 368 other tribes constitute the remaining 30%. There are more than 250 languages spoken in Nigeria. English is considered to be the official language. However, it is notable that not more than about 50% of the population are able to speak in English. Every tribe has got its own language, which they prefer following as the standard mode of communication among themselves. Nigerian culture is as old as 2000 years and what makes it stand out is its diversity.

3.2. Social and Economic Conditions:

Nigeria is primarily an agriculture driven economy with over 70% of the population involved in farming. 20 % are in service sector and Industries take 10 %. It is abundant in oil and natural resources. The gap between the rich and poor is huge. Where in 10 % of the population holds 90 % of the revenue it is the remaining 90% that is surviving here with 10 % of what is left. People from the cream layer of society have wells full of oil and money. The household economy and nation’s economy both are challenging in Nigeria. The common man as we call it is in and out struggling for money to sustain one self and family. All adult members of family are expected to work to make ends meet. . Inclination of doing good for the country and people has been lacking.

3.3. Education System:

Primary education is free and a must for all children. Government Elementary and Primary schools are located scattered across the country. Average Basic Literacy is close to 70%. Thereafter the children tend to fend for themselves as secondary education is neither cheap nor easily available. *Total number of Secondary School is one third of the total of Primary Schools. Federal and State involvement is almost at equal level. Private sector involvement is not intense and is lesser than either.* Tertiary education is by far very limited and available at a cost. Those that can afford it have severe inclination to send their off springs to other countries for higher studies. Nigeria has a special affinity to British culture. They always prefer going the UK way knowing the fact that it is a huge financial burden in trying to follow the British way. Once the students go out they do not have any desire to come back and serve their own country. Where in 2010 if there were over 1.2 million applicants only 200,000 secured seats in various Nigerian Universities. Looking at the population and the number of pass outs each year from the

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