

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

EDUCATION POLICY IN NIGERIA: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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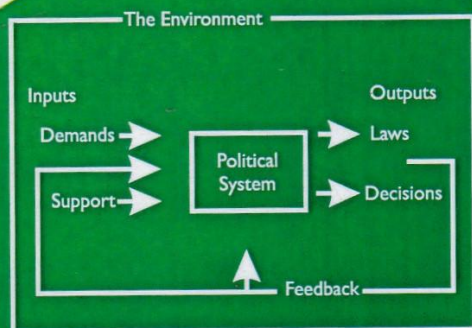
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Introduction

Education relates to the processes through which an individual is given the relevant instructions to acquire skills, knowledge and habit required to enable him navigate the world, interrogate the frontiers of societies and push it further and make it better for continued living. It is a lifelong process and could be obtained in both formal and informal structures. Consequently, it is a tool for the individual, national society and global understanding. Another perspective sees education as the process of receiving or giving systematic instructions at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in order to raise the manpower required to drive development in the state (Yesufu, 2000). It is through these processes that knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, habits are acquired, which drives local, national and international development. It assumes different forms and whichever form it assumes, there is the transfer of knowledge, skills, values and norms required for development of man in the society.

Nigeria was under British colonialism until October 1, 1960. When the British arrived about 1861, they needed manpower to sustain the British colonial exercise since West Africa, and particularly Nigeria, which they created in 1914, was tsetse fly-infested and the immune system of the British citizens were not strong enough to resist mosquitoes and tsetse fly bites. They also came with their new gospel to spread, and needed local indigenes to help do this. It became imperative to educate local people to carry out these functions since the British had manpower shortage. This was because many Britons who came to West Africa died from mosquitoes and tsetse-fly bites, several others were reluctant to take the risk. The option was to educate Nigerians and other West Africans to perform these roles on their behalf.

ISSUES IN PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING



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The British colonial government then established schools to impart British knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, habits to sustain the colonial system, produce white collar workers and preachers of the gospel in Nigeria. Since Badagry in Lagos State was the original entry point for the British colonial explorers, the Wesley Mission (Methodist Church) then established the first primary school in Nigeria there in 1843. By June 6, 1859, the Church Missionary Society established the first secondary school, CMS Grammar School, Bariga also in Lagos. The others are, Hussey College, Warri 1947, Hope Waddel Training Institute -1895, United Presbyterian Church, Methodist Boys High School, Lagos 1878 and Methodist Boys High School Oron 1905, by the Primitive Methodist Church.

The delay in establishing secondary schools long after primary schools was assumed to be that it would instigate critical thinking in Nigerians to begin to interrogate the colonial exercise. Education became one of the tools of British colonialism. Wherever they intended to extend the colonial authority to, they first introduced education and religion to make the people submissive before taking all powers away from them.

By 1882, colonial policy was captured in the education ordinance which gave total control of education to the British government. Schools were classified into Government-public and private. Government schools were to be financed through public funding while the private schools were to receive little aid from the public fund. In 1887, the education ordinance was reviewed and British teachers were brought in to help spread education and raise local personnel. After amalgamation, there was another education ordinance in 1916 to take care of the whole Nigeria. 73 years after the creation of the first secondary school, a tertiary institution was established in 1932 being Yaba Higher College (Yaba Polytechnic) and 1948 University College Ibadan. The goal of education should be to produce independent entrepreneurs and innovators rather than employees and administrators (Yesufu, 2000). But as the history of educational development in Nigeria has shown, the focus of the system was to assist the colonialist and learn their history and contribute little to the local economy and much more to the colonial enterprise.

The policy on education continued to be exfoliated until the 1959 Ashby Panel Report. The panel consisted of more Europeans than Nigerians and as expected, the report was skewed in their favor. It

remained essentially colonial in content and outlook. The objective of this paper is *ab initio* not about the development of education in Nigeria, but about how public policy on education was made and should be made in the future. The emphasis is on how to make policy, define the indicators, administer it, evaluate it to establish the outcomes and the impact. The significance of this study would be in explicating the practical stages of public policy making using the educational policy as an example. Secondly, the educational management bodies would locate themselves in the policy making structure and evaluate their roles

The Problem

Nigeria has a history of having been a British colonial territory upon which British law prevailed. The British educational syllabus and qualifying examinations, rated and graded in the United Kingdom prevailed. The educational content was all United Kingdom oriented. Education however relate to the processes and stages of skill acquisition meant to develop the individual and his society. In this case, the educational content and practices related to England rather than Nigeria. This was the number one educational problem of independent Nigeria, because at independence, the colonial Educational Ordinance post-1914 was the operational educational policy. The form and content of education did not relate to Nigeria's societal needs. The gap in educational policy lasted from 1960-69. The system that emerged from the colonial educational policy, was too bookish, elitist and colonial in orientation and does not reflect the actual needs of the country in terms of types and various mixes of manpower. It had not shifted away from the British object to produce clerical officers to operate the colonial and missionary programs.

In 1969, the National Curriculum conference was held and it expressed its dissatisfaction with the existing education system and its content. The prevailing educational policy and its contents had not been reviewed since independence, therefore it was not focused on Nigeria's development hence, there was a national problem. It is instructive to note that syllabus of subjects taught in Nigerian schools were all European. History of the Europeans was taught, literature was European and many others. Nigerian lawyers who graduated in America, were not permitted

to practice in British colonies unless they had internship at temple-inn in England.

The sovereign state of Nigeria then had a public problem to re-focus its educational policy and system to train human resources for economic, social and political development of Nigeria rather than produce medium term manpower for the sustenance of the colonial system. The new focus of the educational policy should be on the training and development of high level manpower capable to drawing up and actualizing various forms of development plans in Nigeria. This was the tool applied by the various Europeans and Asian countries in their pursuit for development.

Method of Study

The question of Nigeria's post-colonial educational policy to sustain Nigeria had received several treatises from scholars. Given this background of the subject matter, the descriptive technique was the appropriate approach because a lot had been written on the subject, therefore, there is abundance of secondary data available. The suitability of this research design is predicated on the fact that it was meant to obtain information concerning the current status and nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study. The aim was to describe what exists currently. It sought information to assist in decision-making to improve the situation (Ndiyo, 2005 p70). We combined case study, surveys, developmental studies, documentary analyses and cross-sectional data set which are all components of descriptive technique in this study because of its scope. In the application of the components of this technique, we paid particular attention to the characteristics of the population of Nigerian, trained under the colonial education ordinance and those under independent Nigeria education policy, and the critical role they played in the economy. In the course of this, cross-sectional comparison was made. The data obtained were complemented by personal experience and observation, they were subject to triangulation for validation. The procedures of the study included a clear statement of the problem, identification of the data set required to resolve the problem, selection of the data gathering instrument, and the target population. The data were further triangulated.

The Framework: Public Policy Making

In this section of the study, we will illustrate the steps involved in the making of public policy and how National Policy of Education (2004) went through the processes to emerge as a public policy before analyzing its content. The policy process could be said to consist of six steps: (i) Policy generation, (ii) formulation, (iii) policy output, (iv) implementation (v) performance and impact (Ikelegbe, 1994 p.82).

Another scholar, Kingdon (1986) averred that policy-making consists of three streams, the first being *problem stream* which involves focusing policy-makers' attention on a particular social problem, as well as defining the problem. This is the level in which the problem enters into the public policy agenda. Getting public attention on the problem could be accomplished through the interests' group activism, mass-media, actors associated with electors, political parties and the general public agitations.

The Second stream in the Kingdon's perspective is referred to as the *political stream*. It is here that the government agenda i.e the list of issues or problems to be resolved is formed. The primary participants in the formulation of governmental agenda are what Kingdon called the '*visible cluster*', those participants who are seen most readily on the public stage. The third stream is the *policy stream*. It is in this stream that decision agenda, or alternative specification is formulated. His decision agenda is the list of alternatives from which a public policy may be selected by policy makers to resolve a problem (Kingdon, cited in Henry, 1986 p.251).

James Anderson (1984), in his narrative on 'Policy Formation and adoption' conjectured that public policy formulation goes through the processes of problem identification, policy agenda setting, policy formulation, and decision-making. Egonmwan (2002), on the other hand, in his discourse of 'Policy formation and adoption' submitted that it commences with the interrogation of (i) what is a policy problem? A policy problem is a social situation which many people consider adverse or intolerable in its effect on a large number of people over a long period of time. (ii) Policy Agenda, Interest groups are endowed with political resources which are mobilized to make the demand effective and bring it to the attention of policy makers or those Kingdon called '*visible cluster*.' It is important to know that it is only demands from the most powerful

and organizationally skillful groups do get into the public policy agenda. (iii) The Formulation of Policy Proposals. At this point alternative course of action are sought by the policy makers (President, governors National and State House of Assembly members - primary policy makers, Judges, Interest groups - supplementary policy makers). (iv) Policy Decision-Making Stage (v) Public policy implementation (vi) Monitoring and Evaluation of Public policy (vii) Policy outcomes/outputs and impact.

The summary of the framework from these scholars is that public policies have stages they go through viz: (i) there must exist a public problem which affects a wide range of people requiring resolution, (ii) The problem should be made to make the list of policy making agenda (iii) Public policy Organ (iv) It should get implemented by the relevant organ (v) It should be monitored and evaluated to ensure all activities in the policy design are being executed and strategies are being reviewed (vi) Outcome(s) of the policy is/are identified and impact ascertained by policy indicators. The education policy would be analyzed against these elements of public policy.

SECTION II

The Making of Educational Policy

We are to analyze herein whether Nigeria's educational policy went through these stages as a public policy. The point of departure in this analysis would be to ask whether Nigeria had educational problem after independence and what was the nature of the problem? Nigeria certainly had a problem of preparing for national development after independence because the colonial educational ordinance that defined the education content was geared to serve the colonial system to produce middle level manpower that would be clerks and missionary interpreters and preachers. It was inappropriate for national development. The data in support of this analytical position is that the first primary school in Nigeria came in 1843 in Badagry, the first secondary school was in 1859 CMS Grammar school Bariga, 1932 Yaba Higher college and 1948 University college Ibadan. Quantitatively, sixteen years' gap existed before the first secondary school was opened, and 73 years before a higher college was established in 1932 and another sixteen years before University College opened in Ibadan. These gaps were not unnoticed by inquisitive Nigerian minds. The nationalists, pressure groups with focus on education, political parties,

Nigerian Union of Teachers and the media all criticized the inherited educational policy and its contents and called for its revision. This was how the public problems get into the public policy agenda. The first condition for Public Policy making which is the existence of public problem therefore existed in post-independence Nigeria. Consequently, Ikelegbe's (1994), Anderson's (1984), Kingdon's (1986) and Egomnwan's (2000) first stage in the educational public policy making process had presented itself.

The second stage of policy making is the agenda which contains the issues, problems, or subjects that gets attention of the people involved in policymaking such as government officials, legislators and the judges. The federal government through the ministry of education, then set up the National Curriculum Conference to compile a proposed curriculum. In 1969, the conference held to deliberate on the proposed content of the policy. Several interest groups were involved: Association of University Teachers (AUT), National Union of Teachers (NUT), etc. By 1973, the draft document received inputs from States Ministry of Education round the country and was ready to be enacted as a policy.

The third stage in the policy making structure was the then supreme military council, the highest policy making organ at this time was the Supreme Military Council since it was the era of military government. At this point, relevant proposals were drawn and alternative courses of dealing with the problems were considered. Government may decide to bide its time or may feel that since time is the best healer, it will simply allow issues to sort out themselves (Egomnwan, 2000 p.109). At this point, the people referred to by Kingdon as 'visible cluster' here were the members of the supreme council (military governors, Heads of the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Inspector General of the Police). This body today consists of the national assembly, state assemblies, governors, presidency, the courts, etc). By 1977, the first edition of the National Policy on Education was enacted.

The fourth phase of the Public Policy making is the implementation, that is, converting the tasks and the ideas expressed into reality or effect in the society. It refers to the process of converting inputs into outputs. In order to do this diligently, the National Educational Policy Implementation Committee to translate the policy into workable blue

prints that would guide the bodies whose duty it would be to implement the policy. The Committee was also to develop monitoring system for educational plan as it evolved (NPE, 2004). The fifth segment of policy making is often Monitoring and Evaluation, is not an end in itself but a means that increases the quality of the policy, hence it is a way by which the strategies are revised if found to be at variant with the reality on ground. Hence, in 1981, the National Policy on education had the revised version and seven years later (1998) the third revised edition was published. Also, when the country returned to civilian rule, the ruling political party and other interest groups desired the revision of the national policy on education. This was done in 2004, and is the current edition of the National Policy on education.

The sixth level of public policy making is often the outcomes and impact. In the context of policy making, the term implies the more immediate and long-term effects of the policy social intervention program. Impact means the intended long-term sustainable changes which it is hoped the policy program will contribute to bringing about. Outcomes are the effect the policy has had on the initial situation. By effect, we mean the more immediate tangible and observable change, in relation to the initial situation and established objectives...direct result of the policy activities that is verifiable and measurable in one form or other and it will have both qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions (Oakley, Pratt and Clayton, 1998 p.35).

The outcomes as described above of the National Policy on Education included the formation of (i) Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) responsible for providing free, compulsory nine years' basic education, made up of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of Junior Secondary School. It provided for optional early childhood or pre-primary (crèche, kindergarten and nursery education). (ii) Secondary Education Board (SEB) with directorates of mass-literacy, adult and Non-formal education, Science –Technical and Vocational Education. (iii) Tertiary education directorate which relate with the Universities, Colleges of education, and Poly and Monotechnic (iv) Open and Distance Education and Special education as well as National Board.

The education policy outcomes were grafted in Decrees No 1, 1974, No 49, 1988 and No 10 1993 which established the National Universities Commission (NUC), while Decrees No. 9 and 8 of 1977 and

1993 created the National Board for Technical Education. Decrees No 3 and 12 of 1989 and 1993 gave birth to the National Council for Colleges of Education. It was ascertained that indeed National Policy on Education existed and that it went through the entire hug of public policy making processes as illustrated above.

SECTION III

The Impact of the National Policy: Indicators

It is often very mistaken in the policy science that policy 'outcomes' would always have positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. Often, this does not turn out to be true. Also habitually, students, policy practioners and some donor agencies mistake 'effect' to be impact. This is because one element of policy science often discounted is policy 'indicators', the measurable strategies developed to read-off the impact of public policies. Indicators are useful construct to read off the successes or otherwise of public policy that have been implemented. It ascertains the degree to which the initial problem which the policy set out to address has been resolved.

The general rule on the application of this device is that whatever is defined as social indicators to reflect the impact of a public policy or social intervention should (i) reflect the project result at three levels; *output, outcome and impact* in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is pertinent to understand that while result indicators come at the end of the policy execution, there are usually; (ii) indicators of both immediate outcome and longer-term impact indicators (iii) indicators are important to define on the onset because they are used to 'satisfy' the project stakeholders by illustrating to them quantitatively the degree or the extent to which the initial problem have been solved. Since showing the 'effect and the impact' present spectacular problem in indicator definition, each indicator should be clearly defined which set shows policy effect, and those which define the policy impact.

In the case of the education policy, the national policy and the various decrees would be indicators of the effect of the policy and certainly not the impact. Impacts are ascertained after long period of the operations of the policy or social intervention. We pause this discourse here by submitting that there could be; output indicators, outcome indicators and above all the final impact indicators which affirm or

repudiate whether the initial problem had been solved or not. This is so because both output and outcome indicators do not confirm the successes or otherwise of the policy or social intervention.

SECTION IV

Outcomes and Impact: The Analysis

It is a classical procedure that whenever a policy is initiated to resolve a general problem, the impact evaluation is often conducted to rest the case that the problem have either been completely or half resolved. In the preceding section of this analysis, we had pointed out that one of the tools of policy diagnostic is usually the definition of 'social indicators'. We had however cautioned that there are 'outcome indicators' which illustrate the immediate outcomes of the activities contingent on the policy implemented (that is those structures or organs or visible activities which had happened to indicate that the policy is being executed). These indicators do not in any way signpost that the problem have been resolved. They are procedural indicators. The final stage of public policy evaluation and analysis would be to ascertain whether the long term impact or effect have been achieved by addressing what it originally set out to resolve. Put differently, it is the stage which confirms or repudiate whether the public problems which precipitated the public policy have been solved.

The National Policy on Education (2000) provided for the structure of Nigerian Educational system, consisting of:

- i) Early Childhood or Pre-primary consisting of crèche, kindergarten and nursery school. It is liberalized for the private citizens' participation. The government is not involved in funding at this level of pre-school education. The outcome is the numerous pre-school institutions that abound in Nigeria. On the long term impact side, they serve as reservoirs for babies, allowing single and working mothers to attend to their jobs and thereby contributing their quota to the GDP. Today, more women are able to combine work with child care, and in the process support their homes and contribute to the family economy, state and the nation. It is estimated that more than 60 percent of working women in Nigeria are nursing mothers.
- ii) **Basic Education:** National Policy on Education has increased the number of public primary schools in the North West zone to

19,436, North Central, 13,235, North East, 9,777, South West 8,631, South East, 5,453, South-South, 5,824, with a total of 62,406 and a teacher figure of 574,579 (www.yourbudget.com). The impact of this seems rather negative because one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria. Though with free and compulsory primary education, about 10.5 million Nigerian children aged 5-15 years are not in school (www.unicef.org). It could mean that the element of compulsion 'embedded in the National Policy on Education is not being enforced.

This is more worrisome when there is 'school-feeding programme meant to increase primary school enrolment, yet Nigeria has this scandalous number of out-of-school children. Another probable cause of this could be that though primary education is free and compulsory, there may be hidden charges which have restrained the parents from sending their wards to schools. The processes of monitoring and evaluation if conducted, could reveal this and other latent factors to the government with which to strengthen the program. The impact is more positive than negative.

- iii) Nigeria has numerous secondary schools shared by both federal governments referred to as 'unity schools, state colleges, missionary schools and private secondary schools. These have expanded the need for tertiary education in Nigeria. According to the website of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Nigerian universities do not have the carrying capacities to admit all those that apply each year. This is definitely an indication that the growth of tertiary institutions has not matched the evolution rate of transition from secondary and higher schools' levels to the tertiary institutions.
- iv) The tertiary level of education consists of 129 universities with 9 new ones which have been approved but yet to take off as at 2019 academic session. The federal government owns 40, state 39 and 50 private ones. These are complemented by 'Open-and Distance' learning opportunity as well as 'Special education facilities' These institutions have produced the required manpower for the management of Nigerian economy with room for improvement.

The combined output of these tertiary institutions is put at about 500,000 annually.

- iv) The long-term impact of the National Policy on Education is further visible in the area of budget. Education has been taking a large share of the budgetary allocation though falling short of the 15-26 percent prescription of the UNICEF recommendation. In the 2019 budget, education received #620.5 billion. In 2018 it got 7 percent of the budget. In short education takes 5-7 percent of the budget over the years. Though inadequate, the sector has provided the needed manpower with much room for great improvement.

Nigeria had developed and executed National Development Plans from the first in 1962 to the fifth Plan which was to take off in 1985 but was abandoned. The actual fifth Development Plan (2008-2011) had the 'Seven Point Agenda' as its focus. Its educational component stimulated manpower growth and increased the output of Nigerian educational system. To this extent, the National Policies on Education in Nigeria have not been lacking, but when the government of the day understands the correlation between education and National Development, greater budgetary allocation would be made and much greater impact would be felt through the indicators of educational policy.

Problems of Public Policies

Nigeria is not in want of policy makers to drive the economy, however, the challenges have always been at the level of implementation of the policy. The point at which the details of the policy design are translated into actions for the goals and the objectives to be achieved. There are several factors which impinge on the rate of the execution of policies, one which is the clear understanding of the problems and its dimensions, a clear definition of the goals that when achieved, resolves the problem(s). The cost of implementation or financial resources required, the expertise of the officers who are to drive the processes (often require training of those to execute the policy). The policy also requires support from the citizens since the problem to be resolved emanated from them. The government support is the most crucial. This may sound contradictory, to think that the government would initiate policies yet not support it. This is very possible if the policy is against certain interests in the government. Another critical issue is often the absence of Monitoring

of the policy implementation to ensure that all activities decided upon as being contingent on the success of the policy are taking place and progress and the quantity and quality of inputs are being maintained. It is surveillance kept over the policy in the field. The evaluation of a policy is a systematic assessment whether the policy is generating the result as expected. If not, the field officers should have delegated authority to cause adjustment in the policy pursuant to the original goals. The other challenge which is customary to Nigeria is often the lack of social indicators to measure the policy success. The other being the inability to conduct impact assessment to ascertain the success or otherwise of the policy. The education policy in Nigeria is not immune to these challenges, but to a very little extent because every level of education has an accreditation body. The National Universities Commission monitors and evaluates the universities, while National Board for Technical Education, supervises the Polytechnics, Colleges of education are under National Commission for Colleges of Education. State Education Board watches over the Secondary schools and State Universal Basic Education Board supervise primary education. These are the supervisory bodies which watch over the National Policy on Education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Nigeria had been described as having potential for greatness, the greatness is hidden in leadership which would expand and fund educational establishment to consummate the entire objectives of the National Policies on Education. The budgetary allocation to this sector has never exceeded 7 percent of the annual budget. Until there is a political will and the intellectual capacity to understand the linkage between education and development, it is only then the potentiality of Nigeria would be transformed into greatness. When the allocation to the sector is made, expenditure monitored, performance evaluation conducted, and the impact assessed, then the policies would produce the relevant outcomes to drive national development because this is the ultimate goal of educational policy. The long-term impact would be visible with relevant indicators after considerable period of educational policy maturation. Development is a desideratum and education is the means to the end. Education or any policy meant to achieve 'Pareto optimality'

in the society must at all times consummate the public policy processes as discussed herein.

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