

The Incidence of Out-Of-School and Issues of Child's Rights in Nigeria: Brazil and Guatemala's Case and Lessons from Canada

Abdulrahman, Yusuf Maigida¹, Iyieke-Jaja, Joyce Ifeoma², Elems, Ikwegbu Helen¹

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt

²Department of Public Administration, School of Business Administration, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt

Corresponding Author: Abdulrahman, Yusuf Maigida

ABSTRACT

The paper focused on the peculiarity of out-of-school situation and issue of child's right in Nigeria. In the overall examination of the issue among the developing countries of the world, the duo of Guatemala and Brazil were identified as the case studies; to x-ray the associated problems and characteristics of out-of-school in the developing nations in a manner that the cause and effect were portrayed. The study identified that anything that prompts out-of-school as an experience in Nigeria is a violation of child's rights, captured in the Child right Act - an Act to provide and protect the right of the Nigerian child and other related matters, 2003; also as part of the UBE Act of 2004 which legalised compulsory attendance of schools. In spite of these instruments and international protocols and charters like Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and many others, Nigeria is still rated highest in the population of out-of-school children. To address the menace of out-of-school in Nigeria, insights into the Canadian success stories and strategies in policy and practice, resulting in almost 100% attendance of school or no out-of-school children were comparatively appraised for Nigeria to re-assess herself and pick lessons from Canada in the process of embarking on educational reforms. The paper, however, conclude that non-implementation of policies on education is the plaguing problem that has kept the country where it is.

Key words: Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), out-of-school situation, child's right.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, socio-economic, demographic and cultural characteristics of developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have been recognised to predispose those societies to series of developmental challenges, including in the area of education. In Nigeria, the situation is not different from the manifestations associated with the system (theory and practice) of education in the third world countries. One major issue in

the view of these researchers which has remained a phenomenon in the education of children in the developing countries is the spate and rising incidence of out-of-school children which have been found in various studies to be caused by factors not limited to people's cultural practices, family's socio-economic status, country's demographic characteristics and many others. Some children are out-of-school because they dropped out, not that they lacked access, but for one or combination of limiting reasons.

Evidences from the reviewed literature on Brazil and Guatemala are even sufficient in this case to show that out-of-school or drop-out remains a phenomenon in the developing countries.

Among all the rights of world citizens, the one on the educational opportunity, directly involving children is not played down upon; as it is believed all over that children are the future of any nation, therefore, such future is expected to be adequately nursed in all ramifications, including education; to ensure that the expected human dignity is not put on the line. Without education, the dignity of man is removed. Children without education become frustrated as youth and grow to be hostile and irresponsible adults. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises all human beings as free born and equal in dignity and rights (Howard, 2009 and Encarta, 2009). Education right of the world citizens is also exemplified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, captured by Eheazu (1998) and expounded in Abdulrahman and Ogbondah (2007), noting that the declaration of this particular right has been adopted and domesticated by various governments of the world; as contained in article 26, considering education as a right of every human being. The Article in sub-sections (i), (ii) and (iii); stresses that:

- i. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- ii. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of

the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

- iii. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

In addition to the globally declared human rights, several other international protocols, conventions and charters have been specifically subscribed to or adopted by nations, to address and cater for children's education, particularly in the third world countries. Important in the human right recognition of child's education was the World Education Conference held in Jomtien, Thailand from March 5th – 9th, 1990 which Nigeria participated and as one of the signatories to the declaration on Education for All (EFA), championed by UNESCO. With this declaration, every child is expected to be educated. The New Delhi Declaration – 1991, requiring stringent efforts by the E-9 countries (i.e. nine countries of the world with the largest concentration of illiterate adults across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean), including specifically Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan; to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest possible time frame (Okiy, 2004 and Abdulrahman, 2017).

Nigeria in her own way has seen education, just like all other countries, including Canada; as an important part of human dignity consideration, thereby embarking on measures to stem the tide of out-of-school. One of these is a more direct policy effort at recognising the right of the child to education, demonstrated with the passage into law, the Child Right Act titled: An Act to Provide and Protect the Right of the Nigerian Child and Other Related Matters, 2003. Sub section 15(1-7) provides that:

- 1) Every child has the right to free, compulsory and universal basic education and it shall be the duty of the Government in Nigeria to provide such education.
- 2) Every parent or guardian shall ensure that his child or ward attends

- and completes his- (a) primary school education; and (b) junior secondary education.
- 3) Every parent, guardian or person who has the care and custody of a child who has completed his basic education, shall endeavor to send the child to a senior secondary school, except as provided for in Subsection (4) of this section.
 - 4) Where a child to whom Subsection (3) of this section applies is not sent to senior secondary school, the child shall be encouraged to learn an appropriate trade and the employer of the child shall provide the necessities for learning the trade.
 - 5) A female child who becomes pregnant, before completing her education shall be given the opportunity, after delivery, to continue with her education, on the basis of her individual ability.
 - 6) Where a parent, guardian or person who has care and custody of a child, fails in the duty imposed on him under Subsection (2) of this section, he commits an offence and is liable-
 - a. on first conviction to be reprimanded and ordered to undertake community service
 - b. on second conviction to a fine of two thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month or to both such fine and imprisonment; and
 - c. on any subsequent conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months or to both such fine and imprisonment.
 - 7) The provisions of this section shall not apply to children with mental disabilities.

The launching of Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in 1999 and its subsequent passage into laws in 2004, as an Act that gave it a legal backing was a demonstration of interest in the Durban

Statement of Commitment of 1998 and the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) (now, African Union) - Decade of Education for Africa, 1997–2006 which requires African states to generalize access to quality basic education as a foundation stone for sustainable socio-economic development (Federal Ministry of Education, 2000). These global efforts in the recognition of the right of children to quality education and subsequent participation in the country's development process, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) further emphasized the right of the child to education, having Goal Number 2 addressing the achievement of Universal Primary education. This according to Abdulrahman (2014) is to ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school by 2015 and to eliminate gender disparities at all levels in primary education by 2015.

Not all the countries met the target of 2015, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The need, therefore, to provide opportunities for mop-up and gearing of efforts towards sustaining those aspects of the MDGs already achieved; culminated in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This also sees the child right to education as very vital to ensuring the dignity of human beings, where Goal 4 of SDG emphasises quality education, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequality. Apart from all the earlier interventions, the unique and most current interventions on the education of world children, to strengthen and boost all the previous and other existing national and global interventions are those from UNICEF Strategic Plans 2014-2017. Basically, both the local and international efforts at addressing the child's education are channelled towards ensuring:

- i. Access to and completion of quality education for all children and youth to at least 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive and equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory, as well as access to quality education for out-of-

school children and youth through a range of modalities. Ensure the provision of learning opportunities so that all youth and adults acquire functional literacy and numeracy and so as to foster their full participation as active citizens. The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education of good quality should also be encouraged.

- ii. Equity and inclusion in and through education and address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparity, vulnerability and inequality in education access, participation, retention and completion and in learning outcomes. Inclusive education for all should be ensured by designing and implementing transformative public policies to respond to learners' diversity and needs, and to address the multiple forms of discrimination and of situations, including emergencies, which impede the fulfillment of the right to education.

Problem Statement

Geo-political classification or regional characteristics of the country go with different cultural, demographic and economic peculiarities, thwarting in one way or the other, the education right of Nigerian child. In the northern part is a cultural association of the child's right with educational opportunities. This is often confused with the religious interpretations, when female children or girls are considered less of schooling or are withdrawn from schools for marriage. Northern boys are traditionally and mostly sent as emigrant learners to the neighbouring or farther communities for Arabic learning, subjecting them to harsh lifestyles of begging for survival; even fending for the sustenance of their teacher and his family. The dignity of these children are removed, they are dressed in tattered clothing and miserable footwear or barefooted, exposed to health hazards and dangers. In spite of government interventions, the practice has not ceased to exist. However, this is prevalent among the

poor and downtrodden majority of the northern society.

The entire south-eastern geopolitical zone of the country is demographically populated with very enterprising young boys and men. Boys' enrolment in this part of the country is therefore consequentially not encouraging because of commercial orientation that has become the people's culture (way of life) in the region. The Ibo boys, as fondly referred, from the south-eastern Nigeria, are also traditionally required to be away (emigrate) out of their communities, just like the northern boy children, for informal education as apprentices to their relations for business engagements, after which they are financially settled or set up in similar business. The consequence of this is a cultural truncation in the education right of the Ibo boys.

In this educational characteristic, historically the south-western part of the country became the trailblazer in experiencing formal education in Nigeria since 1842 at Badagry and consolidated by the decentralization of education through the 1951 MacPherson Constitution with which the western region availed herself of the opportunity to pioneer Universal Primary Education (UPE). This region is highly favoured as a region with highest educational advancement, characterized with largest number schools, from elementary to tertiary, public and private; but not without the consequences of poverty which render some families incapable of educating their children, even in the face of free compulsory education. In fact, this region is not immuned to the incidence of children out-of-school.

The trend in this phenomenal experience, particularly in Nigeria, as a developing nation is considered most horrible all over the world and it is worrisome.

In this regard, the permanent secretary of the Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education - Adamu Hussaini in BBC (2017) also acknowledged the enormity of

this ugly trend, when he lamented, it was "sad to note" that Nigeria had 10.5 million children out-of-school. This is the largest in the world, comparing the entire population of Libya and Liberia put at 10,496,000; while the population of out-of-school children (OSC) in Nigeria is approximately 10,500,000 in the statistics of UNESCO; portrayed by Lawal (2016), while showing the report of out-of-school children in Nigeria.



Fig. 1: Typical Example of Hawking Nigerian Children during School Hours

Despite that education of children has been made one of the legitimate rights of the child in Nigeria; backed up by law, nationally and internationally, all is still not well. In the same vein, individuals and foreign personalities visiting Nigeria have always recognised the need to overhaul and sanctify education right of children, more especially the girls. One of such personalities is a Pakistani, Malala Yousafzai; a school pupil who is an education and women's rights activist from the town of *Mingora* in the Swat District of KPK province. When she met the Nigeria's acting president, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo and asked him to declare what she called "an education state of emergency in Nigeria. This is calling for more and serious attention, to use the insights from other countries that have surmounted the horrible development, as it is, in the successes of Canada and Finland; to rescue the situation in Nigeria. The right of Nigerian children to education is not negotiable. Children are

humans and should be accorded right to quality education for the achievement of the dignity of man.

With all efforts at universalizing education, making it free and compulsory in Nigeria, as well as recognising education as an important right of the child; what still manifests across the country is a large number of out-of-school children; found on the streets hawking and in various homes as maid, in the rural areas as farm labour, even girls into prostitution etc. The quest for remedy to the incidence of out-of-school and protection of human dignity are considered to be the *raison d'être* for this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study is aimed at examining the very disappointing implications of lack of education on the dignity of man, particularly appraising the incidence of children out-of-school in the face of child's right to education. Despite that Nigeria, as gathered from some reviewed literature, shares some common historical and political characteristics with Canada, having their colonial history linked to the British, their membership of Commonwealth and UN, both Canada and Nigeria are oil producing nations and many other common features. Nigeria is even more endowed with so many other natural/mineral resources that should have placed her on the vantage economic position, needed to oil and facilitate her educational growth. Conversely, the country is left with much to desire in the educational right of the child. There are laws and charters, local and international, including the Child Right Act, Universal Basic Education Act and other interventions from international donors and United Nations' agencies; yet, not much has been achieved. What then is surreptitious about overcoming this out-of-school menace in Nigeria? The known and glaring features of Nigeria are the dense population that has gulped more than 182 million people (National Population Commission, 2017). Corroborative of this assumption is in the UNICEF's remark, that over the last decade;

Nigeria's exponential growth in population has put immense pressure on the country's resources and already overstretched public services and infrastructure. With children under 15 years of age accounting for about 45 per cent of the country's population, the burden on education and other sectors has become overwhelming.

Bad economy, the country was a victim of recessed economy some two previous years, crippling the overall growth of the nation, including educational sector; political instability & insecurity (Boko Haram insurgence, agitation & militancy in the Niger Delta for resource control and the recent secession campaign for *Biafran* country); and cultural reasons have been tentatively assumed to be responsible for this denial of child's right in Nigeria.

The reviewed literature provided the researcher series of specific or combined reasons identified as predisposing factors to the incidence of out-of-school children in developing nations, thus:

I. Health Reason

This is *socio-economic*, considering this from both ways, health problem on the part of children may put an end to schooling (physical or cognitive disability) and on the part of parents, fulfilling financial requirement of students schooling is halted (Alderman et al, 2001 and Pridmore, 2007 in Hunt, 2008).

II. Bereavement and Orphanhood

Case et al, in Hunt (2008) renders that bereavement or death of family members or parents in particular often makes children more vulnerable to drop out-of-school, late enrolment and slow progress. This is a *socio-economic* factor, associated with out-of-school situation.

III. Child Work

The most prevalent types of child labour, according to Hunt (2008) appear to be domestic and household related duties for girls and agricultural labour for boys. The economic situation faced by many families in the developing

countries has left forced them with no choice than sending their children to the streets or as maid to fend for the family's survival. This is a *socio-economic* hindrance, considered a serious predisposing factor.

IV. Gender

Gender and schooling preference is an age long cultural practice in most developing countries. The preference of male children at the expense of girls in schooling is a *cultural* factor in the issue of out-of-school.

V. Rural Urban Migration

Socio-Economic and Demographic are the factors linked to migration or mobility for jobs or security. In many countries, particularly the developing world; the search for greener pastures is the order of the day. Similar to this is fleeing for security reason, accompanied with hunger, penury and starvation. In such insecure situation, no one thinks education. Priority is safety and survival.

VI. Socially Disadvantage Group

There are interlocking reasons for socially disadvantaged group to have less access and retention than others, which Hunt (2008) identified to include poverty, gender, cultural practices (traditional or religious). This is both *Socio-Economic and Cultural*

VII. Age

UNESCO (2005) identified age as a reason for drop out from school as age-specific dropout rates for older children increase drastically after the age of 10, such as the case of Burkina Faso in 2003 and Niger in 2006 where more than one-quarter of 14 year old children that started school dropped out. This is both *Socio-Economic and Cultural*.

VIII. Supply of Schools

Schools available, unavailability or shortage/insufficient number of schools pose threat to access. Population is an associated problem that has always culminated in limited number of school, manifesting in an imbalance in the

demand (increasing number willing to enroll) and supply (number of schools available). More numbers of enrollee are willing but no access in terms of school availability. The situation here is linked to *socio-economic and demographic* factors

IX. Schooling Resources and Facilities

Lack or shortage of school resources and materials are *socio-economic and demographic*. or overstretching facilities in the few available ones

X. Marriage and Notion of Adulthood

Cultural practice of initiation which in most countries, requiring boys to be initiated even around primary school age and girls after the first menstruation as reported by Colelough et al (2000); Molteno, et al (2000) & Nekatibeb (2002) in Hunt (2008) who submitted that these practices are linked to school dropout. This situation is *cultural*.

Are the factors above the real impediments to achieving a 'no out-of-school' situation in Nigeria or there are other factors responsible? This quagmire is the focus of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a qualitative research, specifically using historical research method to x-ray the issue surrounding children's out-of-school situation and as a child's right violation. Many scholars have acknowledged that studies using qualitative methods are not only admissible and appropriate, but have added vitality as well as knowledge to the field of education (Apps, 1999; Griffith, 1999; Mezirow et al, 1975 and Rubenson, 1999). The theoretical perspective most often associated with qualitative researchers is phenomenology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2004). The issue of out-of-school fundamentally does not require any control or manipulation of variables, as the phenomenon under investigation has already occurred and known to still exist. It is believed that this whole issue of out-of-school which negates the human rights

stance of the world communities and the consequential effects of this on human dignity are issues of concern. Historical research according to Osokoya in Abdulrahman (2010) regards this method as the systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning prevailing or past events. Both primary and secondary sources of information were relied upon as the sources of information for this research.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion here is based on the manifestation of the problems and characteristics of out-of-school in the developing countries, using a case study. Also, putting Canada in focus for comparative assessment with Nigeria; constitute the focus of discussion, thus:

Problems and Characteristics of Out-of-school in Nigeria - A Case Study of Brazil and Guatemala

Generally, the characteristics and problems associated with out-of-school in Nigeria is not peculiar only to it, but the characteristics of developing countries. Studies have shown in many countries, mostly the developing countries and particularly in Africa; including Nigeria that dropping out-of-school has become a serious phenomenon. It is, because of attendant social deviance, with society producing frustrated and poverty-ridden citizens who go into all sorts of crimes such as thuggery, robbery, prostitution, shop-lifting, pick-pockets etc. to compensate for what they have missed and earn a living. This is not different from the views of Mathew (2015) who sees dropping out-of-school as a dangerous phenomenon related with poverty, unemployment, criminality or public assistance need. Recognising this issue of out-of-school as a phenomenon, different studies have been carried out in such countries as Burkina Faso in 2003 and Niger in 2006 (UNESCO, 2005); in Zimbabwe in 2011 (Mawere, 2012); in Nigeria in 2011 (UNICEF/FGN, 2012). It is uncommon to hear about or see out-of-

school children in the European nations, United States and Canada. This trend in out-of-school has variously indicated that Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are the worst for it.

In view of the above, evidence from Guatemala shows that only 30% of rural students complete third grade, $\frac{2}{3}$ of Maya first graders are taught by instructors who neither understand nor speak the children's maternal language. In addition to lack of access, poor teacher training and insufficient resources are identified to be plaguing the Guatemala system of education. Also, fewer than 30% of students in Guatemala complete secondary school, and many of those who do finish lack the skills to compete in the workplace – let alone in an increasingly competitive global economy. In summary, the net primary school enrollment has risen according to USAID (2004), from 72.0% in 1999 to 89.2% in 2003, though nearly 2 million children (ages 5-18) still do not attend school. For Brazil, 72 million children at the age of the early years of secondary school were out-of-school in 2009.

As earlier insinuated, the reasons or glaring characteristics of out-of-school are basically due to the socio-economic status of the country and by extension, the individuals. Also, cultural attachment or immersion of the people into their traditional practices and identities has consistently produced out-of-school children in the developing countries. The two major factors have always been linked to those factors influencing access to education. However, Hunt (2008) identified a wider range of reasons such as lack of interest in school, costs, distance, pregnancy and opportunities to earn income as reasons for dropout of school.

More critical of the problems of out-of-school is the economic situation in many developing countries which are so bad that it cannot support education of its citizens, more importantly the children Dropout rates are high, especially for girls. According to Global Education Fund (n.d), Guatemalan

children are often forced to leave school due to the need to provide family income. Studies have shown that child labour creates pressure on child's time, causing erratic school attendance and regular absences (Brock & Cammish, 1997; Croft, 2002, Ersado, 2005; in Hunt, 2008). Girls particularly are often forced to take care of siblings, marry early, or leave school to help support the family. In many poor communities, school fees for tuition, textbooks, uniforms and supplies often force children to drop out-of-school as these expenses can easily consume a substantial percentage of a poor family's income.

The situation that is evident in Brazil is not different from Guatemala, as UNICEF (2012) discovered strongest inequalities when considering the race and family income of the children at risk of dropping out. About 30.67% of white children (1,596,750) are older than the recommended age in the lower secondary school, the figure among the Afro-Brazilian children is of 50.43% (3,513,117). In view of this revelation and the income inequality in Brazil, percentage of children above recommended age amount to 62.02% (1,241,902) in families with per capita income of up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the minimum salary and to 11.52% (121,334) of families with a per capita above two minimum salary. Fulfilling school financial commitment by households/families is a critical factor of consideration in the pupils' retention and drop-out rates.

In the analysis of Hunt (2008), children from better off households are more likely to remain in school whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled. It was submitted by Mukudi (2004) that not only do school fees lead to under-enrollment and drop-out, they also limit attendance at school and lead to temporary withdrawals. In Guatemala, particularly in rural schools and in indigenous communities, schools are often poorly funded and lack adequate books, curriculum guides, literacy materials and

exam prep guides. In Guatemala, Schools sometimes don't have enough supplies to give children and some don't even have chairs or desks.

Teachers, Disposition and Manifestations

In terms of availability and competence, teachers' motivation is also financially significant. On one hand, a poorly motivated teacher makes the school unattractive to the learners; consequently increase the rate of drop-out. In Guatemala for instance, low teacher salaries contribute to a shortage of teachers. On the other hand, training or retraining of teachers requires money and if this is not achieved, quality of teachers will remain a disappointment. Teachers are not properly trained, particularly for rural schools. Recruiting and retaining quality teachers in rural schools poses a significant challenge in Guatemala. Poor teacher preparation and insufficient resources lead to 76% of all rural children who enter first grade dropping out before completing the sixth grade. According to Hunt (2008), almost half of all students consistently fail first grade, these children are more likely to fail again and even drop out. The unfortunate situation of teachers in Brazil shows that a teacher of Children's education in Brazil earns down to 20 times less than a judge (UNICEF, 2012). In the same manner, the remuneration of a secondary school teacher is almost one fourth of that of a police chief in Brazil. The recent discovery by UNICEF indicates that salary average of these professionals with Higher Learning is according to the CNTE, 50% less than the salary average of the professionals of other categories with the same level of education

Teenage Pregnancy

Research studies have shown very abundantly that in Brazil, teenage pregnancy and violence at home push girls in Brazil to marry older husbands, according to research. Griffin (2015) reports that "Child marriage is widely accepted in Brazil," said Alice Taylor, lead author of the report that is the first study of the practice in a society where, unlike in other child marriage

"hotspots" such as Asia or Africa, girls are not forced to marry. In Brazil, marrying as an adolescent increases the risk of a girl experiencing domestic violence and leaving education, with girls either leaving school after they marry or marrying after dropping out of school.

According to the latest Brazilian census in 2010, UNICEF (2012) reports that just over 88,000 girls and boys (aged 10-14) were in unions categorised as consensual, civil or religious. It further reveals that around 877,000 women between 20-24 reported having been married by age 15, which would make Brazil fourth in the world in terms of numbers of girls who are married or co-habiting by age 15. The Brazilian law permits marrying at the age of 16 years, if their parents agree and earlier in the case of pregnancy. In Guatemala, Global Education Fund (2015) has it that most indigenous girls are Mayan and they are among the country's most disadvantaged group with limited schooling, early marriage, frequent childbearing, and chronic poverty. Many parents think girls should not attend school since they should be preparing for motherhood.

Canada in Focus: A Comparative Assessment

The lesson Nigeria can learn from Canada are inherent in the Canadian breakthrough of having almost no record of out-of-school children which is worth considering as a template or guide for the Nigeria's education reforms. The right to education in Canada is jealously guarded. It has been noted that:

Canada has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and one of the two optional protocols to it while signing the other. Responsibility for implementation is split between the federal government and the provinces. Canada's ten provinces have nearly universal health insurance plans that cover virtually all children and maintain most social welfare agencies. Another provincial responsibility is

education. Children receive tax-supported elementary and secondary education. Universities charge subsidized tuition (UNICEF-Canada, n.d).

All students as contained in Education Act, c. E-2, s. 21 (1990), as amended by 2006 S.O. c. 28, s. 5(1) are entitled to virtually free elementary and secondary education in Canada. In fact, the Province of Ontario has recently enacted legislation which requires students to remain in school until the age of eighteen (Library of Congress, n.d). Previously, children had been allowed to legally drop out-of-school upon reaching the age of sixteen. This initiative is part of a larger programme that includes a Can\$1.3 billion (about US\$1.23 billion) Student Success Strategy to expand available programmes. Ontario has also created 1,000 new skilled trades training spaces for vocational training (Library of Congress, n.d). The new requirement that children remain in school until the age of eighteen is enforceable with fines against parents who do not enroll their children in school. However, critics question whether the province will be able to force students to return to school if they decide to quit after reaching the age of sixteen.

What more of the insight into the successes of Canada in the 'massification' of children's education, from enrolment, retention and completion is worth exploring, for Nigeria to surmount her out-of-school or drop-out syndrome?

In actual fact, there are no much difference in the characteristics of education between Nigeria and Canada. However, Canada has always demonstrated serious commitment in the policy and practice, but in Nigeria, implementing policy is always with lukewarm attitude. Canadian parents are more informed and not limited or impeded in getting their children enrolled in schools. It is a government's decision in Canada to have parents committed to ensuring their children get an education. Parents are provided opportunities to make

choice in the type of schools in Canada, thus:

1. free public schools
2. paid private schools
3. at-home education
4. English or French schools (in many areas)

The first two items above are also the case in Nigeria, but the third item is forbidden under the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 which requires compulsory formal schooling, therefore, home schooling is not official. The last item is also not applicable in Nigeria because English is adopted in Nigeria as her national language, except that French is taught as a subject in the Nigerian schools.

In Canada, provincial and territorial governments set up and run their own school systems. They are much the same across Canada, but there are some differences among provinces and territories (Government of Canada, 2017a). It must be noted that Canada does not have a federal department or national system of education, as revealed in Abdulrahman (2014) that Canada, is among those countries like Japan, U.S.A. and Switzerland whose educational systems are characterised with strong local responsibilities and decentralised control of policies. In this regard, Canadian law requires that children must go to school. Depending on the province or territory, children may start at the age of 5 or 6 and continue until they are between 16 and 18 (Government of Canada, 2017b). This situation is not entirely different with what obtains in Nigeria. Comparatively, schooling in Canada has the characteristics of:

1. starting with kindergarten and continue to grades 1 to 12. This is the same with Nigeria where from 0-3years, early childhood education is provided and 1 year pre-primary, from 4 to 5years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).
2. School year usually begins at the end of August and finishes around the end of June while in Nigeria, it begins in September and ends in July

3. Weekly, the school in Canada opens from Monday to Friday during the school year (except during holidays); the same situation in Nigeria.
4. Canada gives high school diplomas to students who successfully complete secondary school (high school). Here, the case is different in Nigeria, as the certificate awarded after senior secondary school (as called in Nigeria) is the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) which not a professional certificate, but entrance requirement for further studies at tertiary institutions.
5. Categories of schools that can be found in English-language and French-language across the country (even in areas where one language is more commonly spoken than the other). This situation is also different in the practice of education in Nigeria. Nigeria is not a dual language country. English is a national language, but French language is adopted as a second language, studied in Nigeria because of her geographical presence, bordered all over with French-speaking (Francophone) countries

As earlier indicated, there is no national control or management of education in Canada; the schools within a certain local area are managed by school boards, which are known to the law of the land as (i). school districts (ii) school divisions and (iii) district education councils. The Canadian schools boards has the responsibilities to maintain and manage the schools' buildings, the staff, oversee school administration and the students' enrolment

Outstanding in the practice of education in Canada, which is being sustained and aiding retention of pupils and students is the tradition of allowing public to elect the people who run a school board. They are called trustees which according to Government of Canada (2017b), hold regular meetings where members of the public can express their views on how schools in their area are managed. This is a

practice that has a benefit of achieving excellent results. The people on the board are from the communities where the school is established, so they will see the schools as their own property for their children, therefore run it better as personal properties.

CONCLUSION

Out of school or drop-out is not peculiar to Nigeria, but the characteristics of education in some developing countries. Out-of -school situation under the laws of many nations, particularly in the Nigeria's Child Right Act of 2003 and UBE Act of 2004 is considered a violation of the child's rights, consequently affecting the dignity of man and leading to degeneration in the society. Nigeria and Canada have almost everything in common, including policies on education. However, Canada has demonstrated the will to jealously pursue her education policies for proactive implementation, but Nigeria is known to accord a lukewarm attitude towards implementation of education policies.

RECOMMENDATION

The only recommendation, based on the conclusion above, is the demonstration of serious commitment to policy implementation; since Canada success in the maximum attendance of school is predicated on well thought out policy formulation and implementation with seriousness and commitment. If Nigeria implements policies, particularly on education, the education sector and other sectors will receive a boost and thing would fall in line.

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How to cite this article: Maigida YA, Ifeoma JI, Helen IE. The incidence of out-of-school and issues of child's rights in Nigeria: Brazil and Guatemala's case and lessons from Canada. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2018; 5(1):21-32.
