
Research and Innovation in Nigeria Education Policy Formulation and Implementation: The Realities, Challenges and Prospects.

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Abstract

Research and Innovation in Education Policy Formulation and Implementation is concerned with the deliberate act of discovery, initiating and developing change in order to resolve a problematic situation in Education. In recent times, activities and events in the education sector have been viewed with suspicion by the general public as to the formulation and implementation of Education policies owing to the downward trend in the educational progress in most countries and particularly in Nigeria. This paper is a theoretical presentation of the realities, challenges and prospects of Education policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. It examined the historical perspectives of Education policy from pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial era in Nigeria. Determinants, features, functions and sources of policy form part of the focus of this paper. It was recommended among others that Nigeria government should draw examples and follow working policies of other countries and also strategize workable guidelines for global impart.

Keyword: Research and Innovation, Education policy formation and implementation.

Education without doubt is an instrument of National development and recognition. Education is heightened by research and innovation, if any nation must come to the land light of global relevance, research and innovation become inevitable.

Educational research is an organized and systematic activity towards identification and solution of education problems aimed at extending the frontiers of knowledge. It is a scientific method of controlled inquiring involving a formal systematic and intensive process of verifying knowledge that will help educationist achieve their goals (Nwana, 2002). In essence, educational research aims at discovering a problematic area of education process and initiating solution. Innovation in the same light is the outcome of an innovative process. Innovative process is the discovery and introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something. It is the modification, restructuring or even re-organization of an existing system to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency (Dlamini, 2004).

Research and Innovation in Education policy formulation and implementation is an inquiry in the existing policy and its implementation so as to improve on it for effective and efficient educational system for global impart. In his word, Anyeni (2012) broadly described educational policy innovation as a dynamic policy, a programme, a project, a method, a technique, a pattern or a design, formulated, planned, devised, created as invented to bring about a change in the educational policy; programme structure and operation in Nigeria system of Education so that the system will; Meet the changing needs of the individuals and the society at large effectively and increase the efficiency of the various resources it employs in the performance of its task, and its global challenges and attract relevance.

Educational Policy

This is the framework within which education is administered in a given place and within specified period, the time fact in the definition of education policy indicates the education sector of a country is not static, it keeps evolving from one state or form to another. Policy is a plan of action agreed or chosen by the government in power. Policy refers to a set of principles that guide individuals, organizations, corporate bodies, government etc. in their decision making for the achievement of predetermined objectives. Iwuchukwu (2006) opines that it is a predetermined definite course of action that serves as a guide to decision making towards the attainment of goals, aims and objective.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) remarked that a nation's policy on education is government's way of realizing that part of the national goals which can be achieved using education as a tool. This means that education policy contain government rules concerning education. Obizue (2014) aptly calls it a legal document,

a collection of guidelines of programmes or purposive course of action for provision of education.

These policies take the form of ordinance, code, law, edict/decree, depending on the political environment.

Institutions operate within the framework of their policy areas to achieve their desired goals. By policy areas, this refers to the components of educational system which actions are directed in order to create conditions for effective achievement of the desired goals. In broad terms, education policy can be divided into two major components by way of policy fronts to which actions need to be directed.

The first area of policy focus is about formulating specific policies, designing programmes, projects and implementing same purposively to create and increase opportunities for the people to control their natural environments and meet their aspirations in various aspects of life. Thus, this aspect of development in school system involves a systematic identification of the scope of aspirations of the society as well as discovering the existing inadequacies in the various spheres of life, including the general gaps to be covered between the present state of being and the targets of aspirations within the framework of the vision. The process also involves initiating well planned programmes and projects, based on data from well-focused research aimed at realizing the objectives of broad policies formulated to confront the problems of underdevelopment through educational sub-sector.

The second area of policy focus in education industry is about how to power the machinery of government in order to enable it play an effective role in policy formulation and policy implementation. Grant (2011) presents a fairly comprehensive statement of policy strategies that can be adopted; one of such strategies for the strengthening of the administrative machinery for effective administration of schools is a proper scheme of decentralization. Decentralization is a necessary condition for effective implementation of policies as it helps intimate understanding of problem requiring attention, effective allocation of resources regarding to need and proper delegation of functions. Other strategies often suggested by experts in education include the establishment of development agencies with specific functions to ensure goal attainment, the creation of planning units in central education ministry that have direct inputs into engineering efforts and introduction of new management system in the educational sub-sector with a strong component of monitoring and evaluating the structure to ensure accountability in project implementation.

Certain historical antecedents have impact on how educational policies are formulated and implemented in Nigeria. The Lagos Colony, Southern and Northern protectorates were British colonies, which were amalgamated in 1914 and named Nigeria. The territory remained a British colony till 1960 when it attained independence. The colonial administrators introduced an indirect rule policy. The indirect rule policy recognized the Islamic education in the Northern Protectorate;

hence the Christian missionaries were restricted from spreading both Christianity and Western education to the region. This accounts for the gap in the level of educational development between the North and the South. This has a lot of implications for the planning of education in Nigeria. Of recent, the Federal Government has put in place several educational policies (such as the quota system admission, and educationally less disadvantaged state etc with a view to reduce the gap in North-South level of educational development. Consequent upon the attainment of independence, it was discovered that this system of education did not meet the aspiration of Nigerians; hence the current 6-3-3-4 educational policy was introduced in 1977 which has recently been succeeded by the 9year basic education programme introduced in 1999 which was born out of research and innovation.

The colonial administrators administered education through the use of certain education ordinances and education codes, such as the 1882, 1887, 1916, 1926, and 1946 Education codes, (Ijaduola, 1998 and Ogunu, 2000). These codes and ordinances were used as guidelines to administer education in the colony. They served as the basis for the modern day educational policies, education laws and techniques of educational administration in Nigeria. The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 put education in a concurrent list; hence both the central and regional governments could legislate on education. This has a lot of impact on the present arrangement. There are thirty-six state governments and the federal government in Nigeria, each of which could impart education.

Historical Background of Education Policy in Nigeria

Education legislation began in Nigeria with the introduction of the 1882 Education Ordinance for British West African territories in Lagos, Gold Coast (now Ghana), Sierra Leone and Gambia. It prescribed the following criteria: Award of grants for organization and discipline, with special grants for schools, which obtained high percentage of passes, and thus attained high standard of general excellence. A capitation grant for each subject and capitation grant in proportion of the average attendance at school.

The other provisions of the ordinance are: annual evaluation of pupils, methods of granting teachers' certificates, a system of grant-in-aid, and the establishment of a General Board of Education with the power to establish local boards. The ordinance also recommended that one-third of the salary of the inspector of schools for the Gold Coast should be paid by the Lagos colony. Lagos and Gold were jointly administered.

The 1887 Educational Policy/Ordinance

Consequent upon the separation of Lagos colony from the Gold Coast in 1886, it became mandatory that a purely Nigerian Education ordinance be enacted. The Ordinance was enacted in 1887. It created an Education Board and also stipulated rates and conditions for the award of grants, standard of examination, classification of

teachers' certificates and the board's power to grant scholarship for secondary education.

The 1916 Lord Lugard's Educational Policy

The 1916 Education Ordinance and the Code were approved on 21st and 24th December, 1916 respectively. They were the results of Lord Lugard's efforts to cater for the whole country as education was based on good character and usefulness to both the individual and the community.

The ordinance tried to reorganize the school system in Nigeria. It also recommended that grant-in-aid be offered in the following percentages: Tone of the school, discipline, organization and moral instruction 30 percent. Adequacy and efficiency of the teaching staff 20 percent, periodical examination and general progress - 40 percent, buildings, equipment, sanitation - 10 percent.

The ordinance paved way for increased financial participation by Government, full- cooperation between the government and the missions and asserted government's firm control over education.

The 1926 Educational Policy/Ordinance

In the month of March 1925, a memorandum on Education Policy in British: Tropical Africa was dispatched to the colonies as the basis for the British colonial education policy. The need to provide a modus operandi for this memorandum and the necessity to stop the mushroom primary schools from operating in Southern Nigeria provided the impetus for this ordinance. The ordinance was a landmark in the development of education in Nigeria and an outcome of the recommendations of the 1920 Phelps Stoke Commission on Education in Africa. Its terms of reference includes: To inquire into existing educational work in each of the areas to be studied; to investigate the educational needs of the people in their religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions; to ascertain the extent to which these educational needs were being met; and to make available in full the result of the study. The report of this commission geared the British Colonial Administration to demonstrate increased interest in African education. It issued its first educational policy in 1925. The 1925 memorandum outlined guidelines for operation in the colonial educational system.

This policy consisted mainly of the recommendations of the Phelps-Stoke Commission. These includes: Establishment of advisory boards of education that will assist in supervision of educational institutions, adaptation of formal education to local conditions, study of vernaculars in schools, thorough supervision and inspection of schools, education of women and girls, emphasis on religious training and moral instructions (Osokoya, 2002).

While the recommendations of the 1926 Education Ordinance are:-Making registration of teachers a pre-condition for teaching in any school in Southern Nigeria, disallowing the opening of schools without the approval of the Director of Education

and the Board of Education, authorizing the closure of any school, which was conducted in a way that was in conflict with the interest of the people or the host community, specifying the functions and duties of supervisors or mission school inspectors, expanding and strengthening the existing Board of Education by including the Director and the Deputy Director of Education, the Assistant Director, ten representatives of the mission and other educational agencies, regulating the minimum pay for teachers who were employed in an assisted school (Osokoya, 2002 and Fabunmi, 2003).

Nature of Nigeria Educational Policy 1948

The report of the Director of Education who was appointed in 1944 to review the ten years plan and that of Sir Sidney Phillipson on the procedure for assessing grants-in-aid for 1948 was the basis for the promulgation of the 1948 Education Ordinance. The ordinance decentralized educational administration. It created a Central Board of Education and four Regional Boards, that is, those of East, West, Lagos and North. It also recommended the establishment of Local Education Committees and Local Education Authorities.

The Challenges of 1952 Education Ordinance

The 1952 Education Ordinance was introduced so as to enable each of the three newly created (Eastern, Western and Northern) regions to develop its educational policies and systems. The ordinance became an education law for the country. The membership of the central board and the regional boards were modified, while the Colonial Board was abolished. All schools, whether public or private, were to be subjected to inspection by the Regional Director or his representatives and the Inspector General or his representatives. The ordinance emphasized the overall responsibility of the central government.

The Regional Education Laws

In 1954, Nigeria became a federation of three (i.e.) Eastern, Western and Northern) regions and the Federal Territory of Lagos (which was the Federal capital) as a result of the adoption of the 1954 constitution. Each region had the power of making laws for its territory and citizens.

The constitution contained three lists. These are: Exclusive legislative list, which contained items upon which only the federal legislature or parliament could legislate, i.e. make laws, concurrent legislative list, which consisted of items upon which both the federal and regional legislatures could make laws, residual legislative list, which comprised items which were within the exclusive legislative competence of the regions.

The regions quickly exploited this constitutional provision and made regional laws. The outcome of this exercise was the Education Law of 1955 in Western Region,

the Education Law of 1956 in Northern Region and the Lagos Education Ordinance in 1957.

The Ashby Report of 1959

In April, 1959, the Federal Government of Nigeria constituted the Ashby Commission to investigate and report Nigeria's manpower needs for a period of twenty years (1960-1980). The Commission led by Sir Eric Ashby, comprised three Nigerians, three Americans and three Britons. The Commission reported: The imbalance between one level of education and the other, limited admission opportunities for primary school leavers, few school teachers were qualified and certificated, that the Nigerian education was parochial and literary, imbalance in the development of education between the North and South.

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The commission recommended the expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education, the upgrading of the University College at Ibadan to a full-fledged university and the establishment of three other universities at Nsukka, Ife and Zaria. It also recommended the establishment of University Commission in Nigeria so that the universities will maintain uniform academic standard. The post-secondary school system was to produce the post-independence high-level manpower needs of Nigeria.

The Education Edicts of 1966-1979

The Federal Military Government of Nigeria enacted Decree No. 14 of 1967, with which it created twelve states out of the existing four regions (West, Mid-West, North and East). Lagos remained the federal capital. The number of the legislatures increased to thirteen, twelve state and one federal legislature. In 1976, the states were increased to nineteen, thus making the legislative bodies to be twenty. Each state promulgated an edict for the regulation of education, and its provision and management. Examples include East Central States Public Education Edict No. 5 of 1970, Lagos State's Education Law (Amendment) Edict/No. 11 of 1970, South Eastern State's Education (School's Board) Edict/No. 20 of 1971 and Mid-Western State's Education Edict, No. 5 of 1973. Each state amended its education law when necessary. All the edicts had common features, such as state take—over of schools from individuals and voluntary agencies, establishment of school management boards and a unified teaching service.

The Education Policy of the Second Republic (1979-1983)

The first era of military rule (1966-1979) in Nigeria was followed by the second republic, which had a presidential system of government. The 1979 constitution was the legal basis of education in the period. The objectives of education as provided in chapter II, Section 18, Sub-Sections 1-3 of the 1979 constitution are: The

government policy shall be directed towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels, the government shall promote science and technology, the government shall strive as and when practicable, provide free, compulsory and universal primary education, free secondary education, and free adult literacy programme

The 1979 constitution put education in the concurrent legislative list. This implies that responsibilities and authority in the provision of education ought to be shared among the three tiers of government, that is, federal, state and local governments. Chapter 11 of the constitution gave the federal government more powers than the states in the areas of post primary, professional, technological and university education under its control. The states had total control of primary; post primary, technical, technological, university and other forms of education within their territories. In states like Ogun and Bendel, the organization and administration of primary education were transferred to their respective Local Government Councils.

The Education Edicts of 1983-1999

Consequent upon the return of military administration in 1983, several decrees were promulgated by the Federal Military Government to guide and regulate the conduct of education. Such include, Decree No. 16 of 1985, which was promulgated on National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institution's Decree No. 20 of 1986 which changed the school calendar from January to December to October to September, Decree No. 26 of 1988, which proscribed and prohibited the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for participating in trade union activities and Decree No. 36 of 1990, which revoked the proscription of ASUU, and many other decrees.

The Education Laws of 1999-2004

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) Decree of 1999, chapter 11, Section 18 re-states the objectives of education in Nigeria as contained in the 1979 constitution of Nigeria and the third edition of the National Policy on Education (FRG, 1998) which states the following as the objectives of Nigerian education: the inculcation of national consciousness and unity; The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Implementation Challenges

Implementation has been the bone of contention in most laudable education programme in Nigeria. Education policies in Nigeria have been said to be among the

best in the world. However there are major problems confronting the effective implementation of these policies which are lack of planning continuity, contradicting policies, under funding among others, the need to formulate and implement policies based on consultation participation and choice from options must be stressed.

Determinants of National Education Policies

According to Akubukwe (2003) National education programs and policies should be based mostly on the nation's present and future economic, political, military and social aspirations, stability and advancement. The world today is full of competition among all nations. Every nation tries to consolidate its present economic, political, military and social achievement and at the same time tries to advance them more and more. The sole aim of policy is to lead in all these areas. Universities and colleges are striving to broaden the existing body of knowledge as the growth of scientific information is presumed to ensure society's survival in a technological world. The above primary functions of education should be considered in national education programmes and policies. A nation's racial, ethnic or tribal composition is also one of the factors that determine the national education policies. Where there are gaps between the levels of education achieved by the groups that make up the nation, an attempt should be made through education policies to bridge the gaps. But however, for the attempt is practically successful can be examined in any given nation.

Essential Characteristics and Features of Educational Policy

As early said, education policy is a body of rules, regulations and guidelines which guides the operation of the education system in a geographical region. According to Akubukwe (2009) education policy must be guided by these features: It must be normative in character. This means that it must contain the norms guiding the behavior of educational practitioners at work, it is normally man-made. This means educational policies are creations of human beings and for human convenience and development of both the individual and the country, it must be persuasive and not coercive, even though it has some element of law. It should not look like a directive; it must have a territorial limitation: This means educational policies are meant for a particular region, state or a country, it must be dynamic in nature. This means educational policies are not to be static, they should change with changing times, with societal demands and technological change. There should be room for research and innovation so as to meet up with global development, it must be goal directed, future oriented, and must be arrived at through a conscious and deliberate effort of government to satisfy needs or solve problems in education.

Sources and Functions of Education Policies

Education policy is meant to promote justice, give legal status to education and maintain order in education sector. Education policy guides the different segment in

education industry of the Nation. It gives legal status to education as a product of the legislative system. It passes through the bill stage to adoption in the parliament to law and maintenance order through the application of specific rules, guidance and procedures. Ogbonnaya (2009) asserted education policy guides educational administrators and serves as a foundation or framework upon which decisions, actions and educational programmes are based.

Okunamiri (2005) opined that educational policies could be sourced from Deliberate and conscious decision of the government, precedents from the past cases, behaviours, experiences, conventions and actions and could be imposed without popular considerations, deliberations or precedents. Sometimes, it may be as a result of emergency such as was or outbreak of disease. Again it may be as a result of the political milieu. Just as Ogbonnaya (2009) asserted that a government with authoritarian or totalitarian view may impose its policies on the nation, citing the IBB regime as an example, during which time the then minister for education, Prof. Ben Nwabueze imposed some stringent policies on the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Imposed policies are more of arbitrary will of a dictator forcefully “placed” on the people.

Conclusion

Research and Innovation in Educational policy formulation and implementation aim at analyzing existing educational policies, discovering better approaches to policy formulation and implementation, and introducing new concepts, strategies and processes. It is a process of modification, restructuring or even re-organization of existing system to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency.

It involves taken careful study of the historical trend of education policy and implementation from its inception to the current, the realities in its implementation, it challenges and prospect to meet global standard.

Recommendations

As a way forward, the following recommendation would foster better prospects to Nigeria policy formulation and implementation.

1. Nigeria government should draw examples and follow working policies of other countries and also strategize workable guidelines for global impart.
2. There should be well articulated policy will involve all stakeholders in education industry.
3. Government should invest into proper implementation of laudable policies
4. There should be proper inspection and supervision of educational programmes for proper implementation.
5. Government should ensure uniformity in policy implementation in the country.
6. Government should maintain consistency in policy formulation regulations.

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