

MASS FAILURES IN JAMB (2024): MATTERS ARISING

BY BEN UMOLE:

Having commended the students from the Deeper Life High School (DLHS), for their giant and monumental feat in the recently released JAMB results of 2024, it is also germane and apposite to take a cursory look at the possible causes for the mass and dismal failures in that exams. The issue, ~~positively~~ or ~~negatively~~ cannot be over flogged. This issue is of public discourse if only we are all interested to see how we can restore the lost glory in education as it was in yesteryears. The abysmal decline in the recent performance in this immediate past JAMB examination cannot be divested from the general fall in Education in Nigeria. Let us reason it together as one navigates through the following reasons.

A common but recurring problem we all face as a country is the infiltration and abusive use of mobile phones by children/ students. Yes, no doubt, this technological device is a very good tool or mechanism that ought to be sensibly used to enhance their academic performance and studies of students'. The internet contains virtually everything in the world. Thus, and in this connection, the use of mobile phones ought to be an integral and very germane part of in enhancing one's studies and knowledge in life. In point of fact, no other source can be more incontrovertible than the internet. But do our students' really use it for this purpose? Rather, they are complacent using their personal or parents phones for frivolous and washy washy activities. The addiction to mobile phones by pupils, students in colleges and Universities, for highly salacious, morbid, and unrewarding purposes is getting out of hand. Students' spend more time surfing the internet to listen to lewd music and watch debasing films that rankle and fester their minds. Thus, the passion to excel in their studies is stultified. Our students spend hours and hours on phones, rather than being engrossed in memorizing salient lines in their textbooks.

Before the extension of internet to this part of the world, students competed avidly among themselves on who has finished a textbook and who has not. The mind was purely a tabula Rasa that could imbibe only decent, and praise worthy ideas. Unfortunately, this discipline has cascaded and the future of our children and youths is getting bleaker



and bleaker.

It is also not out of place to postulate that these days, many students who write JAMB examinations are grossly under aged and immature to face the complexities and intricacies of the examinations. How does one expect students who are just 13 years or 14 years to face and excel in a mountainous exam like JAMB? Yes, and no doubt, there are students' who are naturally precocious and ingenious. Those we fondly call gifted children or genius. But the children in this category of learners cannot be more than one or two from hundreds. Besides, excelling in academic programmes in schools is not a sine qua non or criterion that a child can cope with the vagaries and complexities of University education. The current Minister of Education, Prof. Mammon Turkur, while going round JAMB centres on examination day, said he was disenchanted to see under aged children as it were, writing JAMB examination. While been flustered, he suggested , that the minimum entry into Universities should be pegged at 18 years. Well, whether this suggestion is tenable or untenable is inconsequential. This maybe the subject of another discourse. You cannot remove the maturity of the mind from the quality and volume of what one learns. To a large extent, age plays a vital role in education; especially University education. Do you think this should be undermined?

We must all commend Prof. Oloyede, the current JAMB Registrar, for the salient, pivotal and transformational improvements, he has brought to this august examination body, JAMB. The recurring incidents of leakage or examination malpractice have been drastically reduced. The sanctity and purity of the examination has been restored as it was in yesteryears. All thanks the use of modern technology in conducting, marking and releasing

of marks. Releasing results just one week after the exams has been released is a great feat. In this nexus, candidates who depend on "expo" or JAMB connection by corrupt officials have had their hopes dashed. Anomalies or discrepancies in the award of marks to undeserving candidates, have been drastically reduced. But not totally eradicated. It is hard work and diligence for success now and the propensity for shortcuts is gradually abating. Also, the use of "special centres", is also being vigorously checked and stamped out. As every passes, JAMB enhances the quality of the exams. Kudos!

One must also not gloss over the fact that most candidates, who write JAMB exams, are not sound and grounded enough in the use of computers. Pressing the wrong keys could be another be another reason why most candidates do not perform well in the exams. Schools must see to it that candidates, from their schools are dexterous and versatile in the use of computers in answering questions. This is in the light of the fact that the entire exams is now computerized. Though JAMB conducts mock exams for candidates to test their abilities and be familiar with how computers are used in answering questions, it is not out of place if good schools and learning centres do a similar thing , to support or augment the efforts of JAMB. One single mistake in any examination can be very costly. Most candidates do not take writing JAMB exams seriously. More emphasis is still placed on passing and excelling in SSCE than in JAMB examinations. No thanks to the arbitrary establishment of private Universities , that admit candidates into their Universities , irrespective of how candidates fare or performed in JAMB examinations.

While government Universities still have minimum prerequisite in admitting candidates into Universities,

private Universities do not. In private Universities, it is admission for the highest bidder. Come with cash and you get your admission. Of course, what does one expect? Private Universities are established purely and solely for profit making. I know of a candidate who was admitted into a private University with a score of 99/400. So, why would candidates , especially those from affluent or opulent homes take the examinations seriously and prepare vigorously for it. Not a few candidates get to their examination centres late and so hurriedly or hastily write the exams so as to beat or meet up with the time allotted to the exams. Even before they leave the exam hall, failure is already staring them.

Finally or to sum up, the pursuit for money and mundane things is not making many parents to give their children the necessary guide , monitoring and mentoring in preparing for examinations. Such parents are unfair to themselves, to their children and to the society at large. Some students choose subjects in JAMB examinations and proposed courses arbitrarily. This should not be the case. Such students end up doing wrong subjects; they cannot skillfully handle and in process fail the examinations. Parents must play a very passionate role in guiding and enhancing the education of their children. Parents must plug this loophole at all cost. Some students just need guide to excel in examinations. Not all students who fail examinations are cognitively weak. They may just be victims of wrong choices they make. We may all have cause to smile in subsequent years, if the above issues are addressed. All the points asserted above are not holistic. Issues of mass failures in exams cannot be comprehensively and thoroughly discussed in one discourse such as this. This maybe tip of the iceberg.

