

## Nigeria's Education Policy in a Democratic Setting: An Appraisal

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### **Abstract**

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This paper seeks to provide a useful frame work for an assessment of Nigeria's Education Policy in the light of the country's new democratic experience, bearing in mind the context of the global vision of Education for all (EFA), which aims 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. It assesses Nigeria's Education policy over six (6) decades and attempts to redefine the policy against the back drop of the new democratic dispensation. The author Identifies the factors considered as impediments to the implementation of education policy in Nigeria and weakness of the current policy, and arguing that, the government bestows on the, stake-holders a huge responsibility to implement, while the policy suffers in adequate funding. This paper adopts survey research design. It entails the use of questionnaires, interviews and an observation as the primary sources of data also secondary sources of data was applied. This study adopts elite theory because it is appropriate in the implementation of the education policy. The education crises bedeviling public schools in Nigeria today are reflection of damaging consequences of the elites exploitative polices. It is a deliberate policy to deny the poor masses good and qualitative education that would liberate their minds from the shackles of mental enslavement. This study recommends policy options for future research.

**Keywords:** *Education policy, Democratic experience, Global vision, Mobilizing, Civil society, Illiteracy, Poverty, Disease, Unemployment.*

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### **Background to the Study**

The importance of 6-3-3-4 educational policy implementation to its growth in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It is on this premise that this paper concerns in identifying the factors considered as impediments in the implementation of 6-3-3-4 educational policy in Nigeria. No matter how well a policy is formulated, unless the implementation is well presented, the policy is bound to fail. Education has been recognized by every society or nation, whether developed or developing or underdeveloped as a potent instrument of social, cultural, political, economic and technological advancement as well as a means of empowering every individual for the effective performance of his roles.

According to Debie, (2000: 106), education is not only the instrument for human socialization and development; it is also a means of self-actualization. Education increases equality in society by income distribution, by increasing the talent pool available to society and by engineering equality. Education not only eradicates illiteracy and ignorance, it is the knowledge and skills for social development, and civilization.

In many countries, including Nigeria, education is seen as the key to solving world problems, and to climbing up the social ladder. It is more than that; it enhances individual and group freedom and security (Egonmwan, 1992). Education equips the individual with knowledge, skills, attitude and habits that he/she requires to make him/her very functional in the society. In every social activity such as religious observances, membership and participation in social organizations, mode of dressing, eating habits, adaptability and acceptance of innovations, the level of education attained by the individual is reflected in his behavior.

The level of economic development of the individual and his society is a function of the quality of education attained by the people. The individual can only produce more when he is adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude for the performance of his roles. The consumption pattern of the individual to a large extent is influenced by his level of education hence according to Fafunwa, (1992), "an illiterate individual is invariably a poor consumer of goods".

The illiterate individuals cannot actively participate or contribute to the political development of their country. They are quite susceptible to succumb to the political maneuvering of the political class. In most cases because of their gullibility, they serve as easy tools for politicians to achieve their selfish ends.

Before independence the colonial policy on education was essentially directed at producing obedient and compromising natives who would serve the needs of the administration as clerks, literate house helps and perform menial jobs. The emergence of Nigerian leaders at independence as from 1960 did not provide any significant difference in the quality of education either. The national government of Nigeria introduced universal primary education designed to make primary education available to every child of primary school age. This policy galvanized enrollment in the nation that at the

end of the first six years the absorptive capacity of the secondary school system and the labor market was over-stretched. The result was shortage of placement opportunity and strict competition for the few available spaces in the secondary schools. Currently in the school system of Nigeria the level of enrollment in primary education is very high and continues to demand a large share of the education budget. Shortages of amenities have led to poor building conditions, and lack of furniture for children to sit on in many schools. Several pupils have to sit on dirty floor at school. The enrollment rate of girls is in decline in some remote districts of the nation.

Teachers are often under paid, and in some cases they are not paid for several months. This trend has frustrated teachers, caused a lot of them to seek alternative well paying jobs or leave the nation resulting to brain drain and has left Nigeria with an inadequate trained teaching force. The remote areas in Nigeria are without trained teachers.

Secondary education has also over expanded relative to the resources available for education. The quality of secondary education is suffering from professional teacher shortages and inadequate supplies of books and other teaching materials, while secondary education continues to be regarded as a stepping-stone to higher education rather than as something worth while in itself. Although there has been a general increase in the enrollment pattern of secondary school students in the nation, this increase is still not reflected in most rural areas. Thus, one of the immediate concern of the twenty-first century education policy in Nigeria is how to ensure adequate utilization of resources to diversify the system of education in accordance with social, economic, political and technological changes taking place both domestically and internationally, and how this new educational system can benefit those in both urban and rural areas, as well as children from poor and rich families, women, and elderly people. Thus, if the model of education derived from colonial legacy continues to be unchecked, it is bound to fail in producing an appropriately educated people with an emerging knowledge based system.

Any nation that wants to embrace technology cannot but give adequate attention to qualitative education. This would ensure that the citizens open themselves up to the acquisition of technology culture and at the same time offer opportunities to the people to acquire knowledge, skills and habits necessary for effective technological take off. There is no denying the fact that good quality education would bring about pragmatic individuals / citizens who would influence desirable changes in Nigeria.

The Universal Basic Education programme was launched in Nigeria by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria. The Universal Basic Education Act (2004) states that:

- i. Every government in Nigeria shall provide free compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age.
- ii. Every parent shall ensure that his child or ward attends and complete his:-
  - a. Primary school education and

- b. Junior secondary education by endeavoring to send the child to primary and junior secondary schools.

Conclusively, the paper focuses on the need for qualitative change in education. It is against this background, the author seeks to identify the factors considered as impediments to the implementation of education policy in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

In modern organizations, there are sensitive issues that call for thorough scientific investigation and examination so as to unfold factors which interact to advance or retard the accomplishment of their set goals and objectives. Educational institutions like any other organizations are beset with problems of performance largely due to poor policy implementation:

- i. The policy of rapid education has not kept pace with the policy of adequate funding of education.
- ii. The allocation to the local government from the state is not sufficient to cater for educational needs.
- iii. Delaying of teacher's salary for several months.
- iv. Shortage of qualified teachers.
- v. Corruption on the part of policy implementers.

In summary, this has presented a situation of lack of qualitative educational development. Educational institutions in Nigeria are generally under funded. At the primary level, there are no enough study materials; shortage of qualified teachers, dilapidated classrooms are virtually everywhere. This has informed the trend of educational development in Nigeria, specifically in Otukpo Local government area of Benue State.

According to Ogbonna, (2000:2), it is a common knowledge that development of educational system today is in complete shambles to say the least. The story is the same at all levels, policy inconsistencies and the prevalent acute under funding have placed the school system in a precarious position of perennially having to grapple with multidimensional problems, including inadequate physical and teaching facilities, dilapidated structures, falling academic standards, restive and undisciplined student population, poor staff development programmes, low staff morale and others. These problems are glaring and constantly call for urgent attention. It can only be addressed through proper formulation and implementation of public oriented policies. To this end, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has been seen as a golden opportunity to address the problems in the educational sector.

The globalization trend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its challenges have positioned education as a vital tool for Nigeria in its effort to join the technological race of the century. It is very important to state that, the importance of qualitative education for development in Nigeria necessitated the launching of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, but it is disheartening to note that the scheme failed as a result of inadequate planning, lack of

good evaluation and monitoring of public policies of such nature. Worthy of note is the fact that UPE policy was given legal backing, even before state officials, policy implementers and other bureaucratic and technical experts had time to think of it, let alone assemble all the necessary data inputs for its success. Failure of the programme (UPE) all emanated from the confused and ad-hoc nature of the policy, coupled with the prolonged military rule and its dictatorial tendency that could not allow for proper evaluation, criticism and assessment of inputs from the civil society. This culminated into a crisis of basic education, which manifested in the following: low enrolment attendance and, infrastructural decay, lack of funding and qualitative staff.

There is no doubt that the need for qualitative change in educational development in Nigeria informed the birth of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 through an articulated educational policy. Its launching has generated controversies amongst educational policy analysts. Some have argued for an against the new programme. It is against this background that this paper seeks to identify the factors considered as impediments to the implementation of education policy in Nigeria.

### **Research Propositions**

The following propositions will guide this study:

- i. That adequate funding of education play vital role towards educational development.
- ii. That conducive environment contributes in enhancing education in any society.
- iii. That good condition of teachers could affect the output in pupils' education.
- iv. That adequate evaluation towards the implementation of National Policy on education (6-3-3-4) programme by the government agencies will compel the school administrators to adhere strictly to the stated objectives of the policy.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to conduct a research using the method of policy analysis against the empirical data of educational policy in Benue state of Nigeria.

### **The specific objectives are:**

- i. To identify and discuss the problems that are related to policy evaluation and how it affects educational policy in Benue state of Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the contribution this research can make to the knowledge of policy analysis using example from educational policy in Nigeria.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The word policy connotes planning and purposive direction of doing something. Roberts and Edwards (1991:98) define policy as a set of decisions taken by a political actor or group concerning the selection of goals and the method of attaining them, relating to a specified situation. Policy, thus involves decisions and choice. It implies that some alternatives from which choice is made do exist. Therefore, both decision making and choice making involve analysis which should be usually embedded in rationality. This

rationality also implies that policy involves planning. This is to ensure that any worthwhile policy has been based on a sound plan worthy of justification. Ikelegbe, (1994:1) has referred to policy as actions taken or to be taken by government or private organization. It is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what it is not doing and what would not be done. Presthus (1975:14) has defined policy as a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and usually determine present and future decisions. Robert Simmons (1974:465) regards policy "as indication of an intention, a guide to action encompassing values which set priorities and relations.

From the above stated conceptions of policy, it connotes both present and future applications. It is goal oriented. Thus, for a policy to evolve there must be a purpose, there must be a problem or problems requiring some attention. For instance, the high incidence of maternal and infant mortality rates in a particular society could compel that society to evolve some health policy to enable it tackle such a problem. A policy could contain a series of decisions which will facilitate the actualization of the policy. As Jenkins (1978) puts it, "Policy is a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors". Successful implementation of a policy requires that a programme or package of decisions, activities and the like be designed, thus, a programme has to be developed by way of setting the structures, procedures, providing the resources (Human and Material) as well as the activities in order to implement the policy.

According to Nwangwu, (1992:1), "policy can be defined as official statement by the government on the chosen course of action and the procedures for achieving it. When considered on the platform of education, a nation's policy on education could be defined as the government official statement on the national goals and the procedure for achieving same using education as an instrument". Educational policy can be defined as a statement of those objectives that guide the actions of a substantial portion of the educational organization. Policy may be summarized as a plan of action, statement of ideals, proposed or adopted by a government, political party, education, business, etc. Educational policy in its simplest form is a series of decisions or guidelines stated over a period of time to shape the behavior of individuals in the educational organization or stipulated to shape the activities of the school of a state for the welfare of its citizens or the public.

Individuals, organizations and the society at large are always beset with various political and social-economic problems. When attempts are not made on time to address the situations, the consequence is that the problems degenerate into uncontrollable stages and they render the system difficult to manage. Barrett and Fudge (1981:4) argued that, we talk of "public policy" when a policy emanates from the public sector including both the institutions of central and local government and state created agencies such as water or health authorities, commissions and corporations. It may be implemented through and directed at a wide variety of individuals and organizations which may or may not be part of the state apparatus and which may be to a greater or lesser degree independent of state influence or control. The implication of the above position is that, any named public policy

is designed to affect a particular “target population” in a geo-politically defined entity. Therefore, an outsider will be unaffected by the policy.

The basic tenets upon which this definition is premised are as follows: that policy maker usually chooses specific political or socio-economic problems demanding attention on the bases of priorities. Solutions to each of the problems are so designed in such a way that they will meet the desired goals.

This is where planning comes in, because the adoption of a wrong strategy will eventually lead to a failure in achieving the desired objective. Even after the adoption of a particular strategy, the policy actors must consciously monitor the activities of the “implementing agents” so that they do not deviate from the organizational goals. Control is therefore the instrument employed to assure that activities or events conform to plan (Chandler and Plano, 1988:107).

Chandler and Plano (1988:107) defined public policy as the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns. In a similar vein, Dimock, (1983:40) argued that, public policy is deciding at any time or place what objectives and substantive measures should be chosen in order to deal with a particular problem issue or innovation. It also includes the reasons they should be chosen....” These two definitions see public policy from the management point of view. First, there is the awareness on the part of the policy markets that human wants are insatiable. Secondly, that the available resources to these wants are inadequate. Consequently, this problem calls for prudent management of the meager resources to meet some of the pressing demands of the populace. It is therefore the responsibility of the policy actors to decide who gets what, when and how.

Virtually all the definitions reviewed above perceived the concept from goal attainment point of view. They all saw it as a form of political interplay (game). They all considered planning as very crucial to making policy choice and achieving organizational objective (goal). That a policy is intended to address a particular problem at any point in time and not to solve all the problems in the society. All said and done, one will be correct to define public policy as the management of human and material resources by policy actors to address a policy problem identified in a polity at any point in time.

### **Policy Implementation**

According to Anderson (2003:193) “When the adoption phase of the policy process has been completed and for instance, a bill has been enacted into law by a legislature, we can begin to refer to something called public policy. Policymaking is not concluded, however, once a policy decision has been expressed in statutory or other official form. The policies that are embodied in statutes, for example, often are rudimentary and require much additional development.

Implementation has been referred to as “What happens after a bill becomes law”. More precisely, implementation encompasses whatever is done to carry a law into effect, to apply it to the target population, and to achieve its goals. The study of policy implementation is concerned with the agencies and officials involved, the procedures they follow, the techniques they employ, and the political support and opposition that they encounter. In so doing, it focuses attention on the day to day operation of government. There is often considerable uncertainty about what a policy will accomplish, how effective in terms of its goals it will be, or the consequences that it will have for society. It is this uncertainty that makes the study of policy implementation interesting and worthwhile. Why some policies succeed and others fail remains a challenging puzzle. This study is on Nigeria's Education policy; an appraisals. When policies are being implemented, certain problems are encountered. This includes:

#### **In adequacy of Resources**

One of the problems encountered in the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy is in adequacy of resource to effectively handle the programmes. Often times, programmes resource are not available at the level of operation, the programmes do not have the means and resources for effective execution. Sometimes programme responsibilities are increased or public expectations generated without commensurate increase in allocated programme resources. There are often gaps between resources on the one hand and responsibilities and directed accomplishment levels and expectations on the other hand. Thus resources may be insufficient to obtain implementation success. The implications of in adequacy of resources are numerous and often negative. Frustration on the part of programme staff including absenteeism is always recorded.

#### **Corruption**

In the process of the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy in Nigeria, there are various corrupt practices like diversion of goods and services for personal aggrandizement. Such corrupt practices raise implementation costs, distort and pervert implementation, misdirect implementation goods and services thereby depreciate efficient allocation and utilization of scarce resources.

#### **Problems in Evaluation**

Evaluation provides feedback on programmes, enhances problem resolutions and enables steering activities in relation to targets and desired ends. Evaluations provide an information base for management decisions on improvement of operations, resource allocation, administrative processes, services and performance.

However, in spite of the importance of evaluations, the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy lacks adequate evaluation as evidently seen in many states in Nigeria. There are no regular information on the state of inputs, operations and outputs. Similarly, no regular feedback information on the efforts, activities and problems of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy as well as the state of problem resolution, impacts and side effects, Evaluators and monitoring deficiencies created several problems. Corrective action in



response to problems are neither coming from the local government nor the state. Consequently, improprieties, misdirection's of output and efforts persist. Evaluation deficiencies encourage inaction and poor attention to the issue of critical tasks of performance enhancement and programmes modification. This inadequacy of evaluation can be attributed to programme managers and staff who are not cooperative enough. This is often because of vested interests in the continuity of the programmes and the fear that evaluation tends to be political and vindictive. Evaluation tends to be seen as a contest between those who support or oppose the programme activity. As a result, it is inundated by pressures, influences and interference, such that the problem of bias is heightened.

Ujo (2011: 67), posits thus; The Top - Down approach is based on a set of important assumption:

- i. Policies contain clearly defined goals against which performance can be measured.
- ii. Policies contain clearly defined policy tools for accomplishment of goals.
- iii. There is an "implementation chain" that starts with a policy message at the top and sees implementation as occurring in a chain.
- iv. Policy designers have good knowledge of the capacity and commitment of the implementers. Capacity encompasses the availability of resources for an implementing organization to carry out its task, including monetary and human resources, legal authority and autonomy, and knowledge needed to effectively implement policy. According to Ujo (Op.cit). In a top - down model of policy design, the implementer assumes that, these features are present or that; any problem suggested by these assumptions can be overcome. The focus is on creating the proper structures and controls to encourage or compel compliance with the goals set at the top. The main problem(s) encountered in the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy in Nigeria is "Top - Bottom Approach". This is due to the fact that, the target population which is the major beneficiary of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy remains passive in the formulation of this policy. The target populations are not carried along hence no input(s) were obtained from them. Top - down models are mostly concerned with compliance without cognizance to the needs of the lower implementers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Ikelegbe (1996:31). The theories of policy making tend more towards the source of policy flow or more simply towards who wields policy making power in a society. This has essentially been a controversy between the pluralist group theory which sees policy making and policies as involving several competing groups with government as the arbitrator and the elite theory which sees policy as the reflection of elite interests. The other theory, the system theory seeks to explain governmental policy making process through the use of David Easton's system analysis. The system's theory of policy making is based on the Eastonian systems frame work for the analysis of political systems. The theory conceives of political activity as essentially involving the environment, the political system and output. The environment consists of the objective conditions and

forces that generate demand and support inputs. Support consists of adherence to laws or positive orientations which promote the political system such as loyalty and patriotism. Demands are the articulated needs, problems and aspirations which are brought to bear upon the political system.

The elite theory propounded by Mills, Mosca and Michels. The theory postulates that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elites, rather than the demands of the masses. It is the elites that make policies, while administrators and public officials carry out the elites policy decisions. Because the elites have common interest in the preservation of societal status Quo, policies are bound to be conservative, non innovative and marginal, rather than those with bold and high change potentials. Policies might sometimes be in the masses interests, even though the long term interest may be that of the elites. The elites are few in society but they wield power and influence, allocate values and rule.

This study adopts the Elite theory because it is appropriate in the implementation of educational policy. Varma (1985:65) posits that, the minority, ie the political class or governing elites compose of all those that occupy political power or those that influence governmental decisions. In its most basic form, the elitist arguments assert that in any society, political power is concentrated in the hands of a comparatively small group.

According to Schwarzmantel, (1987) Plato in his republic describes the selection, training and way of life of ruling elite. He stressed that the ideas and conceptions were utopian. Amongst the elite theorists, the often quoted words of Mosca can serve as an authoritative statement of the basic tenets of elite theory as it is stated thus:

*Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms. One is so obvious that, it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies from societies that are very meagerly developed and have barely attained the dawning's of civilization, down to the most advanced powerful societies. Two classes of people appear. A class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class always the less numerous, perform all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is less legal, less arbitrary and violent and supplies the first, in appearance at least with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism.*

Cox (1985:42), in his analysis of Mosca's contribution and position on elitism stressed that Mosca's understanding of elitism and its power is based on the organizational ability of the elites, which to him is lacking in the mass group or class. According to him, this organizational ability could be characterized into three features:- consciousness, coherency and conspiracy, which in turn gives them a manipulative power. He christened the elites as the "governing class". Thus, from his analysis, he strongly identified the features that make elites different from the ordinary mass group. Mosca

further attributed the quality of rationality to the elites groups, meaning that the group is structured so as to achieve in a purposeful and conscious manner, the whole elites objectives in a society. This enables them to have a common share objective on societal issues.

In aligning this paradigm perspective of Mosca's elitism to our discussion on public policy implementation, as it affects educational development, the whole lot of his arguments will make a lot meaning to our understanding of the manipulation of the masses in policy making. This in essence negates the notion of popular participation which is the hall-mark of governance in all democratic societies.

Robert Michels in his "Iron law of oligarchy" assert that, organization is central oligarchy (elitism). According to Michels in Schwarzmentel (1987:66), the political immaturity of the mass, the inorganic weakness of the mass, the need which the mass feels for guidance, the apathy of the masses and the incompetence constituted the most solid foundation of powers of the elites. From whatever point we may view Michels elite theory, one thing is common, he believes in the existence of a small but powerful and few group, governing, presiding and overseeing the affairs of a more larger group of people in any given human organization.

What we see today as public polices in Nigeria, ie policy making and implementation are not really for the benefit of the general masses nor either a reflection of their desires, but rather a manifestation of the results of the products of political scheming, manipulation and exploitative tendencies of the elites.

The various educational policies we have today in Nigeria and their implementation represent the interest of the ruling elites as in the case of providing good educational opportunity. This is evidently seen in the privatization of educational sector that brought about the issue of private schools, ie nursery, primary, secondary, colleges, polytechnics including universities. This proves the reality and extent of exploitation and manipulation of the masses to the advantages of the few elites.

The educational crises bedeviling public schools in Nigeria today are reflection of the damaging consequences of the elites exploitative polices. It is a deliberate policy to deny the poor masses good and qualitative education that would liberate their minds from the shackles of mental enslavement.

The universal basic education (UBE) programme was not conceived by the masses and neither did any of them make any input towards its formulation, as such, the masses interest were not given adequate attention in its implementation. The question still unanswered, if the (UBE) policy is meant to address the educational problems in Nigeria, why has the various stakeholders (Federal, state and local governments) shown gross ineptitude to its logical implementation?

This can be largely attributed to gross corruption of our leaders in the society. The children of the elites who make these educational policies do not attend public schools where the (UBE) programme operates and as such do not have anything to loose in the event of failure in terms of proper implementation. The free and universal basic education programme is only existing in paper, because primary schools in the local government areas still pay some sorts of fees, study under unconducive environment, dilapidated structures, in adequate study materials and above all, teachers are owed several months without salary. The ruling elites have continually used the (UBE) programme as an election campaign strategy which after gaining power do not care for proper implementation.

However, the theoretical framework adopted for this study, the Elites theory cannot be said to be free of loopholes. The theory laid much emphasis on exploitation and manipulation of the masses by the few elites in the society. In the final analysis the framework had helped us in the understanding of proper formulation and implementation of educational policies, all the stakeholders must be carried along in order to achieve greater success.

- i. For proper formulation and implementation of educational polices in Nigeria, all stakeholders must be carried along in order to achieve success.
- ii. Availability of learning facilities in all public schools will play vital role towards educational development.
- iii. Conducive learning environment in our public schools will enhance the standard of education in the society.
- iv. The general condition of teachers should be improved as this will affect the positive output in pupils/ students education.
- v. Adequate evaluation towards the implementation of the educational policy by government agencies will compel the school administrators to adhere strictly to the stated objectives.
- vi. This study takes into account important features of most policy design that, implementation is as much a matter of negotiation and communication as it is a matter of command.
- vii. Clear message sent by credible officials and received by receptive implementers who are given sufficient resources can lead to implementation success.
- viii. Adequate funding of education is recommended in earnest towards the implementation of the educational policy in Nigeria for rapid development and sustainability of every sector in the country.
- ix. Above all, on the issue of corruption, policy implementers engaged in any form of corrupt practices while discharging his or her official duties must be made to face the wrought of the law to serve as deterrent to others.

### **The History of Nigerian Educational System**

Following the introduction to the background of this study, there is the need to have an overview of the over-all environment of the educational system in Nigeria. Fafunwa, (1982) posits thus, Nigerian state as we have it today was under the colonial control of the

British government from 1852 to 1960. With its large population, enormous land mass and relatively complex ethno, religious and cultural configuration, the administration, formulation and implementation of development policies were very tasking, including education as a sub-sector.

In 1947, the British colonial government introduced its regionalism policy, which saw the creation of the Northern, Eastern and Western regions, with each region having an autonomy and government with different policies for development. It could be recalled that prior to this period, the different ethnic groups that formed the Nigerian state has their different educational systems, and development administration. In his recognition of the role of education, Fafunwa (1982:125), maintained that education in this era was regarded as a means to an end, and not an end itself. It was for an immediate induction of the members of the society and a preparation for an adult hood.

This type of education incorporated into it, two main learning components- skills acquisition and learning of societal norms, values and cultures. Traditional educational system in Nigeria was not divided into separate compartment unlike its western counterpart, but was intricately interwoven, with the medium of education as the mother tongue.

According to Fafunwa, (op.cit) Islamic education had its impact on Nigeria from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the present, while the greater impact on the Nigerian education was to come latter through the Christian missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The period 1842 – 1882 saw the greatest impact of Christian missionaries' activities on the development of the Nigerian educational system. Badagry, near Lagos was the first place that the Baptist missionaries established first educational institution in Nigeria. It could be recalled that the primary objective of the Christian missionaries was to convert the Nigerian (African to Christianity through education). This education was administered through the teaching of the knowledge of the Bible, ability to sing hymns and recite the catechisms, which were only optional and available in English Language.

In an attempt to inculcate their western culture to Nigerians, the missionaries realized the need of training Nigerians with English language and preferably local language combined. Their aim was to train Christian workers like catechists, lay readers and other teachers who would minister to their fellow Africans and aid in the conversion process from African traditionalism to Christians. In this process, the missionaries erroneously assumed that the African traditional beliefs and educational system was too “animism”. It is against these mindsets that they established their schools.

The missions, which were mostly, Baptists, Catholics, Anglican and Methodists established and ran their schools (educational system) without any interference and intervention of the colonial governments. Each missionary organization designed its educational curriculum the way and manner it could serve its administrative interest in Nigerian education, for the benefit of the indigenious recipients. They only demonstrated

little interest by giving meager financial support to the missions, without proper evaluation and addressing of the educational or linguistic policy of the missionary organizations. The colonial government was only interested in ensuring that the schools produced clerks and court interpreters that aided the various economic, political and social exploitation policies of the then colonial government.

It is interesting to note that prior to the 1925 period, the British government had no clearly defined policy on education. This could be demonstrated in the educational backwardness of the northern Nigerian region. The North before the advent of colonialism had embraced Islam and Islamic culture, hence, the penetration of Western culture and education were not successful and possibly achieved. This partly explains why the northern Nigeria since the birth of the Nigerian state has lagged behind in western education.

The 1925 memorandum of education in British colonial territories established the first government policy on education. According to Taiwo (1980), the memorandum stated inter alia that, "Education should be adapted to local conditions in such a manner as would enable it to conserve all sound elements in local traditional and social organization".... The study of the educational use of vernacular and the provision of textbooks in vernacular are of primary importance", Taiwo argued that for the first time in the history of western education in Nigeria, the colonial government officially demonstrated its desire and approved the use of the mother-tongue in education. But he further argued that this demonstrated desire was not borne out of true intention for the development of the Nigerian state, but because the most traditional elements and organizations they (government) met on ground served as an enabling institution for the smooth running of indirect rule system.

It was this policy through the 1925 memorandum that introduced the mother tongue as a policy and as a medium of instruction for the first two or three years classes at the primary education level. This memorandum also laid down the system and development of education in Nigeria. The first National policy on education stated thus,

*System should be established which, although varying with local conditions, will provide elementary education for boys and girls, secondary education of several types, technical vocational education, institutions of higher technical vocational education, institutions of higher education which might eventually develop into universities and some form of adult education. (Fafunwa 1982).*

This policy statement on education appeared so promising in terms of educational development, but in implementation, it was quite different, as so many disparities appeared in all regions, states and segments. Prior to Nigerian's independence in 1960 that is between 1925 and 1960, Nigeria witnessed so many changes in educational system and development. There was increase in both primary, secondary school enrolments. The first higher institution, the Yaba college of Technology was established and it became the nucleus of the first premier university college Ibadan in 1948.

With independence in 1960, and its attendant challenges of national development, the Nigerian state and its citizens began to regard education as a vital tool and engine for over all development, consequently, the various federating units as well as the federal government began to increase their capital expenditure on education at all levels- primary, secondary and higher education as well as adult education. The need to develop education as a sector viable for pioneering the overall development of the economy has remained a policy problem in the Nigerian society. This is dated back to the period of colonial administration. Attempts have been made towards formulating and implementing practical education policy in Nigeria.

Here efforts will be put at exploring the environment of educational policy in the history of Nigeria from the colonial period, First Republic, second republic, military regimes and the fourth republic, with the purpose of analyzing the changes in this agenda over the years, problem in formulation and implementation as well as the various institutions of implementation.

### **National Policy on Education**

The policy was first published in 1976 and then revised in 1981. It was the government's stand that "Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise, but huge Government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic intervention and active participation. The government has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development", (NPE, 1981:5).

The government, having adopted education as a vehicle for national development sought, through the policy, to clarify its national objectives on which Nigeria's philosophy of Education is hinged. The national objectives endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on education, are the building of:

- i. A free and democratic society;
- ii. A just and egalitarian society;
- iii. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- iv. A great and dynamic economy;
- v. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Consequent upon the above, Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

### **Primary Education**

The age bracket here is 6 to 11.

### **Objectives**

- i. The inculcation of permanent literacy and innumeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively;

- ii. The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- iii. Citizenship as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- iv. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- v. Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- vi. Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity;
- vii. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

### **Secondary Education**

This is the type of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage.

The two broad aims of secondary education are:

- i. Preparation for useful living within the society;
- ii. Preparation for higher education;

### **Higher Education Including Professional Education**

This is the post secondary section of the national education system given in universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

### **Technical Education**

This is “that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge”, (NPE, op cit: 28).

### **Adult and Non-Formal Education**

Adult and non-formal education consists of functional literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, aesthetic, cultural and civic education for youths and adults outside the formal school system.

### **Special Education**

Section 8 of the policy defines Special Education as: The education of children and adults who have learning difficulty because of different sorts of handicaps: blindness, partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing, mental retardation, social maladjustment, physical handicap, etc. Due to circumstances of birth, inheritance, social position, mental and physical health pattern, or accident in later life. As a result, a few children and adults are unable to cope with the normal school class organization and methods. There are also the specially gifted children who are intellectually precocious and find themselves insufficiently challenged by the programme of the school, and who may take to stubbornness and apathy in resistance to it.

### **Teacher Education**

Attention to teacher education is considered very necessary because “no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers” (NPE, op.cit: 38). Based on this contention, the objectives of teacher education should be:



- i. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
- ii. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- iii. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- iv. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world;
- v. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

### **Universal Basic Education**

September 30, 1999, saw the launching of the universal Basic Education (UBE) at Sokoto by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Basic education encompasses primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult literacy (FME, 1999).

Basic education is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable the citizens:

- i. Live meaningful and fulfilling lives;
- ii. Contribute to the development of the society;
- iii. Derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits from the society; and
- iv. Discharge their civic obligations competently

The rationale for introducing the UBE scheme was based on the fact that Nigeria was a signatory to the 1990 Jomtiem declaration of education for all by the year 2000, and also a member of the group of E-9 nations committed to the total eradication of illiteracy, (FME, 1999). Evidence abound that the situation in Nigeria has not improved over the year. Therefore, something must be done to ameliorate the situation.

### **Colonialism**

During the colonial domination in the Nigerian soil, education existed in two forms; the traditional education and the western education. The western education sought to instill western culture into the system, while the traditional education functioned as a custodian of native cultural values, norms and traditions.

Worthy of note is the fact that the colonial government had no clear policy on education for Nigeria, and as such did not bother to develop education for meaningful development in Nigeria. A lot of changes occurred in the development of education in the colonial period.

The British policy of indirect rule, regionalism of 1946 really posed great challenge to education in Nigeria. While the indirect rule was aimed at producing mainly interpreters, court clerks, and teachers, neglecting science and technology, the regionalism policy created and widened the gap in educational development in Nigeria. According to

Fafunwa (1982), the Christian missionaries' activity in the Western and Eastern Nigeria facilitated the rapid educational development of the two regions as against the less development of western education in the Northern Nigeria, under Islamic educational control.

Other changes witnessed in the British colonial educational administration was the 1925 memorandum of Education, which sought to introduce the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools in the programme of conserving sound local condition in Nigeria's educational development policy. However, this so called educational policy, (memorandum of 1925) had in it inherent problems. First the policy formulation process lacked the public input especially that of the few educated Nigerians. Second, there was no adequate institution for the implementation of the provisions of the policy (memorandum). Third, there was inadequate manpower to help in the implementation of the policy in classroom.

It is also important to state that under the same colonial administration, preferable at the tail end, the different regions - Northern, Western and Eastern had different policy programmes on education and educational development. The Western region programme under Chief Obafemi Awolowo had sought to introduce and institutionalize free primary education in the West. The Eastern Nigeria also followed suit leaving behind the Northern Nigeria. But this tempo could not be sustained owing to independence of the 1960.

### **The First Republic**

The era of self-independence of Nigeria in 1960 provided the country the opportunity of re-examining its role in the world community of nations, as Nigeria ceased to be regarded as a colony of the British. This situation made Nigeria and its people to regard education as the key to over-all development. It forced the various levels of government to increase spending on education so as to produce enough manpower to fill in the vacant position left by the exit of the colonial people.

The first republic civilian government had no clear-cut vision on the formulation of an indigenous educational policy. The Nigerian State was still guided and operated a policy of education derived from British. According to Fafunwa (1982:40), five years after the independence of 1960, the Nigerian educational system was not only colonial, but more British themselves, that is to say, the Nigerian school children was only educated to meet the needs of a foreign culture and in turn were more fit for export for life in their country. The only attempt at given Nigeria a policy on education during the first republic was on the establishment of the Nigerian Education Research Council (NERC) in 1964. This institution was charged with the responsibility of drafting a new educational curriculum, capable of positioning the country to a new developmental challenge. In an effort to achieve these feet, a Joint consultative committee (JCC) was established as a national advisory body on education.

With the wide criticism that rose against the system of education in the first republic, a National Curriculum conference was advocated. This was to address the problems in the Nigerian educational sector through setting up of an agenda. But this conference could not hold owing to the military coup and counter coup that resulted in to the demise of the first republic, with its attendant consequences from the three (3) years civil war (1967 – 1970).

### **The Military Era**

In an attempt to reposition education as a key to overall national development, the Nigerian government after independence organized one of the prestigious and unique national curriculum conferences in Lagos in September 1969. It was unique in the sense that it involved a cross section of the entire society, or calls it all stakeholders in the educational sub-sector of the Nigerian state.

According to Dibia (2000) the 1969 National Curriculum conference was the only attempt by Nigeria to seek solution for the crisis of educational development in Nigeria. But this could not be mistaken to as a national policy on education. It was primarily aimed at reviewing old and identifies new national goals for Nigerian education, bearing in mind the needs of the teeming youths in nation building and development for the well-being of the individual and the society.

In the conference, nine priority areas in Nigeria's educational system were looked into as prime objectives. They were as follow;

- i. National philosophy of education
- ii. Goals of primary education
- iii. Objectives of secondary education
- iv. Purposes of tertiary education
- v. The role of teacher education
- vi. Functions of science and technical education
- vii. The place of women's education
- viii. Education for living
- ix. Control of public education.

From the above conference objectives, the conference made amongst other things a total of sixty-five recommendations on the direction in which education should be pursued if Nigerian education is to have a focused goal and direction. In order to harness the recommendations of the National Curriculum conference of 1969, the Federal ministry of education in 1973 organized a seminar on education in Nigeria headed by Chief S.O Adebayo, where the recommendations of the National Curriculum conference recommendations were adopted. But of particular interest to this seminar of 1973 was the adoption of the National Curriculum Conference Recommendation number 59, which proposed a 6-3-3-4 system of education, that is full six years primary education followed by a three year junior and a three year senior secondary education, culminating in a four year university course as the case may be.

However, the 6-3-3-4 system of education policy was not allowed to commence, as the change of government that took place in September 1975, which ushered in the administration of General Murtala Mohammed as head of state. The regime could not start the immediate implementation of this system as it first concerned itself with the creation of additional states. The creation of the additional state altered the structure of the educational administration as additional states ministries of education emerged.

The present Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) which was established in 1964 were charged with the objectives of fashioning out and implementing the Nations Policy of Education on Curriculum development and administration. It was to be assisted by the Comparative Education study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) in printing and publishing study materials that would aid in the implementation of the National Education policies.

Frequent changes in policy shifts arising from changes in regimes and governments have hardly helped those who implement policies to see their way through. This has been demonstrated through the administration of diverse education policies, which have hardly had effects on the level of qualitative educational outputs.

In 1977, the Federal Military Government of General Olusegun Obasanjo issued the first white paper on the National Policy on education, which contained the recommendations of the 1973 national seminar on 1969 National curriculum Conference. The same military government upon inception of power introduced the “free and Universal Primary Education” called the Universal Primary Education (UPE).

In the same year, 1977, the military government set up a seven-man implementation committee for the recommendations of the 1973 national seminar on education. It was charged following terms of reference:

- i. Translation of the education policy into a workable blueprint and to develop programmes for its implementation.
- ii. To coordinate and monitor the implementation of those programmes developed under the policy.
- iii. To advise the government on and to assist in providing the infrastructural and other requirement for implementation and,
- iv. To provide a continuous review and assessment of the aims, objectives and targets of the policy with a view to ensuring the adequacy and continued relevance of the policy (and those programmes) developed under it.

However, it is disheartening to note that the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme developed under this policy could not achieve its objectives, goals and aspiration, in spite of the existence of such an established implementation committee. It could be judged that the implementation committee did not live to justify its establishment and existence; hence many analysts judged the UPE programme as a monumental failure, which arose from both policy formulation and implementation problems.

It could be recalled that the implementation committee in its efforts to achieve their set out objective organized education stakeholders in different forms. One was with primary and secondary education level, where primary and secondary institutions were involved in brainstorming sessions for possible solutions to the crises in their institutions. Though this was seen as a possible means of policy evaluation by the government, by the terms of reference given to the committee was seen as an undue restriction and interference.

In 1979, the federal government issued yet another white paper entitled, "Government views on the implementation Committee's Blueprint on "The Federal Republic of Nigerian National Policy on Education". Most of the recommendations of the implementation committee's reports were accepted, rejected or deferred.

In the third phase of the military rule, (Buhari and Babangida regimes). What seemed to, as National policies on education were official pronouncements back up by decrees to establish implementation institutions for educational programmes. To be specific, the Babangida's regime establishes the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), National Primary Education Fund (NPEF). Apart from these institutions, the regime adopted the 6-3-3-4 system of education as its policy agenda. In terms of funding, the regime made the three levels of government (federal states and local governments) to be contributing to the funding of primary education, hence it was discovered that the level (Primary) education suffered acute under funding which resulted in to crisis that greeted the second republic (1979 - 1983). The 6-3-3-4 system continued through the life of the Abacha's regime, down to the dawn of the 1999 civilian democratic government.

### **The Second Republic**

Following the returning of the country to a civilian regime in October 1979, the new civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari ordered for a review of the 1979 white paper and also issued a revised edition of the National Policy on Education.

In its reaffirmation on the improvement of Education in Nigeria through a comprehensive National Policy on education, the government stated amongst other things the following:

- i. The need to rate and regard education as a vital tool to national and human capacity development.
- ii. Basing the nation's educational policies on lifelong education system.
- iii. Making educational and training facilities more accessible and available through diversification for flexible choices.
- iv. Providing basic education in variety of forms, depending on the needs and possibilities for citizens etc.

Looking at the Nigeria Educational Policies, one thing keeps occurring and reoccurring. This is the issue of translating the policy contents or pronouncements into a practical reality as well as ensuring an endured implementation of such policies. But the Nigerian society has not been so lucky in this aspect. Educational policies for an example has had its fair share of policy politicization which has neglected the nation much of its needed development in a crucial sector.

It is disheartening and pathetic to note that the handsome investments in education have not yielded the desired results in terms of qualitative educational development due to the inconsistencies in educational policies, which has had a deleterious effect on the development of the sector. Both the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels of the Nigerians sector have had their own shortcomings resulting from the above-identified phenomenon. But of more worrisome is the primary education level, which constitutes the very foundation of the nation's educational development.

Nigerian National Policies on Education have been practically implemented and expressed through different programmes geared towards achieving the goals. Behind the philosophies and objectives of the educational policies. In Nigerians history of Educational policies and implementation programmes, such schemes as the 1950s Western and Eastern regions free primary Education programmes, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of the early 1970s and the 6-3-3-4 system of education of the military regimes were in all ramifications far from addressing the educational problems of the country.

### **The Fourth Republic**

In an attempt at shifting away from the old and obsolete ways of administering education and its policies and programmes, the civilian government upon assumption of power in may 1999, in the same year launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE), which according to the President Olusegun Obasanjo, have the objective of universalizing basic education in Nigeria, through making it compulsory and free from primary school to junior secondary level. In other to achieve this, the government in its new policy on education introduced a nine (9) tiers basic education, changing the old 6-3-3-4 systems to a 9-3-4 system of education.

In the final analysis the National Policy on education since the colonial days has witnessed a lot of changes, both in the formulation and implementation as well as in the institutional frameworks and arrangements. It has also been crisis ridden, from problems of regime interruption to the crisis of implementation arising from administrative ineptitude the various policies, especially those of the military regimes was carried out in an ad-hoc manner, without proper and careful procedures. They could not involve inputs of all stakeholders, thus it was an exclusive affairs.

In terms of implementation, the military regimes appeared to show much commitment to policy implementation as could be seen from the Babangida regimes of 1985 – 1993. The National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), National Primary Education Fund, (NPEF) and the Universal Primary Education (UPE) were reorganized to have given birth to the present Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the fourth republic.

### **The Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme**

The drive for the improvement of education sector of the Nigerian has led to the continuous search and attempts at establishing programmes and schemes that would

harness the ideas behind the aims and objectives of the National Policy on Education. According to Ukeje (1986) the emergent of the UPE was preceded and consequent upon the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and the 1973 seminar on a National Policy on education which both recommended “free and Universal Primary Education” for all the children in the federation.

In the programmes package, it was expected that a total of 2.3 million pupils would turn up for enrolment, but it was latter realized that 3 million pupils turned up for enrolment in the programme. This resulted into an under estimated rate of about 30 percent. This triggered off a phenomenal rise in the pupils enrolment, resulting into a situation of shortage of classrooms, teachers and study materials. The unprecedented rise in the enrolment of pupils under the UPE programme underscored the level of illiteracy in the Nigerian state, which resulted from the formulation, and implementation of unfriendly and unpopular public educational policies.

Evaluating the success or otherwise of the UPE programme that was launched in September 1976 by the Obasanjo led military regime, it is also of great importance to note that the programme as conceived by the Gowon military regime had in its budget and development plan for 12 then existing states. But with the creating of additional seven states and the Federal Capital Territory in 1976, the structure of educational administration and funding changed. That is to say that the UPE programme was planned with the mind for 12 states, but was then implemented for 19 states and the federal capital territory inclusive.

In this analysis on the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, Oguiche (2000) identified that one of the major problems that confronted the successful implementation of the programme was lack of trained teachers, physical facilities, refusal of available teachers to be posted to rural areas, inadequacy of textbooks and their poor distribution and above all, the scheme suffered from acute shortage of trained school managers who could ensure its effectiveness and trained planners who could promptly monitor it.

Funding constituted a major agenda of the implementation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme. In order to actualize this, the succeeding civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari established different commissions to advice the government on the problems. The commission headed by a renowned educationist in the person of Professor A. Babs Fufunwa. The commission apportioned financial responsibilities for primary education amongst the three tiers of governments in the following order;

- i. Payment of teachers salaries, allowances as well as those of the non-teaching staff by the federal government.
- ii. Infrastructural materials and facilities to be borne by the states government.
- iii. Part of the cost of the learning materials, textbooks etc to be borne by the parents. But in cases of educationally disadvantaged state, where parents are reluctant to send their children to school, state governments may have to shoulder some of the responsibilities.

- iv. Construction and maintenance of schools buildings, teachers' accommodations and provisions of land for the building of primary school be the responsibility of the local government.

With the governments welcome and acceptance of the recommendations of the commission, it was set to implement them with the aim of achieving the stated objectives of the universal Primary (UPE) Education scheme. This could possibly be achieved as several bureaucratic and policy framework problems inhibited the smooth implementation of the recommendations. Both the federal, states and local governments were logged in battle of how and whom to bear the full burden of primary education, A situation, which plunged the primary education system into a prolonged crises and culminating into several months of teachers' industrial action, which almost paralyzed the educational sector of the Nigerian society.

Many analysts have attributed the failure of the UPE programme to the issue of lack of political will and commitment to the course of the programme. The programme was actually, conceived by Obasanjo's military regime of the 1976-1979, but due to lack of political commitment on the side of most states, there arose lots of implementation problems in the programme. The succeeding regimes of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Buhari / Idiagbon, Babangida and Abacha / Abdulsalam all abandoned the noble projects.

The policy failure of the UPE programme did brought more devastating effects on the development of education in Nigeria. By the time the military took over realm of governance in 1983, it was revealed that the primary education system had been taken many steps backward largely due to the problem of lack of funding, good management and undue political interference. The Universal Primary Education, that was designed to give every Nigerian equal opportunity for educational attainment had failed, giving way for the emergent of private investments in education nationwide.

Any argument that posits, public policies in Nigeria fail for the benefit of the ruling capitalist class could not be totally far from the truth. According to Debie, (2000), policies in Nigeria have failed and continued to fail due to selfish and unpatriotic conducts of policy actors, who formulate and implement these policies not for the direct benefit of the public, but for the interest of the class concerned. He further posited that privatization of educational sub sector of the economy, is an indirect way of economic exploitation of the public. These private investors in the educational sector acquired their resources through corrupt means, as a result of the position they occupied in public service.

The UPE programme failed because there was a premonition for the privatization and commercialization of the educational sub sector, hence the lack of political will and commitment to the course of the programme could not have come at a better period than that. How would, the policy actors allow the programme to survive when most of them have their own private schools? Thus, the UPE programme suffered from the Nigerian problem factors.



The Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) is a programme designed by the federal government to help in facilitating the actualization of the National policy on Education, which seek to achieve and provide an equal opportunity for attainment of education for every citizen, irrespective of his/her background.

Before carrying out any analysis on the programme, there is the need to relay the meaning of basic education. Basic education according to Oguche (2000) is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides reading, writing and numeric skills. It comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners acquire functional literacy. In the Nigerian context, basic education includes primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult literacy.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in Nigeria is informed by a lot of internal and external contending factors. Internally, the long military rule and its resultant effects of the long age decay of educational infrastructures; culture, values and system necessitated the search for remedy of the educational system, especially at the primary education level. Many analysts have argued that the military rule, corruption, inefficiency and other negative factors contributed immensely to the poor quality of educational development that heralded the country. These monumental decays in the educational systems, institutions and structures posed a great challenge for the nations quest for sustainable development, hence the need to address the situation and other external factors contributed to the launching of the new (UBE) scheme.

In the external factors, Nigeria as a sovereign nation are signatory to some international treaties and declaration, both in the social, economic and political sphere. Nigeria is a signatory to the 1990 Declaration of Education for all by the year 2000 (EFA) and also a member of the Group of E-9 nations committed to the total elimination of illiteracy. Amidst these challenges, the country as at the year 1996 was still grappling with literacy rate of 52%. This statistics show that out of 21 million children of school-going age, only 14.1 million were only enrolled in primary school. But the most pathetic side of this was that out of this figure, the completion rate of the 14.1 million children enrolled was 64% while the rate of transition of this number into junior secondary school was 43.5%. It clearly showed that the educational system was totally in a pitiable condition.

However, for Nigeria to attain the conceived 100% literacy level as envisaged by the Education for All (EFA) and the E-9 group, it became imperative that necessary structures and provisions be made to universalize basic education, enthrone conducive learning environment and improve quality and standards of education. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was designed and launched to address these vital challenges. No adequate attention was given to the equitable opportunity for the pupils conducive learning environment and an improved quality and standard of education, in terms of output (Oguche, O.P. Cit).

In the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) September 1999 in Sokoto, the President and commander in chief of the armed forces, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo observed thus,

*After thorough study, our administration plan to re-launch UPE in conjunction with the states and local governments. It will be compulsory. We do not intend to re-invent the wheel but we must go for adaptability, relevance and appropriateness”.*

The presidential pronouncement here depicts two things. One, it shows a demonstration of a re-invigorated and re-engineered political will and commitment. Two, it shows that the government has shown a spirit of repentance from the past policy mistakes, especially as it has to do with education. With these political commitments, the country launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) with the following objectives.

### **Federal Funding of Education in Nigeria**

Figure VIII gives a picture of federal funding of all levels of education in Nigeria between 1960 to 1995. Recurrent education expenditure rose absolutely from only N3.2 million in 1970 to N2426.4 million in 1995. It is glaring that the government had been spending a smaller proportion on capital expenditure since our education institutions and their facilities are in a state of tragic dilapidation, disrepair and utter neglect. Except for 1992 for which the figures and data are suspect, recurrent expenditure on education had dominated the capital component since 1985.

Another glaring fact from the table is the fact that Nigeria spends an almost insignificant proportion of her financial resources on education. It was a mere 0.55% of total expenditure in 1970, with the highest proportion being 10.29% in 1975. This fell to a mere 0.87% in 1992 before rising to only 4.75% in 1995, Ironically, this is a nation that is not at war but spends over 10% of its resources on defense.

**Table 1:** Nigeria: Education Financing, 1960-1995 (Nm).

Year	Recurrent Expenditure	Capital Expenditure			Total Edu. Expenditure	Total Federal Expenditure	Education Expenditure as % of Total government Expenditure
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total			
1960					246.9		
1965					404.2		
1970	3.2	51.61	3.0	48.39	6.2	1130.1	0.55
1975	218.9	25.75	631.1	74.25	850.0	8252.3	10.29
1980	509.1	41.11	749.4	58.89	1238.5	23695.7	5.22
1985	697.2	84.67	126.2	15.33	823.4	12680.0	6.49
1990	2402.8	85.23	416.3	14.79	2819.1	60268.2	4.68
1991	1256.3	80.88	297.0	19.12	1553.3	66584.4	2.33
1992	297.0	36.63	507.2	63.07	804.2	92797.4	0.87
1993	5336.4	84.28	995.1	15.72	6331.5	233806.5	2.71
1994	7382.8	78.25	2051.9	21.75	9434.7	202513.0	4.66
1995*	9746.4	80.07	2426.4	19.93	12172.8	256520.7	4.75

**Source:** Computed from CN. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Various Years: Statistical Bulletin, June 1995.

### Nigerian Primary Education

Primary education is the first component of basic education, the other component being junior secondary education. Basic education is often considered a right which nations have a responsibility to guarantee to each generation. This partly explains the adoption of the defunct Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria in 1976 (later revised in 1981). This level of education is for 6 to 11 year – old children. It shows the growth in the number of Nigeria's primary schools: from 15,703 in 1960 to 39,677 in 1995 a phenomenal growth.

**Table 2:** Nigeria: Growth in the Number of Primary Schools, 1960-1995.

Year	Number of Primary Schools
1960	15,703
1965	14,967
1970	14,902
1975	21,200
1980	36,626
1985	33,353
1990	35,433
1991	35,446
1992	36,610
1993	37,812
1994	38,000
1995	39,677

**Source:** Ayanwu (1987a) and CBN, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Various Years.

Table 3 present primary school enrolments in Nigeria between 1960 and 1993/94 session. It grew from 2,912,618 in 1960 to about 16,191,000 in 1993/94. It also shows the predominance of male enrolment for the period, 1979/80 to 1993/94. There was no year that female enrolment was over 45% between 1979 and 1993. Thus the gender ratio ranged from 76 in 1979 to 95 in 1993. While primary education is currently funded by the Federal Government through the Primary Education Commission, its management rests with the local governments.

**Table 3:** Primary School Enrolment in Nigeria from 1960-93/94

Year	Total Enrolment ("000)				Enrolment Ratio (%)			
	M	F	M/F	%F	M	F	MF	Gender Ratio
1960			2,913					
1965			2,912					
1970			3,516					
1975			6,128					
1979/80	6,823	5,295	12,118	34.7	118	90	104	.76
1980/81	7,808	5,670	13,778	43.4	98	84	81	.86
1981/82	8,616	6,151	14,312	43.0	100.2	84	92.1	.84
1982/83	8,355	6,322	17,677	43.1	105	81	63	.77
1983/84	8,052	6,232	14,384	44.0	98	78	88	.80
1984/85	7,257	5,769	13,025	44.3	85	69	77	.81
1985/86	7,183	5,732	12,915	44.4	82	66	74	.81
1986/87	8,521	5,020	11,540	43.5	72	56	64	.78
1987/88	7,308	5,383	12,691	42.4	78	58	68	.74
1988/89	3,997	5,724	12,721	45.0	70	60	65	.86
1989/90	1,730	5,878	13,607	43.2	76.4	59.1	67.7	.77
1990/91	7,742	6,035	13,777	43.3	84.6	69.7	77.1	.82
1991/92	8,274	6,532	14,806	44.1	90.3	71.9	81.1	.80
1992/93	8,931	6,940	15,870	43.7	93.6	74.7	84.1	.80
1993/94	9,055	7,135	16,191	44.1	95	62	63.5	.95

**Source:** Ayawu (1987a: 1997a).

### Funding

During the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), expenditure on primary education stood at N33.934 million or 24.4% of total education expenditure. During the Third National Development Plan (1975-80), N501 million was spent on primary education, representing 20.1% of total education expenditure. Also during the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85, a total of N1,126.535 million was spent on primary education representing 14.6% of total educational expenditure. This means that primary education expenditure as a percentage of total education expenditure' has been on a downward trend since 1970. Anyanwu (op.cit).

### Nigerian Secondary Education

Secondary education in Nigerian is for the 12 to 18 years old children. It is on the concurrent list in the Nigerian constitution. This explains the existence of Unity Schools or Federal Government Colleges in the country.

1. It shows the trend in the number of secondary schools in Nigeria between 1960 and 1995. This rose from 1227 in 1960 to 6,452 in 1995.
2. It also shows the enrolment in Nigerian secondary schools between 1975/76 and 1993/94. This rose from 745,717 in 1975/76 to 4,451,329 in 1993/94. Again male enrolment dominated female enrolment. Male enrolment was never below 54% in any single year for the entire period, 1975/76 to 1993/94.

Expenditure on secondary education during the First National Development Plan was N53.886 million or 38.75% of total education expenditure. Allocations during the Second National Development Plan were N1055.4 million or 43.4% of total education allocation. During the Third National Development Plan the sum of N3096.303 million or 40.2% of total education expenditure and to secondary education.

**Table 4:** Nigerian Secondary School Enrolment by Gender, 1975/76-1993/94

Year	Total	Male	% male	Female	% female	Gender Gap
1975/76	745717	629361	92.8	53356	7.2	.08
1976/77	904931	783681	86.6	121250	13.2	.16
1977/78	113112	1015182	89.8	115930	10.4	.11
1978/79	1451242	994531	68.5	456711	31.5	.46
1979/80	1864712	1241456	66.6	623257	33.4	.50
1980/81	2345604	1523820	75.0	821784	23.0	.33
1981/82	2880280	2047528	71.1	832752	28.9	.41
1982/83	3234644	2367502	73.1	867142	26.9	.37
1983/84	3402665	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
1984/85	2988174	1757035	58.8	1231139	41.2	.70
1985/86	3088711	1758866	56.9	1329845	43.1	.76
1986/87	2934349	1700222	57.9	1234127	42.1	.73
1987/88	2941781	1729537	58.8	1212244	41.2	.70
1988/89	2723791	1581648	58.1	1142143	41.9	.72
1989/90	2901993	1661468	57.2	1240525	42.8	.75
1990/91	3123277	1821307	58.3	1301970	41.7	.72
1991/92	3600620	1979045	55.0	1621575	45.0	.82
1992/93	4032083	2182034	54.1	1850049	45.9	.85
1993/94	4451329	2419782	54.4	2031547	45.6	.84

**Source:** Anyanwu (1997b).

### Summary

This research study dealt extensively on Nigeria's Education Policy in a democratic setting. An appraisal. The paper commences with the introductory part of the work. The background was delineated in detail. This includes the importance of public policy implementation to educational development. Education has been recognized by every society or nation, whether developed or developing or under developed as a potent instrument of social, cultural, political, economic and technological advancement as well as a means of empowering every individual for the effective performance of his roles. Unless the implementation of educational policy is well presented, the policy is bound to

fail. In this chapter also, the objectives including the significance of the study were highlighted.

The study also dwelled on related literatures and theoretical frame work respectively. The study adopts the Elite theory which postulates that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elites rather than the demands of the masses. It is the elites that make policies, while administrators and public officials carry out the elites policy decisions.

The study used more of primary and secondary data, questionnaires including interviews were used and the random sampling to ensure that all members of the population has the same chance of being selected from a small sample. The history of Nigerian Educational system from the colonial period up to the present day as it affects the implementation and the development of Nigerian educational policy under different republics were delineated while appropriate recommendations put forward for future study.

### **Conclusion**

The National objectives endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National policy on education, are the building of:

- i. A free and democratic society
- ii. A just and egalitarian society
- iii. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- iv. A great and dynamic economy
- v. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Consequent upon the above, Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. The research study revealed that, the major challenges in the implementation of educational policy today at federal, state and local government levels in Nigeria is corruption on the part of policy implementers. Corrupt practices raises implementation cost, distort, pervert and misdirect implementation goods and services thereby depreciate efficient allocation and utilization of scarce resources.

### **Recommendations**

Consequent upon my findings, this study therefore makes the following recommendations.

- i. Enhance welfare packages for teachers. Public school teachers in the local government area of the state are poorly treated. Adequate motivation and needs of lower implementers must be taken into accounts. This will reduce brain drain and contribute in achieving the desired policy objectives.
- ii. Adequate funding of public schools. Federal, state and local governments should increase their budgetary allocation to the educational sector to enhance proper funding. Implementers if given sufficient resources can lead to implementation success.

- iii. Provision of needed facilities in the public schools. Adequate learning facilities will improve the general standards in the public schools. This should include physical and teaching facilities such as renovation of dilapidated school structures, equipping of libraries, science laboratories, furniture etc for both pupils in the primary and students in the JSS respectively.
- vi. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the educational policy by government agencies will compel the school administrators to adhere strictly to the stated objectives. Evaluation provides comprehensive analyses, measures and assesses the programmes to determine performance, impact, worth, problems and the improvements including modifications that may be needed.
- v. Training and development of personnel under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in the local government area should be encouraged as it will enhance productivity generally. This is necessitated to the fact that, it enables the employees to acquire the necessary skills needed to perform their jobs effectively.
- vi. Corruption on the part of Universal Basic Education policy implementers. Those found to be involved in corrupt practices towards the implementation of educational policy in the federal, state and local government area must be brought to justice to serve as deterrence to others. Corrupt practices raise implementation costs, distort and pervert implementation goods and services thereby resulting to policy failure.
- vii. The educational stake holders including the “target population” must be carried along by the federal government in the formulation and implementation of the educational policies in Nigeria.

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