



JOURNAL ON PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Rev. Fr. Prof. Eugene Anowai
Department of Philosophy

&

Rev. Fr. OKAGBUE Paschal Udogadi
Christ the King College, Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria
donpapacyrev@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The development of any nation and its achieving greatness depends largely on the development and the effectiveness of implementing appropriate education laws. For this reason, most governments all over the world placed much emphasis on educational policies as instruments of national development. In the Nigerian context, despite the importance attached to education policy development, certain challenges affect the implementation of the education policies which adversely affects academic excellence. The paper used secondary source of data through extant literature and document review as a map of action and identified that institutional weaknesses, lack of professionalism and inadequate manpower among others constrained education policy development in Nigeria. This adversely blocked the chances of achieving educational policy goals. It is therefore, recommended that the institutional capacities need to be strengthened, competent and qualified personnel need to be recruited and appropriate stakeholders need to be allowed full participation in education establishment. This is believed to effectively aid in the developing quality educational policies and also implementing them appropriately towards achieving academic excellence.

Keywords: philosophy of Education, Education Policy, Policy implementation, and Result

Introduction

Education is believed to be the bedrock of any country's development. It is considered as the cornerstone for meaningful and sustainable growth development and achievement in art, science and technology. Arguing in the same direction, Adesina (2014), had affirmed that, worldwide, education has been recognized as a catalyst for achieving socio-economic, scientific and technological development. For instance, Federal Government of Nigeria in 2004 declared in its National Policy on Education that education is an instrument par excellence for achieving national development. In other words, any

meaningful growth and development of any country must be preceded by a sound educational planning. Since education constituted an indispensable aspect of social realities of a nation, it is of cardinal importance to any society.

From the above postulations, one could now see that education is not just a mere discipline, but a philosophical force of its own with positive implications for human development. Obviously, any such education without a philosophy may not achieve its envisioned end for national development. Arguably, any education that is devoid of some philosophy would tantamount to the

anomaly of a lively tortoise moving around without its carapace. Thus it is the intention of this paper to prove how education energized by philosophy can form the basis for national development. In Nigeria, education has been adopted as an instrument per excellence for achieving the national objectives (FGN,1981 revised). As an independent and developing nation confronted with the problems of nation building, social integration and economic development, education is seen and adopted as a means of dealing with the great problem of national development. It is through education that the senses of national unity, patriotism, loyalty, etc, are transmitted into members of the society.

Philosophy and objectives of Nigerian Education

The philosophy and objectives of education of a nation is usually an off-short of the people's goals which can be regarded as the identified societal values to be attained or sustained through education. It is to be noted that the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian education has metamorphosised into the present state, having passed through some stages with appreciable landmark.

Unlike the colonial education which was a replica of British education system lacking harmony with the needs and aspirations of Nigerians and was geared towards the production of mere subordinates who would never rub shoulders with the colonial masters but remain perpetually at the bottom of the economic, as well as political ladder (Adesina, 2007), the current philosophy and objectives of education was formulated based on the following criteria:

A systematic thought of the nature of man, the caliber of man to be produced through

education, the type of society desired for him, the type of values cherished in the society and such that the individual would cherish. Nigeria as a nation aims at building a free and democratic society, a just an egalitarian society, a united strong and self-reliant nation a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (FEG 1981, revised).

The Philosophy of Nigerian Education

The philosophy of Nigerian education is embedded in the National Policy on Education. According to the policy document, the five national goals which Nigeria's philosophy of education draws its strength are:

1. A free and democratic society;
2. A just and egalitarian society;
3. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
4. A great and dynamic economy;
5. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. (National Policy on Education, 2004).

Based on the above national aspirations, the philosophy of the Nigerian education seeks to achieve the following:

- a) The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.
- b) The full integration of the individual into the community; and
- c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

In order to make the philosophy of education work harmoniously for Nigeria's goals, education in Nigeria has to be tailored towards self-realization, right human relations, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness,

national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (NPE, 2004). To this end, the Nigerian education system is value-laden and aims at the betterment of the citizens in order that they may live a better life and contribute to the advancement of society. The role of education in the attainment of the broadcast philosophy of education. It might be necessary at this point to examine each aspect of the national goals for which education is set to achieve in Nigeria.

Free and Democratic Society

The question that readily comes to mind here is what does a free and democratic society entail? And how can this be achieved through education? A free society is a society where the citizens do not suffer restraints or undue interference. They are at liberty to achieve whatever they want to achieve that the least capable person can attain.

Just like freedom, democracy implies:

1. That all men possess certain inalienable rights;
2. That all humans are to be regarded equal in certain respects;
3. Faith in human intelligence;
4. Enhancement of individual freedom;
5. Right to peaceful dissent (Adighijie 2005)

The needed level of awareness of the citizens of the Nigerian society on the benefits of a free and democratic society as outlined above can be achieved through a virile education system that is guided by rational policy, which the society itself has evolved for its own benefit (Aghenta, 2005).

Just and Egalitarian Society

The attributes of a just and egalitarian society entails that all persons should be considered of equal importance and their

opinions treated equally and seriously (Akagbuo, 2005). Underneath a just and egalitarian society is the principle of justice and fairness; and the principle of fairness to all is also the principle of equity. The goals of a just and egalitarian society can indeed be pursued through education. Here, education can be used to deliberately inculcate in the learner the spirit of fairness and help to recognize individual differences and needs.

A great and dynamic economy

A dynamic economy is an economy that is capable of enhancing equitable income distribution by:

- i) Eliminating absolute poverty;
- ii) Participation of broadly based group in public matter affecting the citizens;
- iii) A reduction in the level of literacy;
- iv) A greater control and manipulation of the resource endowment of the nation by the internal forces.

The role of education in achieving a great and dynamic economy for Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Skilled manpower of various categories and in their diverse qualities is needed in the various economic sectors to pursue the goals of economic growth and development. It is through the process of education that these skills are developed and used to implement any meaningful economic development plan.

A united strong and self-reliant National and a Land full of bright opportunities for all Citizens.

To build a united country entails that education should be able to inculcate in every Nigerian the ability to contribute to the development or upliftment of the country; every Nigerian should be his brother's keeper irrespective of religion, ethnicity or social background; a country that will be

strong in defending its territory; a country that defends the rights of her people and upholds the integrity and dignity of its citizens and provide social securities (NTI 2006).

Policies of Education in Nigeria

Educational policy

Educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system (Okoroma 2003). According to Ake (2008): Education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. So every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation. In the view of Awokoya (2011), educational policy is directed towards increasing the quality of life of a people. He believes that the objective of any policy is to satisfy individual needs, community pressures and the degree of complexity and sophistication to which socialised personnel must be educated and trained to meet these demands. The following considerations, according to Awokoya (2011), are necessary to guide the formulation of adequate educational policy. It should be formulated and adopted through a political process which acknowledges the reality and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among its participants

It should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals. It should contain information on the broad objectives that should be reached. It should be a binding guide on the actions of those implementing it. It should be enforceable and enforced by the society which formulates it.

Kerr (2006) believes that, for a policy to

qualify as an educational policy, it must be distinct from other policies. In his view, educational policies are distinguishable from other policies by the fact that policies on education are part and parcel of educational institutions. However, it is important to note that not all policies formulated in educational institutions can qualify as educational policies. Generally, policies must be rational and purposeful to enable them to stand the test of time.

Educational policy in Nigeria has passed through two significant stages, the colonial and post-independence eras. Prior to the British conquest of the area and the subsequent establishment of Colonial Government, most of the area to the northern and western parts comprised empires, kingdoms and some chiefdoms, while in the central parts and south eastern parts there were small chiefdoms with some semi-autonomous communities. In the northern parts, Islam was deeply entrenched both in the religious belief and educational orientation of the people who had a uniform Qur'anic education policy (Baguada, 2011). In the southern parts, each ethnic group had its own traditional form of education based on its own culture and tradition, whose aims and objectives were similar.

Results

From the literature reviewed, we can conclude that the implementations of educational policies in Nigeria are constrained by the following factors. Most educational policies are well focused but the planning is often defective, making implementation difficult. Resources available for the implementation of a given educational policy are often over-estimated and thereby elicit unrealistic expectations

that fail to materialise. Since educational policies are usually translated into plans before implementation, studies have shown that the costs of implementing such plans have often been under-estimated. Most educational policies have become stalled at the planning stage. Reliable data have not been a popular feature in planning education in Nigeria. This situation has not facilitated the effective implementation of educational plans.

The implementation of educational policies is also often hindered by the interplay of politics, which may sometimes relegate reality to obscurity. Qualified teachers are not in sufficient numbers in the entire educational system in Nigeria. Studies have already confirmed this to be true of the U.B.E. Scheme, as well as the secondary education program.

The tertiary level of education, where hundreds of students receive lectures hanging out of windows and doors and taught by one lecturer, is also confirmation. Facilities such as classrooms, offices, laboratories, workshops, libraries, power, water *etcetera* are basic requirements in every school system. These have been found to be grossly inadequate in most Nigerian educational institutions.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has confirmed this in its numerous publications. Insufficiency of funds for implementing educational policies in Nigeria is a problem that has recurred in almost every implementation study that has been carried out. The importance of funds for carrying out any activity need not be over-emphasized. Government lacks the

political will for effective implementation. Corruption at all levels hinders the implementation of educational policies and programs.

Constraints on Policy Implementation.

As has already been highlighted, each of the educational policies has its peculiar bottlenecks when it comes to the issue of implementation. But over and above such peculiar problems, there are others that cut across the policies. Such include the problem of leadership changes; foreign linkage and foreign interference and resource manipulation.

Leadership

Since the attainment of independence Nigeria has experienced frequent change in leadership. These leaders have had their difficulties in both formulating and implementing 'educational policies'. From the Macpherson constitution of 1954 into the first republic, the regions were left to formulate and implement educational policies. Thus each region developed at its own pace. The various military regimes that operated in Nigeria between 1966 and 1979, formulated and implemented various educational policies to suit their imagination. The Shagari administration and later the Buhari, Babangida and Abacha administrations interpreted educational policies the way they understood them.

The idea here is that as each administration assumes power with its own vision, so are the educational policies twisted to suit their tastes. Just like there is no continuity in the leadership, so also the educational attitude to implementation frequently changes. Each successive administration tries to

initiate an approach that can be associated with it. As a result of confusion and conflicting attitudes to implementation, there is no continuity Nigerians really need. Such crises and public outcry against it led the head of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to constitute the EtsuNupe committee for the Vision 2010.

Foreign Linkage

Nigeria is a former British Colony and although it attained political independence in October 1960, the basic educational structures and patterns established by the British colonialists have continued to dominate the Nigerian educational scene. Attempts to make Nigeria retain its rightful place in the British Commonwealth have made it difficult to introduce and implement radical changes in the educational system. Even when some relatively radical changes were proposed in the 6 - 3 - 3 - 4, for example making the educational system practical and functional in nature, emphasising science and technical education, the implementation has not been smooth. The process of acquiring the science and technical equipment has not been an easy task. The foreign powers charged with the responsibility of supplying these items would not close their eyes to see Nigeria advance to a level that would challenge their enviable positions.

In all our institutions of learning there is a large number of untrained teachers. This is against the provision of the National policy which provided that eventually only trained teachers would be allowed to teach and that the National Certificate of Education (N C E) would become the minimum entry qualification to teach at primary school. The year 1998 was later fixed for making N C E

minimum qualification for teaching. However as noted by Nkom (1996) while most primary school teachers in the southern states have TC II, in the northern states most are without TCII.

Finance

The effective implementations of most educational policies demand high expenditure. This is particularly so for Nigeria where most of her policies are introduced in such large scale as to ridicule the country's capacity to perform. When for example one considers the reason for the failure of Universal Primary Education Scheme (U P E) in Nigeria, there was the issue of the shortage of teachers and supportive staff, lack of physical facilities. In an attempt to cope with the increasing number of primary school leavers, secondary schools were deboarded so as to use the feeding money in other areas. But the deboarding itself came with its own ills like truancy, prostitution, hooliganism and other vices. The 6 - 3 - 3 - 4 system faces the problem of infrastructure. The inverse relationship between the needs of our schools and the resource allocation is even more pronounced in the secondary and tertiary institutions.

Resource Management

Alongside the problem of finance is the problem of poor resource management. There exist a high number of abandoned projects in the educational sector. Similarly, the heavy machinery imported for ensuring science and technical education in Nigeria, have wasted in many school sites and many of such are wearing and tearing away. Similarly many people who were sent overseas for training, returned home without being put into proper use.

Other problems include poor planning, indiscipline among policy managers, negative attitude to work by education personnel, poor coordination, and devaluation of the Naira which made imported educational materials very expensive.

Conclusion

Developing and implementing appropriate education laws are of great importance and benefit as instruments of national development. Most developed nations across the world achieved greater heights by placing much emphasis on educational policies. It is therefore imperative for the relevant education authorities in Nigeria to critically address the identified impediments that constrained education policy development by taking into consideration the recommendations offered. This is believed to bring about the much needed change in the education sector for a better Nigeria.

Recommendations

Areas of Adjustment

In view of the numerous problem areas observed, urgent measures must be taken to make the educational system prepare the citizens for meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Some of these areas that need for adjustment include:

1. A reassessment of the situation on the ground in Nigeria vis-a-vis global developments in various facets of life. This assessment can show problems of the current policy, the needs of the Nigerian society and

economy, and the adjustments required to make Nigerian educational system functional as desired.

2. Taking appropriate measures to enforce the Language Policy as contained in the National Policy on Education. This step can make transition from home to school environment smoother. It will also help to promote our culture.
3. The issue of teacher- education must be viewed with greater seriousness- Much of our teacher-education programmes leave much to be desired. More attention should be given to strategies for character molding and more time should be given to practicals bearing in mind that our future teachers are S S C E holders and not TC II.
4. Teaching should be professionalised such that anyone who wants to be a teacher must be trained in the profession.
5. Science and Technical Education should be reviewed with a view to making it realistic in the Nigerian environment especially the rural areas. The content of some senior secondary school subjects need to be trimmed so as to enable teachers cover it conveniently in three years

References

- Adesina, O. (2004). *The Guardian Newspaper*, Monday, 1 November, p.16.
- Adesina, S. (2007). *Planning and educational development in*

- Nigeria, Ibadan : Education Industries (Nigeria) Ltd,
Adighije, C. (2005). *Saturday Sun Newspaper*, 9 April, p. 5.
Aghenta, J .A.(2004). Towards a systems approach to the planning of secondary education in Nigeria', in Adesina, Segun and Ogunaju (eds.), *Secondary education in Nigeria*, Ibadan: University of Lagos Press.
Akagbou, S.D. (2005). *The economic of educational planning in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Vikas Publishing House, PVT Ltd.
Ake, C. (2008). 'Quality education in a dwindling economy', lecture delivered on the occasion of the 11th Convocation Ceremony of the Rivers State College of Education, Port Harcourt.
Awokoya, S.O.(2011). 'The parameters of educational planning', in Adesina, S.(ed.), *Introduction to educational planning*. Ibadan: University of Lagos Press.
Babalola, S.K. (2011), *Universal free primary education in Nigeria*, Seminar proceedings organised by the Nigerian Union of Teachers in Lagos.
Baguwa Report (2010). *Perspectives of quantities and qualities in Nigerian education*, NERC Report of the Baguwa Seminar.
Bello, J.Y. (2006). 'The 6-3-3-4 system : another exercise in futility?' , a paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Nigeria Association of Educational Administration and Planning at the University of Port Harcourt.
Ejiogu, B. (2005) .*Daily Sun Newspaper*, Monday, 11 April, p.10.
Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Abuja: Federal Ministry of Information.
Hodges, A. (2011). *Children's and women's rights in Nigeria: awake-up call*, Abuja: National Planning Commission and UNICEF.
Hoy, W.K. & Miskel, C.G. (200). *Educational administration: theory, research, and practice*, New York: Random House.
Kerr, D.H. (2006). *Educational policy : analysis, structure and justification*, New York: David McKay Company.
Lindblom, C. (2009). 'The science of muddling through', *Public Administration Review*, vol. 19, pp. 78-88.
Nwankwo, G.N. (2004) . 'The cost of free primary education in Nigeria', in Adesina, S. &
Obasanjo , O. (2005) . *The Guardian Newspaper*, Wednesday, 23 March, p.11.
Okeke, B.S. et al. (2005). *A handbook of educational administration*, Owerri: New African Publishing Co. Ltd.
Okoroma, N.S. (2011). 'An evaluation study of the 3-3 aspect of the National Policy on Education in Port Harcourt and Obio/ Akpor Local Government area of Rivers State', *Journal of Technical and Science Education*, vol, 10 , nos. 1 & 2.
Okoroma, N.S. (2003). 'Factors militating

- against the effective implementation of the basic education programme in Rivers State', unpublished paper.
- Okoroma, N.S. (2010). *The perspectives of educational management, planning and policy analysis*, PortHarcourt: Minson Publishers.
- Onabamiro, S. (2004). 'The financial implications of free primary education', *Daily Times Newspaper*, 6 February, P.7. Osokoya, O.I. (1987). *6-3-3-4 education in Nigeria: history, strategies, issues and problems*, Lagos: Bininaike Educational Publishers.
- Osuji, F. (2005). *Daily Sun Newspaper*, Wednesday, 13 April, p. 1.
- Oyakhilome, F. (2006). 'An address presented to the Annual Convention of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP), University of Port Harcourt .
- Taiwo, C.O. (2010). *The Nigerian educational system: past, present and future*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson (Nig) Ltd.
- Terry, G.R. (2007). *Principles of management*, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
- Ukeje, B.O. (2006). *Education for social reconstruction*, Lagos: Macmillan and Co. (Nig) Ltd.