

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN INDIA AND NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper starts with a brief comparison of the education systems of both countries, starting at the primary levels of school and moving up to colleges and universities. Nigeria and India are two developing countries with high population rates, the former located in western Africa and the latter in South Asia. Upon reading this information, one should be able to compare and contrast the systems, including their pros and cons.

Keywords: Primary/ Secondary Education, India, Nigeria, Colleges, Universities.

Overview of Education Systems in India and Nigeria

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela. Education is one of the most critical components of an individual's success. It can shape one's life in the right direction. In India, a well-developing country that provides education as a constitutional right, the literacy rate is 77.70%, with literate males at 84.70% and literate females at 70.30%, according to the National Family Health Survey. This ratio is still low compared to other developed countries, but India is progressing at an impressive rate. On the other hand, Nigeria's literacy rate has differed between 65%-75% in the past three years. Nigeria is also a developing country in West Africa, where most educated people hail from big cities. The rural part of Nigeria has seen few people, mostly the female population, take an interest in educating themselves or their children. This disinterest and lack of education are holding the country's literacy growth.

The same situation is often seen in parts of India as well. Many families believe the female members of the household do not require education. Some aren't able to afford it while others prefer not to spend their money. This orthodox mindset holds back the youth of the nation from progressing ahead, thus also disrupting the development of the country.

Nigeria has seen rapid growth in its education sector. However, this privilege is limited to

particular regions and cities. Twenty-three of Thirty-six states have less than a 50% literacy rate. The root cause of this withholding is poverty and lack of knowledge. The government hasn't reached these regions yet.

Primary Education

Primary education begins at around age 5 for the majority of Nigerians. Students spend six years in primary school and graduate with a school-leaving certificate. Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6-11 year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education.

In the north of the country, the picture is even bleaker, with a net attendance rate of 53 percent. Getting out-of-school children back into education poses a massive challenge.

Genders, like geography and poverty, are an important factor in the pattern of educational marginalization. States in the northeast and northwest have female primary net attendance rates of 47.7 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively, meaning that more than half of the girls are not in school.

Education deprivation in northern Nigeria is driven by various factors, including economic barriers and socio-cultural norms and practices that discourage attendance in formal education, especially for girls.

The Indian government emphasizes primary education for children aged 6 to 14 years old. Since education laws are given by the states, the period of primary school stays alters between the Indian states. The Indian government has banned child labor to ensure that children do not enter unsafe working conditions. 80% of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government-run or supported, making it the largest provider of education in the country.

However, both free education and the ban on child labor are difficult to enforce due to economic disparity and social conditions. However, due to a shortage of resources and a lack of political will, this system suffers from massive gaps including high pupil-to-teacher ratios, a shortage of infrastructure, and poor levels of teacher training.

Secondary Education

Secondary school is a link between the primary and tertiary levels of education. State-owned secondary schools are funded by the state government and are not comparable to Federal government colleges. Although education is supposed to be free in the majority of the state-owned institutions, students are required to purchase books, and uniforms and pay for

miscellaneous things costing them an average of fifty thousand naira (\$130) in one academic year.

Secondary schools in Nigeria are filled with unqualified teachers who end up not being able to motivate their students, these schools are often understaffed due to low state budgets, lack of incentives, and irregularities in the payment of staff salaries. Some state-owned secondary schools are regarded as elite colleges because of the historically high educational standard and alumni who have become prominent citizens and successful in various careers. However, the college ranking of these institutions has since dropped because of the arrival of some privately owned institutions.

Private secondary schools in Nigeria tend to be quite expensive with average fees ranging from two hundred and fifty thousand naira to one million naira (\$652.00 – \$2600.00) annually. These schools have smaller classes (approximately ten to twenty students per class), modern equipment, and a better learning environment. Most teachers in these institutions possess at least a bachelor's degree in a specific course area and are sent for workshops or short-term programs regularly.

Secondary education covers children aged 14 to 18, a group comprising 88.5 million children according to the 2001 Census of India. The two halves of secondary education are each an important stage for which a pass certificate is needed and thus are affiliated by central boards of education under the HRD ministry, before one can pursue higher education, including college or professional courses.

The struggle to revive secondary education came right after the Independence of India under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, the first prime minister of India. It started to take new initiatives by forming committees, and commissions and developing the infrastructure, quantity, and quality of secondary education in India. These committees suggested curriculums that would focus on the overall development of students instead of continuing the colonial legacy of rote learning and were achieved to a certain level. However, the colonial concept of rote learning remained in the system.

Higher Education - Colleges and Universities

The government has majority control over a university education. Tertiary education in Nigeria consists of Universities (Public and Private), Polytechnics, Monotechnics, and Colleges of education. The country has a total number of 153 universities registered by NUC. The higher education sector faces many challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of professional teachers, etc. However, Nigeria has been making progress in facilitating its education policies.

India's higher education landscape is a mix of progress and challenges. Its scope is vast: 1,043

universities, 42,343 colleges, and 11,779 stand-alone institutions make it one of the largest higher education sectors in the world, according to the latest (2019–20) All India Survey of Higher Education Report (AISHE 2019–20).

The number of institutions has expanded by more than 400 percent since 2001, with much of the growth taking place in the private education sector, according to a major 2019 report from the Brookings Institution, *Reviving Higher Education in India*. This growth continued through 2019–20, according to the 2019–20 AISHE report.

Capacity is growing rapidly to serve India's large youth population and burgeoning college-aged cohort. One metric of note is the gross enrollment ratio (GER), which measures total enrollment in education as a percentage of the eligible school-aged population. India's GER of 27.1 percent in 2019–20 seems poised to fall below the Ministry of Education's target of achieving 32 percent by 2022.

Local Survey - Opinions of Students Living in Nigeria

Upon conducting research among my classmates and their parents, most preferred higher education in India. Many Indian students studying in Nigeria travel back to their home country to pursue their secondary grade studies.

The education in Nigeria does not provide many options for CBSE, ICSE, or any Indian board student, which leaves them with little to no options. However, IB schools provide a well-facilitated education to those who would like to travel abroad to universities and colleges.

Conclusion

It is fair to say that both these countries are trying to grow and enhance their educational sectors. Challenges are faced in every situation, but governments work on finding worthy solutions to these problems. Rapid growth is already seen in India's education quality, and Nigeria not falling too far behind.

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