

Implementation of Educational Policy for Socio – Economic and Political Emancipation in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the influence of the implementation of Nigerian Educational Policy on socio – economic and political emancipation in Nigeria. It specifically examined how the implementation of the policy could socially, economically and politically assist in the emancipation of people i.e. the Nigerian citizens. The study revealed that educational policies in Nigeria are capable of making an average Nigerian, self – reliant economically and socially. It further revealed that proper implementation of the policy could improve the political awareness and participation of the citizens. It was concluded that Nigerian educational policy paved way for socio-economic and political emancipation; however, effective and proper implementation brings development to Nigeria. Educational policies in Nigeria should be tailored to suit the social, economic and political aspirations of Nigerians. The problems militating against effective implementation of educational policies were highlighted. Based on the conclusions of the study, it was recommended that the challenges facing the effective implementation of educational policies should be addressed by government and all stakeholders. Since teachers are the implementers of educational policies, qualified teachers should be employed, trained and retrained on how to implement national educational policy in such a way that socio – economic and political emancipation would be achieved. Policy makers and educational experts need to work together to design national policies that would give way to economically self – reliant citizens, they need to work as partners in progress with teachers to ensure that the policy is implemented accordingly, also the cultural backgrounds of all ethnic groups in Nigeria should be taken into consideration whenever educational policies are reviewed.*

KEYWORDS: implementation, educational policies, socio-economic, political emancipation, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Education is internationally accepted as a key to social, economic and political emancipation and in recognition of the importance, governments all over the world have made commitments towards enacting educational policies. Education policy issues continue to be a question of critical concern and a tool for development. (Imam, 2012). Within the Nigerian context, Education can contribute

meaningfully to National development and this is achievable through the Educational policies put in place in the country.

Ajayi and Afolabi (2009) were of the opinion that education is largely considered as an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the Nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization in Nigeria. This is a clear indication that without education, a nation cannot get the required manpower material advancement and enlightenment of the citizenry. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors and other fields of profession therefore are the products of educational policies in the country.

Nigeria adopted series of educational policies right from pre-independence to post-independence period. The pre-independence policies include the 1882, 1887, 1916 Educational policies, the Phelps-Stokes commission of 1920, the 1926 Memorandum on Education, also various commission such as the Asquith and Elliot Commission of 1943 and the Ashby commission of 1959 were also set up to revamp the educational policies. Others include the 1948 Education Ordinance, the 1952 Education Ordinance and the Regional laws of 1954. Previous Educational policies from the Colonial masters could not meet the National needs especially the aspirations of the Nigerian child. The policies did not equip Nigerians to be self-employed through job creation. It was inadequate to develop Nigerians scientifically and technologically (Adamu and Adesua, 2003). The first Post-Independence Educational Policy was formulated in 1977, as a result of the major recommendation of the one-week conference held in Lagos in September 1969, the National Policy of Education was formulated, this was revised in 1981, 1985, 1988, 2004, 2013 and 2016 respectively.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria has been adjudged as one of the best which can be used for the Nations advantage for the purpose of economic, social and political restoration. The Policy states that Education is the greatest investment that the Nation can use for quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources and that education is the most important instrument of change since any fundamental change in the intellectual and sociological outlook of any society has to proceed by an educational revolution. The NPE (2014) states that education could be used to rectify the developmental imbalances inter-state and intra-state wise. This suggests that the implementation of the Educational policy could foster socio-economic and political fortunes for the citizens of Nigeria. Educational policies if properly implemented could help to emancipate Nigerians socially, economically and politically. This supports the NPE (2004) that the educational goals in Nigeria could help to actualize a free, just and democratic society; a land full of opportunities for all citizens; able to generate a great and dynamic economy; and growing into a united strong and self-reliant nation.

The inter-relationship among education, socio-economic and political emancipation underscores the imperatives of nationhood. Hence, as earlier indicated, education is the bedrock of any meaningful and sustainable development. It is therefore imperative to social, economic and

political development of every developing or developed economy. Education identifies the plights, set the priorities and design the modalities to actualize the targets of national development. This is indeed the philosophy and mandate of successive National Policy on Education in Nigeria as highlighted by Olawaiye (2013) that the National Policy on Education focuses on self- realization, individual and national efficiency, and national unity with the objective of achieving social, cultural, political, scientific and technological development.

Concept of Educational Policy in Nigeria.

Udida (2008) defined Educational policy as the projected programme of action which specifies goals, values and practices of an educational system. It could also be described as statement which guides and directs all actions at achieving national development through educational section. The National policy in Nigeria may be described as an Educational constitution policy document that embraces nearly all aspects of Nigerian Education system which serves as a guide to be followed.

Nigeria began a vigorous quest for a functional education that will meet the yearnings and aspiration of her citizens immediately after independence in 1960. A national educational council was set up by the Federal ministry of Education in 1964. It was saddled with the responsibility of embarking on an intensive research towards charting a new educational course for the country. Educational policy is a statement which guides and directs all actions directed at achieving goals leading to national development through the educational sector (NPE, 2014). Education policy provides the basis for regulation and control of the educational system. These policies are thus formulated to meet the desires and aspirations of people, community and the entire nation. (Edem,2006).

According to Uba (2004), a curriculum conference was held in September 1969, although this was truncated by military coup and thereafter, the Nigeria civil war which lasted for 30 months. As a result the education system of the country crumbled. However, as soon as the civil war came to an end in 1970, it necessitated the need to revive the educational system. The outcome of the national curriculum conference of 1969 led to the formulation of a policy document - the National policy on Education. The policy document spelt out the following goals:

- a free and democratic society.
- a just and egalitarian society.
- a united, strong and self-reliant nation.
- a great and dynamic economy.
- a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

That is why Agabi (2002) opined that policies are made and implemented normally to reflect the values, wishes, programmes and ideology of the government in power and it is at this level that decisions are made to initiate changes or shift between types of Education and programmes.

Educational Policies and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

Uju and Joy (2014), defined socio-economic development as the process of identifying both social and economic needs within a community and seeks to create strategies that will address various issues and needs in ways that would affect the society over a long period of time. Education is the most important instrument to enhance human capabilities and to achieve the desired objectives of social and economic development, education enables individual to make informed choices, broaden their horizons and opportunities and to have a voice in public decision making. Education through Educational policies plays a dominant role in fostering socio-economic growth and development in Nigeria. (Eze, 2003). Educational policy in Nigeria provides a foundation for development, the groundwork on which economic and social wellbeing is built. This confirms the fact that Education is an important instrument for economic development and social emancipation. Education has being recognized globally as a veritable and strategic venture pivotal to economic transformation of any nation.(Ismail, 2003). The significance of proper implementation of educational policy boils down not only in the area of provision of the required human capital resources but it also acts as an agent in developing the necessary technological tools and know-how for economic take-off.

Ebong (2016) conceived Educational policy as a powerful instrument or framework for the development of man and the society. Implementation of educational policies in schools is the key to increasing economic efficiency and social consistency in the country. By increasing the value and efficiency of their labour, it helps to raise the poor by eradicating poverty. Effective implementation of educational policy increases the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the labour force; ensures that a country is competitive in world markets now characterized by changing technologies and production methods. As such, no country can achieve sustainable economic development without proper implementation of its educational policy. The present educational policy in Nigeria raises people's productivity and creativity, and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances because it recognizes entrepreneurial skills that can boost economic fortunes of individual student. In the same vein, implementation of Educational policy plays a very crucial role in securing social emancipation which can be achieved through Civic Education.

Alhaz and Abbas (2010) opined that Education has positive long-run and short run relationship on economic growth which indicates that proper implementation of educational policy creates improved citizens and help to upgrade the general standard of living in a society. Therefore, positive social change is likely to be associated with the production of quality citizenry, and if there are positive social externalities of education, national income should increase by even more than the sum of the individual benefits. This increasing faith in education as an agent of change in many developing countries including Nigeria has led to a heavy investment in it and thus the delegation of manpower development to the schools. The desire for higher education and even education in many developing countries has undoubtedly helped public perception of financial reward from pursuing such education. This generally goes with the belief that expanding education promotes economic growth.

Oghiagbephan (2015) highlighted the expected socio-economic contributions of the implementation of educational policy in Nigeria :

1. Implementation of educational policy will help the young graduates acquire specific training and develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour especially within the discipline of choice.
2. Implementation of educational policy will make citizens to understand, appreciate and promote organizational objective. Well implemented policy can enable individuals to know the aims and objectives of organizations they find themselves and work in accordance with it.
3. Implementation of educational policy will build a sense of self-reliance, competence and the ability on the individual in order to become self-employed. Well implemented educational policy can discourage people from chasing employment opportunities that are not available at all. Effective implementation of educational policy is expected to lead to skill development which can make an individual self – employed.
4. Implementation of educational policy will help create an appropriate balance and critical mass of human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to be fully engaged and contribute to national development efforts. Implementation of educational policy will provide opportunities for all citizens to develop their fullest potentials through education, training and and motivation as well as creating the enabling environment for everyone to participate fully in national development.
5. Implementation of educational policy will help build on the morality of individual citizen. One of the objectives of education is to build citizens with high moral standard and implementing the policy will improve on the morality of citizens.

Educational Policies and Political Emancipation in Nigeria.

Education is a process that takes the dimension of including relevant skills, norms and values appropriate to the dynamics, challenges, trends and emancipation of the political system which is stipulated in the national policy on education. Similarly, Political education is only an aspect and specialized form of education directly or indirectly embedded in the educational policy. Implementation of educational policy is expected to be the peculiarity exclusiveness that can build political structure for the country and political trust and feeling of participation on individual citizens.

Emancipation on the other hand is the state of being freed, the liberation, freedom from inhibition and convention (Memedix dictionary www.dictionary.com). Black's law dictionary (2nd edition) also defined emancipation as the act or process by which a person is liberated from the authority and control of another person. The relationship between politics and education is not a new area in Nigeria. The development of politics through education and educational policies has been in existence since the period of colonial administration. Educational policies since independence have paved way for political independence, political emancipation and development among citizens in Nigeria. Educational policies have been designed to be in line with the political needs of the nation. Despite the challenges of implementation, its implementation has been a blessing to political emancipation among the citizens in Nigeria. Teaching of subject such as Government,

Social Studies and Civic Education are targeted towards citizenship education and democratic knowledge. (Nwachukwu, 2014).

Implementation of Nigerian educational policy will help educate citizen on democratic and political values, participation and fundamental human rights. The implementation of educational policy will help Nigeria move forward politically, help citizens understand political instructions, signs and rudiments of politics. Proper implementation of educational policy can easily eradicate gender disparity that usually keeps women out of politics. This is in line with one of the objectives of the National policy on education which lay emphasis on egalitarian society. Effective implementation of educational policy will enable all Nigerian citizens to know they have great roles to play in increasing participation in political activities. Well implemented educational policies facilitates the process of imparting knowledge, skills, facts and ideas on individual citizens. (Lenchie, 2013). Educational policy in this study is seen as the framework to motivate positive political institutional changes and development and moving towards creating the required political emancipation, cohesion and integration of people of diverse opinions to achieve the common good for Nigeria as an egalitarian society.

Citizenship education is a component of political education designed in the National policy on education to inculcate in the minds of people, the values of responsibility, selflessness, patriotism and industry as indices of a good citizen. Dennis and Osakwe (1996) are of the opinion that it is necessary to provide Nigerians with the type of education that will intergrate inter-cultural education. Essentially, political education, not only provides appropriate orientation in governance, citizenship obligations and events of the political process, but it also articulates viable options or alternatives for accountable governance, rule of law, citizen's relation with the decision-making structures of the state and purposeful diplomatic relations with other countries of the world. Conclusively, implementation of educational policy no doubt leads to political emancipation and National development.

Problems associated with Effective implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria.

Several studies revealed the problems facing the implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria. Ogunode and Adah (2020) in their studies identified inadequacies in funding, infrastructural facilities, professional teachers, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenges, lack of commitment to policy implementation, political instability, poor policy formulation and poor relationship between policy designer and policy implementer as challenges facing effective implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria.

In a related study, Joel, Ogi and Ikpe (2019) identified funding and inconsistency in Educational policies and programmes as the problems facing Educational policy implementation in Nigeria. Other identified problems include: incompetent staffs, insufficient information, distortion in the communication process, inconsistencies in the channel of communication, lack of political support, insubordination and conflict. To further buttress this, Odukoya (2015) stressed that frequent changes in Educational policies and programme was a major challenge, he observed that between 2000-2015, the nation passed through several reviews, reforms, innovations/educational

policies due to different regimes. Similarly, Aibieyi and Ogboator (2015) in their findings revealed that lack of manpower, lack of equipment, inadequate guidance and counseling services, absence of legislation were the factors hindering effective implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

A Breakdown of Nigerian Education Budgetry Allocation for a decade

Years	Education Budget	%	Naira
2010	N234.8 Billion	5.10	N4.6 Trillion
2011	N306.3 Billion	6.20	4.972 Trillion
2012	N400.15 Billion	8.43	N4.749 Trillion
2013	N426.53 Billion	8.60	N4.987 Trillion
2014	N493 Billion	10.70	N4.69 Trillion
2015	N392.2 Billion	8.91	N4.4 Trillion
2016	N369.3 Billion	6.01	N6.1 Trillion
2017	N448.01 Billion	6.00	N7.3 Trillion
2018	N605.8 Billion	7.04	N8.3 Trillion
2019	N620.5 Billion	7.05	N8.83 Trillion
2020	N652.9 Billion	6.9	N10.50 Trillion

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2022).

The table above described the budgetary allocation for education within a decade. This is a clear indication that the entire budgets on education falls bellow the recommended UNESCO 26% of the total annual budget for a year. This implies that, poor funding of education could directly or indirectly hinder effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

The study concluded that Nigerian educational policy paved way for socio-economic and political emancipation; moreover, effective and proper implementation brings development to Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that there is nothing wrong with the current national policy on Education. The problem is lack of proper implementation of the policy which is as a result of financial inadequacies, planning without accurate data (faulty statistics), political instability, inadequate human and material resources, corruption and inconsistency and lack of due process which make policies to be delayed or rushed. It concluded that although the implementation of educational policies may have its short-comings at the implementation stage. It was concluded that proper and effective implementation of the educational policy could make Nigerians to be socially, economically and politically relevant. The policy gives room for economic independence, and its proper implementation would foster self reliance and economic freedom for individual citizens. Furthermore, the study concluded that well implemented educational policy could lead to political emancipation among citizens as well as national development. Moreover, well implemented educational policy would build an egalitarian society where political participation would not be

restricted to certain gender or groups. Hence, male citizens would not take dominance over the female citizens.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Qualified teachers should be employed, trained and retrained on how to implement national educational policy in such a way that socio-economic and political emancipation would be achieved.
2. Policy makers and educational experts need to work together to produce national educational policy that would give way to economic self reliance among citizens. They must work cooperatively with teachers to ensure that the implementation is carried out accordingly.
3. The cultural backgrounds of all ethnic groups in Nigeria should be taken into consideration whenever curriculum innovation is embarked upon and whenever educational policy is reviewed.
4. The challenges facing the effective implementation of educational policies should be addressed by government and all stakeholders. The issue of inadequate funding, inadequate human and material resources, lack of accurate statistics for planning, corruption, lack of political will towards implementation of educational policy and the issue of inadequate security in educational institution should be seriously tackled and addressed.

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