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**Politics of Policies: The Quest for Qualitative
Education in Nigeria**

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Abstract

The quality of education means much to the development of any nation. The government of Nigeria since independence realizes the unique position of education as a catalyst to the development of individual and the society at large. Much as they do; and much as they pronounce it; education policies and its implementation procedures at all levels of governmental powers in Nigeria have revealed intricacies in politics which brought Nigeria into a situation of ‘one leg forward and two legs backward’ as far as achieving qualitative education is concerned. The persistent fall in the standard of education is no longer debatable. The issue is in analyzing the politics and ‘policies’ that have contributed to this fall and search for a ‘ground’ where qualitative education would be achievable. This paper examines the undeniable relationship between politics and education using a system approach analysis and exposes their interrelationship in evolving qualitative education in Nigeria.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria in recent years seems to be on gradual decline, whether in terms of infrastructures and or output of the available graduates. The evidences are obvious. The lack of adequate infrastructure, high rate of school dropouts and ‘out-of-school’ children, mass failures in external secondary school examinations, brain drain of lecturers and now students, perennial industrial actions by various unions in the education sector and such likes. A non-governmental organization, Exam Ethics International, had claimed that Nigeria loses a whopping N1.5tn to education tourism. In this case, N160bn is spent by Nigerian parents on their children and wards’ education in neighbouring Ghana while they spent N80bn on same in the United Kingdom (Ojo 2012:21). Further statistics on education in Nigeria shows that Nigeria students invested N246bn which is over 60 percent of total budget of the country on education in the UK Universities alone (‘Nigeria Students Invested,’ 2013). In a similar account, Nigerians studying at British and America Universities were said to be spending above N137bn on tuition and living expenses for just two academic sessions (‘Nigeria Students Invested,’ 2013). This is about 34% of the Federal Government’s allocation to education.

In November 2012, the Professor Mahmoud Yakubu-led committee on Needs Assessment of Nigerian Public Universities set up by the Federal Ministry of Education presented its reports and among other things, accused the public Universities of being incapable of supplying the nation’s manpower needs and are said to be bogged down by corruption at various levels while offering education of poor quality. Although since 1999, the Federal Government has initiated some reforms in the education sector; all the stakeholders are still demanding the equivalence of a Marshall plan to rescue it from the abyss. The reforms started with the Universal Basic

Education (UBE) scheme launched by the Federal Government on the 30th September, 1999. The programme was situated within the context of the global vision of 'Education For All' (EFA) and aimed at mobilizing the civil society to be part of efforts to eradicate illiteracy and thus tackle such problems as poverty, disease and unemployment as well as promote peace and democracy. Several years after the scheme were launched with all pomp and pageantry, Lawal (2007:83-108) appraised the programme and summed up that it is a classic example of policy making before or without adequate planning.

Also in October 2007, members of the Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) and other players in the sector converged in Lagos for the 69th plenary session of the group, the chairperson of the group had listed, among other things, the need for creating a synergy in education development efforts; strengthening quality assurance, institutional frameworks and capacities at Federal, State and Local governments to ensure the attainment and sustenance of quality education delivery at all levels (The Nation, October 25, 2007:17). This has been a cause for concern, especially as the nation resolves to become one of the topmost 20 economies in the world by 2020, less than five years from now and as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) winds up.

Solarin (1988) had observed that the prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenue, and not even on the strength of its fortifications or on the beauty of its building but that it consist of the number of its cultivated citizens, in its men of education, enlightenment and character. Equally, Woodhall (1970) claimed that education is now universally recognized as a form of investment in human beings and that it yields economic benefits and contributes to country's future wealth by enhancing the productive capacity of its people. These assertions indicate the relevance of education and that education is expected to be qualitative if it will serve the purpose

it is meant for. Nigeria as a state accepts these views and it has been enshrined in the national policy on education, where education is located as an instrument per excellence for affecting national development (Federal Government 1977; 1981). Nigeria's philosophy on education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (Nigeria's Philosophy,'2015).

The fall in standard of education in Nigeria (Nwana 1966, Nwabueze 1995; Adeniyi 1989; Okebukola 2007; Olupohunda 2012) and the obvious dominant role of the government in Nigerian education system coupled with the politics involved in satisfying the multi-ethnic groups, has brought in quantitative policies rather than qualitative drive. The effects of this quantitative policy lie on today's over population of students in schools compared with the available resources and infrastructures (Campbell 1980).

Reading and discussing the history of education in Nigeria to the present trend, it has been discovered that qualitative goals have been difficult to achieve. Financial, human and physical resources have not matched the growing enrolments: hindering the education quality too are inappropriate policies, crowded classroom, inadequate textbooks and curricula. Most experts have agreed that the examination system does not even provide a valid or reliable indication of students' ability. They feel that the system reinforces traditional tendencies toward memorization and a rigid classroom culture (New Encyclopedia 1992). If the above are true, then the roles of government in providing qualitative education are stated and queried in the words of Tai Solarin that:

It is not enough for Nigeria to build classrooms and laboratories and point them out to 'Nigerians: This is your University', it is the duty of

Nigeria to fill this University with eligible undergraduates, who being sponsored by the Nation know that they owe duty to the nation (Solarin 1988:57)

The above, challenged the efficiency of the Nigerian government in providing functional education. Worse still, the present social ills and moral decay, lazy attitudes of students and the ultimate get-rich syndrome within the society have ultimately affected the efficiency and inputs of students to study hard. The socio-economic problems stated here cannot even be treated in isolation because it may have arisen due to failures of the whole system as been handled by the government. Fafunwa (1971) had posited that the introduction of new methods in educational organization, administration and content as well as the goals of modern education in Nigeria are unclear. He declared that, Nigeria, like any other African Country, has reached a stage in development when it must wrestle with the problem of defining its educational goals in terms of her own ‘concepts, needs and temperament’.

With the above background, the paper examines the politics that are involved in the quest for achieving qualitative education in Nigeria. Hence, it is the objective of this study to:

- (a) Appraise the Federal Government’s policy on education as an instrument for national development.
- (b) Examine government’s role on the fall in standard of education in Nigeria.
- (c) Assess the extent of political influence on the quest for achieving qualitative education in Nigeria:
- (d) Offer suggestions and recommendations that would enhance the realization of government goals in improving the quality of education in Nigeria.

To achieve these objectives, the study employs a system analysis combining historical, descriptive and analytical methods. The paper studies the past events on Nigeria’s

educational politics and evaluates the evidences of the politics involved. The descriptive method allows the study to state the events, situations and trends as they exist, with the analysis going through qualitative processes using the existing secondary data.

The study is divided into five major parts; Section One centers on Introduction, Literature and Conceptual issues. Section Two summarizes the underlying philosophy guiding the education sector in Nigeria with a mindset to finding out the Nigeria aims in Education. Section three comments on the fall of the standard of Education and assess the political influence on the quest for achieving qualitative education in Nigeria. The last section concludes and makes some submissions flowing from the study.

The concept of Policies, Politics and Quality in Education

Education policies are general statements containing principles, regulations and rules, which govern, influence and determine the decisions on how to educate the children, where to get them educated, where to get them employed who to teach them and how to finance their education (Owolabi 1987; Babalola 2003 and Akindutire et al, 1983). It is a formal agreement on how to operate the education system. It is also a frame work within which education is administered in a particular place and within specific period. Such agreement connotes the guiding principles and courses of action. In the public sector, they are deliberately adopted by relevant government authorities to influence and determine educational decisions. It stands as education policy which must be focused on what developmental outlook the country has planned for itself. In developed climes, the focus had been on economic and technological function whereas, in many developing world, the demands of individuals and interest and the provision of social benefits may become the overriding principles. In the developing world, these policies could

however be subjected to the whims and caprices of the ruling elites and or political party in power.

In Nigeria, it is evident that the performance of education and its administration are influenced by the realities of political power (See Lyons 1977; Akundutire et al, 1983). Overtime, Nigeria's programmes and policies on nomadic education, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE), Unity Schools, creation of more public Universities and where they are sited all have political undertones. Ultimately, the bi-directional relationship that exists between education and politics is normal. This is because education is usually provided through a political system as it derives its authority and resource allocation from the political system. Hence the link between education and politics does not only exist on the practice, it equally has literature validation.

The Link between Education and Politics

Education is a giant focus of the state; hence the definition of Hudson (1979:389) is relevant to this study. He defines politics as “the science and art of government; the science dealing with the form of organization and administrative of a state or part of one, and with the regulation of its relations with other states”. Geoffrey Roberts too as quoted by Hudson looks at politics as an activity, saying “politics is the process in a social system not necessarily confined to the level of the national state – by which the goals of that system are selected, ordered in terms of priority both temporarily and concerning resources allocation and implementation”.

The application of these definitions to education implies that politics exist in education management especially in terms of resource allocation and implementation. It thus involves both cooperation and resolution of conflict by means of the exercise of political authority and its necessary coercion, all of which are the main pivots of politics. The link between education and the

political system is not unique to current interests. Both Plato and Aristotle were concerned about the interrelated effects of these social institutions. This is confirmed also by Rusk and Scotland (1979). Their concerns are better illustrated by the following common sense saying about the school and the state cited by Coleman (1965:6) “As is the state, so is the school” and “what you want in the state, you must put into school”.

Prior to 1950, the politics of education emerged as a product of American Scholarship. Eliot’s (1959) Political Science colleagues recognize school politics as a significant domain of policy making and political power exertion (Mitchell 2015). In those decades prior to 1960, energized political advocacies could be found in and around the schools. Soon after, there were movements, seeking reform in the governance of both cities and school, sought to professionalize, bureaucratize and insulate ‘reform’ governance structures through teacher tenure (Mitchell 2015). Soon after, the development and evolution of what we all now recognize as a richly textured, highly contested and often partisan politics of education emerged. It has since stimulated serious scholarly interests.

By the mid-1960s, critics of the discussed bureaucratic, scientific management reforms began to see a more sociopolitical view. They rather see the bureaucratic and managerial transformation of the schools as the result of business interest in turning the schools into worker training rather than social development institutions (Callahan 1964; Katz 1975). They had waved away the early education reforms as driven by social class structures promoted by the industrial evolution.

Expanding this position, subsequent researchers (Bailey and Marsh 1962; Cahill and Hencley 1964; Flesch 1986; MacKinnon 1960 and Mitchel 1982) created a lot of influential linkages between school administrations and the state legislators in the control of school policy and funding. They cleverly argued that

keeping politics out of education and education out of politics did not preclude debates over educational programs and policies. This is especially on the political character of school finance and policy decisions. These authors see the state as the primary actor and identify the interplay of organized educators and state political officials as the primary source of education policy and practice.

Subsequent literatures and practices during 1970's, 80's and the fall of the millennium (Burnham 1970; Lutz and Lannaccone, (eds) 1978; Alsbury 2003; Alsbury 2008) took the debate further on the school board governance theories and the realignments in national politics as the emergence of the democratic party's 'Solid South.

Currently, the debate is anchored on globalization. The thesis of most work is that education policy in the 21st century is the key to global security, sustainability and survival. By this, Education has entered international politics where urgency to education policies is seen to sustain international governance (see Marginson 1998; Olssen Codd, and O'Neill 2004; Popkewitz 2009).

Nigeria's Aims in Education

Nigeria, like other developing nations, requires people with knowledge and practical skills. Consequently, the country is expected to embrace a system of education that is relevant to its aspirations and man power needs. Ogunsaju (1995) reiterates that education has been used as a vital instrument of social policy by governments of all kinds, proving further that, such commitment for government is a form of investment on human resources and that they are more durable and flexible than capital plant and equipment. Farrant (1980) had clearly stated that such educational goals and objectives are expressed in broad political, cultural and economic terms such as citizenship, democracy or national unity. According to Farrant (1980), they

are reflected in personal development including intellectual and spiritual growth; it also involves vocational preparation in terms of necessary practical skills and character qualities. Through these, it projects on the social training in which young people are initiated into society at local and national levels.

Historically, Nigeria's education system started from an informal indigenous crafts and services and were passed down in families and acquired through apprenticeship training. It grew further to where the school-age population operated almost entirely in the private sectors. At this time, there was virtually no regulation by the government unless training included the need for a license.

Western – style education came to Nigeria with the missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century ('Western-style education', 2015). Progress in the education was then slow, but steady throughout the colonial era until the end of the World War II. The three- tiered system of primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education was based on the British model of wide participation at the bottom, sorting into academic and vocational training at the secondary level, and higher education for a small elite destined for leadership. On the eve of independence in the late 1950s, Nigeria had gone through a decade of exceptional educational growth leading to a movement for Universal Primary Education in the Western Region ('Universal primary education', 2015). As the formal education assumed central importance, it soon became the largest social programme of all governments of the federation, absorbing as much as 40 per cent of the budgets of some state governments ('Education assumed central', 2015). The schools were however influential as a form of a local private schools that retained the predominance of religious values within a modernized school system.

The first national attempt to change the colonial orientation of the Nigerian educational system emerged in 1969, when the joint consultative committee met for a national curriculum conference; 'A conference of people' as Fafunwa (1971) put it, was to find a lasting solution to the problem of education in Nigeria. This was where the structure of 6-3-3-4 system emanated from. It was meant to give Nigerian educational system a face-lift. This was launched and the federal government issued its first white paper on it in 1977. However, before then, the popular Universal free primary Education, called Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) was launched in September, 1976. The policy was revised in 1981 and in 1991 with a central theme that education should serve the goal of social transformation and development of the people. The National Council on Education is to formulate education policy with the objectives of planning, administrative, inspectorate, supervisory and financial services.

The general aim is at removing any existing contradictions and lack of uniformity in educational practices for even and orderly development of the country and integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen ensuring equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system. For it to be in harmony with Nigeria national objectives, it has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (Federal Government of Nigeria 1981).

The objectives of the planning administrative inspectorate, supervisory and financial services in education are to:

(a) Ensure adequate and effective planning for all educational service

- (b) Ensure quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services
- (c) Provide adequate and balanced financial support for all educational services (Federal Government of Nigeria 1981)

Higher education including professional education covers post-secondary section of the national education system which is given in Universities, Polytechnics, Schools of Technology, Colleges of Education, Advanced Teacher Training Colleges and Correspondence Colleges.

These higher institutions aim at:

- (a) The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value-orientation for the survival of the individual and society;
- (b) The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to develop into useful members of the community (section 5.41).

To achieve this aim, it is government policy to fully participate in the maintenance of national standards of performance.

Provisions were equally made for technical education, adult and non-formal education, special education, teacher education and educational services. Generally, section 11, 96(1) of the policy states that the federal government shall prescribe minimum standards of education at all level and that University, pre-primary and post-primary education shall be the responsibility of both the federal and state governments.

The second Republic came up with the 1979 constitution and the issue of free education at all levels came up strongly. Indeed, it was enshrined in the 1979 constitution; section 18 (3)

that 'government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide:

- (a) Free, compulsory and universal primary education;
- (b) Free secondary education; and
- (c) Free university education.

This policy was manifested in form of the free education policy pursued by the government of the South Western Nigeria during the second republic and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the federal government.

Again, at the commencement of the 4th Republic in 1999, (the 3rd republic having been aborted by a military Junta) the Obasanjo's civilian administration- few months after he came into power- launched UBE scheme pointing out its objectives as follows:

- (a) To provide free and compulsory education universally from the first year in the primary to the third year in the junior secondary school;
- (b) To drastically reduce drop-outs at the primary level by enhancing quality, relevance and effective education;
- (c) To develop in the entire populace the interest in, and also the promotion of education;
- (d) To provide functional literacy for adults of 15 years and above;
- (e) To provide complementary educational opportunities for persons who left school too soon;
- (f) To provide for universalization and democratization of educational opportunities at formal and non formal levels;
- (g) To serve as a necessary starting point for curing the ills of the educational system; and;
- (h) To serve as a means for national mobilization and awareness (Obanya 2001:6).

These actually became the nucleus or pivot around which the other educational reforms revolved. The scheme started by Obasanjo was the foundation upon which the subsequent governments are building in Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Education under President Goodluck Jonathan also made inroads through its nomadic education to the predominantly Muslim North where millions of ‘Almajiris’ roam the streets uneducated, hungry and angry. This becomes essential as these vulnerable children are most often useful tools in the hands of political and religious extremists. The current Buhari government has not shown any clear departure from the previous administration.

The fall in Standard of Education in Nigeria

Nigeria education sector has suffered a lot of ‘crises’ though how the crises have affected standard has been subject of controversy (Nwabueze 1995:56). All the same, the belief of the generality of the people is that standard of education has fallen even though government functionaries may have a different position.

A newspaper editorial (Sunday Times, May 25, 1997:10) claimed that qualitative education was rising fast despite the fears to the contrary. The paper opined that, well over half of the population; 56.7% was literate then. However, the situation between 1997 and year 2016 have not in any way proved these assertions to be true. Walter Carrington, former United States Ambassador to Nigeria, was of a different opinion. He said that the standard of education he saw during his first visit to Nigeria in 1959 was higher than what obtains now. A former Education Minister was quoted as saying that Nigerian graduates are at the risk of being seen as “products of fraud and deceit” due to wide – spread examination malpractice”. Calling supports for examination ethic projects, he declared that Nigeria is faced with the danger of its other professionals being seen as “mere

pretenders or certificated idiots, masquerades of what they claim to be” (The Guardian, July 1, 1997:15). The situation is more of a paradox as Nigeria economy received an oil boom in the 70’s but the economic, educational and infrastructural growth of the 70’s were not sustained, such that, as the nation climbs the millennium, it is claimed that one out of every classrooms in the country is in very deplorable state; and according to the Federal Ministry of Education, 50.95 per cent of the 70,000 public Primary Schools in the country and 50.25 per cent of the 14,534 public secondary schools are in relatively good conditions (Adeoye 2007:26).

According to UNESCO, Nigeria tops the list of nations with most children out of schools. Though Nigeria has not implemented UNESCO directive that the minimum ratio of a nation’s budget for education should be 26 percent, but it is claimed that, since 2000, the budget of the education sector has increased significantly by an average of N23.95 billion (Adeoye 2007:27). For 2008 budget, it is on record, that educational sector was given the highest, in history of appropriation on education in Nigeria. The Federal Government devoted N210bn or 13 per cent of the total budget to education alone, apart from another 39.7bn earmarked as intervention fund for the UBE programme. The N210bn allocation represents about 12 percent increase over the 2007 N188bn education budget (Punch, November 14, 2007:14). But Oby Ezekwesili, former Nigeria minister of education was honest enough to admit that, despite the huge allocation and various programmes put in place, the performance in the sector has not lived up to expectations, attributing the sorry state of the public schools to absence of a “Cohesive, consistent and strategic advocacy funding structure ...” (Adeoye 2007:27)

From a poor start of budgetary allocation in 1999 and the peak in 2008 through the late President Yaradua, it appears the downward trend is again emerging. The N426.53bn budgeted

for Education in the 2013 appropriation bill is about nine per cent of the total budget. If the 2013 appropriation was that bad, the N20bn allocated to the education sector, including the Federal Ministry of Education and the Universal Basic Commission in 2015 budget is a bad taste to education development in Nigeria ('Education development',2015). This is a far –cry from the UNESCO's recommended 26 percent. Ghana budgets 31 per cent of its annual estimates for education, any wonder the country is now the choice destination of many Nigerians in search of quality education.

Arguably, the fluctuating fortunes of the budgetary allocation could account for the poor quality of basic education in Nigeria in spite of the comprehensive and ambitious scope of UBE. A USAID report was quoted as saying that 30 million primary school age children in the country, of whom an estimated 10 million are not enrolled in school (Olupohunda 2012:20). This situation is not just recent, in 2007, a Federal Ministry of Education report, titled 'state of Nigeria public schools' showed that about 45 per cent of the estimated population of 140 million people in the country, translating to about 63 million, are children who fall within the age bracket of 0 – 15 years. Out of this, however, only 42.1 million were expected to be receiving primary education. However, the sad thing is that only 22.3 million of the 42.1 million were in school, with the public school system catering for 85 per cent of the population according to the Ministry of education (Adeoye 2007:26).

The statistics on the university level is even more pathetic. The access to university education in the United State is said to be 84 per cent, but in Nigeria it is an abysmal five (5) per cent (Adeoye 2007:26). Still on the enrolment, the 2012, committee on Needs Assessment of Nigeria public universities reports revealed that there are a total of 1,252,913 students in the public universities with 85 per cent undergraduates, five per cent sub degree, three per cent post graduate diploma, five per cent

Master's and two per cent Ph.D. As against the National Policy on Education that stipulates 60:40 enrolment in favour of science based programmes, 66.1 per cent of them are studying arts, social sciences, and management and education courses. Only 16 per cent of the students are studying science and science education courses; 6.3 per cent on engineering, five per cent on medicine while 6.6 are studying Agriculture, pharmacy and law (Ojo 2012:21). It beats every imagination how the ratio 60:40 science bias enrolment could be achieved given the deplorable state of science laboratories and workshops in Nigeria higher institutions.

The Politics of Qualitative Education in Nigeria

A close study of the historical development of education in Nigeria exposed the fact that, the establishment of Western education had its premise on other considerations different from the advantages that could accrue to the country by the introduction of the system. The schools established during the colonial period emanated from a 'political angle' – to achieve economic advantage, political domination and sometimes social enslavement. The subjects taught were basically chosen to solve communication problems, achieve missionary purpose and were far away from the expected large scale socio-economic development. At independence, the existing colonial divide and rule system had already pitched the North against the south, such that, the strong desire of the south west to pursue vigorous educational development was largely restricted to their region. The educational liberation drives were largely beclouded by the degree of politicization at both pre-independence and early-independence era.

After independence, the federal government started some policies at the secondary education which brought about some disparities in the system. Federal government colleges were created in each state of the federation, and were funded directly

by the federal government. They employed qualified teachers and gave more incentive while the state – owned schools were left at the whims and caprices of the state government. The state schools were not only understaffed and poorly payed; they were equally filled with unqualified teachers who end up not able to motivate the students. The state schools started on a poor budget, poor incentives and irregularities in payment of staff salaries compared with the Federal government colleges. The federal schools become elitist schools. It got to a stage where some rich states equally created such special schools like the King's College, Lagos and Queen's College Lagos to compete with the Federal government colleges. The growth was dramatic and the private schools then were few and expensive, pulling the population of the secondary schools to the state owned schools without much attention to the level of quality of the outputs. On this, Akindutire, Ayodele and Osiki (2011:20) insisted that the government in Nigeria determine the direction of education system by formulating and interpreting educational law and policies when they establish standards for measurement of educational quality. They equally opined that, in doing this, educational development has been guided by politics in the areas of social demand for education, schools take – over of the boarding or day schools, the establishment of special (unity) schools and the location of new schools.

The second republic brought with it the highest degree of politicization of education in Nigeria's political and educational history. The three dominant political parties brought the issue of free education as a political strategy; it was so abused as it was reduced to mere 'sloganeering'. While the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) emphatically stated ideologically their resolve to providing free education at all levels, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) cajoled the Nation to providing it 'when practicable' capitalizing on the lacuna in the constitution, while NPP fix its own to 'when feasible'. At the end of the elections,

the 'Unwilling' Nigeria peoples party (NPN) controls the centre and definitely the 'national cake'. The UPN who had the control of south west states and with its poor resources, could not accomplish effectively its laudable initiative.

The expansion policy which started with the tertiary institutions has the first five generation of Nigeria universities from a product of political struggles of the existing regional superpowers. Between 1948 and 1965, following the recommendation of the Ashby commission, set up by the British Colonial Government to study the necessity of university education for Nigeria, Ibadan, Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University and University of Nigeria at Nsukka were all created. From there, the government has majority control of university education with the increasing population of qualified students for university education, twelve additional universities were established in various part of the country between 1970 and 1985 and between 1985 and 1999, and additional Ten were established. It also became imperative and urgent for some state government to invest in the establishment of universities. The Federal Government re-established the law in 1993, allowing private sectors to establish universities following guidelines prescribed by the government.

Prior to 2015, the country has a total of 129 universities owned by federal and state government with 40 and 39 respectively while 50 universities are privately owned. This was aside many Polytechnic, Colleges of Education and other tertiary institution across the federation. It is obvious that such growth was impossible without having a host of problems, several of which were so severe as to endanger the entire system.

The proliferation of University which gained prominence in 1970's and 80's and culminated to the establishment of additional nine new universities by the Goodluck government in 2012 and another nine in 2015, were highly politicized. Upon

the creation of some Universities, the politics of where it will be sited became an issue. Apart from Obafemi Awolowo who sited a university outside his home town, Adekunle Ajasin, Adebayo Adefarati, Ambrose Ali and a host of other past Nigerian state Governors were mindful of their home towns in the siting of higher institutions in their states. The recent nine universities did not escape such politicking as one was sited in Otuoke, Bayelsa State, and the home town of President Goodluck Jonathan. The one sited in Ekiti state became a serious political battle that would have aborted its take off. It became a tango between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)-controlled Federal Government who preferred Oye-Ekiti that produced a federal lawmaker from the party and the All Progressive Congress (APC)-controlled state government who preferred Ikole-Ekiti. This is because either party wanted to score cheap political gains. Regardless of the availability of take-off structure, the government had to settle for two campuses for the two towns. The expansion drive and its attendant politicking continue till date especially with the Federal Government's interest in private schools. Many private nursery and primary schools, secondary and higher institutions are springing up. All the same, the government has majority control of University education in Nigeria. In May, 2015, the Federal government approves another nine new Universities raising it from 129 to 138. It is obvious that Nigeria is a country having 'state controls' on almost all sectors. With the currently distorted economy and the much history of adverse political redistributions determined to favour the constituencies of respective political leaders, the current Federal government under Muhammadu Buhari may not fare differently. From the Nigeria political history, there is always political or social purpose behind any educational policy which is contingent upon the ideology of the government in power.

In spite of the expansion policy and or politics, no Nigerian University ranks among the best 2000 in the world. University of Benin was ranked best in Nigeria at 2,485 in the world by webometrics (Ojo 2012, 21). The improvement in 2015 was found in a private University with 1,401 in January, 2015 (www.naij.com/385333). Again, statistics had placed the country at the bottom of the ladder in the overall Global literacy index. According to the country comparison Index of literacy level by country in 2012, Nigeria ranked a dismal 161 place out of 184 countries with 66 per cent literacy rate. This makes the country one of the world's most illiterate countries (Olupohunda 2012:20)

In his analysis, Danmole (1995) had claimed that the new national policy on education does not necessarily lead to great educational achievements; more so, when it seems that the Federal Government is unprepared for the economic and social innovations that go with the system. One can therefore blame the failure of the system, not on the viability of the system but on subsequent government's lack of political will to implement the policies and goals of education in Nigeria. In this wise, production of entrepreneurial graduates, skills development, science and technology development and excellent research programmes are put into serious jeopardy.

The above consideration on politics of qualitative education in Nigeria over the years and till date, has thrown up a number of issues; the issues which are itemized below, forms substantial problems with achieving qualitative education in Nigeria.

1. There has been an inequality in Nigeria's educational system with variation within the old regions and present state levels.
2. There has been private schools vs public schools tango.
3. There have been educational ideological confusions of the subsequent federal governments.

4. The extension of federal character on admissions to schools putting aside the issue of merit; led to politics of admissions.
5. The general schools vs elitist schools. The federal schools' especially the unity schools, model schools, armed force and, police schools are dominated by the elite children.
6. Autonomy limitations of our higher institutions, with incumbent government's direct intervention in their polices, programmes and personnel, sometimes sidelining merit and standard required in such system.
7. Poor funding of education, even in the face of massive expansions.

Educational implications of politics of policies

The issue involved in the educational implications and the politics of policies in our case study (Nigeria) are quite enormous. However five common topical themes that arise from the study are discussed summarily here. It begins from poor implementation of policies as a result of the overbearing political influence and patronage. In addition, quality control problem arises affecting the intended attainment of qualitative goals. Teaching and curriculum, choice of books and plans on what to teach are seriously devalued as politics involved places premium on personal gains and some primordial interest above the desired merit of such arrangement. Similarly, the issue of budgetary and funding is adversely affecting the quality of education in Nigeria as political considerations are placed above the drive for national development envisaged from the educational plans. Another topical issue common with Nigeria case bothers on the political expansionist agenda of some Nigeria leaders and the admission policies without much consideration for the provision of adequate infrastructures and the welfare of the personnel at the education sector.

In Nigeria, there have been challenges for policy makers and those who carry responsibility for providing leadership and management in schools. The desire to bring about positive changes to education and make learning more effective and of higher quality for all comes within the constraints of political distribution of resources and or political prerogative associated with decentralized, tribalised, multilingual and multi-religion set up like Nigeria. The experience in this study is that political influence, though not out of place, but in Nigeria case, has been more often negative than positive. This is because, politicians sometimes reach decisions which are not based upon full understanding of the technical considerations. Much as this study has proved that education cannot be divorced from political concerns, as its rising cost must be met largely from the public purse and therefore be subjected to political accountability, but the incessant policy changes on education in Nigeria occasioned from regime changes, shows that the federal government is unprepared for the economic and social innovations that goes with the system.

As discussed in the paper, the issue of funding and budgeting has been a political issue and meeting the (UNESCO) international suggestion on education budgetary has been elusive in Nigeria even though the country realized that investment in education has traditionally been justified by optimistic assumptions. In Nigeria, funding becomes a problem as a result of the expansion. Poor funding is obviously resulting to unconducive learning environment, inadequacy of instrument and learning facilities, ineffective and inefficient management of the schools, poor implementation of good policies and the general drain of the human resources in the country's education sector.

On the last note here, the Nigeria federal character arrangement is unfortunately extended to the admission policy of the university system. Candidates with low JAMB scores are

admitted to higher institutions due to their state of origin and or belonging to particular catchment areas and other students with similar marks are turned back because they are from the so called educational advantaged areas. Merits are played down and in effect may not be favourable to achieving qualitative education at least in the short run.

Conclusion

Government has allowed partisan politics to dictate the implementation of basic policy decisions this includes decision like education policy that has over all effects on the nation's socio economic advancement of the individual and the nation: This occurs in various ways:

- (a) The way in which state governments pursue education is divergent.
- (b) There has been glaring discrepancies in the education system even between state and federal governments. This however negates the 1981 policy of education and the provision of 1979 constitution as it has been amended in 1999.
- (c) There are differences in educational goals and strategies. The past decisions for education policy of the south/western states, without the corresponding financial backing of the federal government had faced serious crises of implementation.
- (d) The goals and focus of the present government albeit the ruling party at the federal level as regards education is still unclear.
- (e) We see proliferation of institutions' and admissions without the corresponding proliferation of infrastructure, quality control measures and job opportunities.

If the above items are taken into consideration and addressed, then it is sufficient to say that, Nigeria, like any other nation in the world owe it a duty to provide free and qualitative education at all levels for her citizen as entrenched in the constitution; especially with the abounding natural resources. However, if the federal government is failing in her primary duties of providing for the education of its citizen, then, the present private intervention and massive investment in education should not be strangled whether by federal government or its component units. On the contrary, it should be encouraged, monitored, depoliticized and groomed to offer the much desired qualitative education to generality of Nigeria citizens.

On this note, researchers on education developments may focus their attention in the present surge of private schools. The line is already filled in Nursery/Primary and Secondary Schools arrangements. The present various approvals for private tertiary education should not be seen as commercial ventures only, but should be developed and monitored by the government and all stakeholders in the education sector as a credible alternative to the present government's monopolistic advantages that is always resulting to quantitative education rather than qualitative and functional one. The present liberalization of education sector, if properly handled and objectively monitored or supervised may go far in the urgent need to revamp public education in Nigeria.

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