

Educational Policy Formulation, Political System and the Attainment of Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There can be no doubt that education opens people's mindset, enlightens their knowledge, equips them to pursue freedom and links them with liberation and independence. It assists the society in various ways, such as agriculture, manufacturing, research among others. The examination of education policy and political system of a nation indicates that educational programmes of a country do not operate in isolation and such depends largely on the political powers that be. There is also the indication that the approach and plan to provide education services depends largely on the ideology of the ruling political party; the ideology of the ruling party dictates who funds education; the ideology of the ruling party determines who controls the educational institutions; while it should be noted that the ideological camp, which a country belongs, dictates the type or form of education in the country.

Keywords: Education, policy formulation, political system, development

INTRODUCTION

Education is seen as a vital tool to the development of any society. It aims at raising champions who use their ingenuities to reshape, reconstruct and rebuild the pillars erected by the forefathers. No nation survives without education. It is seen as a source of investment and development. Most people remain blind; others stick rigidly to their old ways of doing things while few see the need to pursue the evolutionary trend in education across the globe. Hoyle (1989) posits that a nation's quest for education can be traceable to her developmental strategies as well as policies. The resultant effect is usually enormous. In other words, development can be said to be a function of education. Look at a highly industrialized nation and you will see a nation that embraces education and its various aspects of operations. Education opens people's mindset, enlightens their knowledge, equips them to pursue freedom and links them with liberation and independence. It assists the society in various ways, such as agriculture, manufacturing, research among others. Ball (2002), Czinkotta and Ikka (2002) opine that the United States of America has the largest population of high income consumers in the world. Competition for their patronage is high. Ball (2002) stresses further that manufacturers tend to look for ways of satisfying their consumers because of this, they invest in research and development. Consequently, the design and production methods are up to date always. In essence, Czinkotta and Ikka

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(2002) point out that America has the highest number of new products because of the factor stated above. The foregoing has been necessitated as a result of the advancements in their education system. Thus, in the view of Hoyle (1989), competition within societies should be embraced in terms of educational attainment. There should be competition within societies, regions, states, countries and even continents. Societies could come together to compete with other society. Sometimes, it could be between two or more countries in all aspects of the economy. Ball (2002) notes that competition is a healthy development for societies; this is because it compels the competitions to adequately satisfy the target otherwise patronage would drop.

Education Policy, Political Ideology and System of a Nation for Development

Educational programmes of a country do not operate in isolation. It depends largely on the political powers that be. Political leadership on the other hand operates within the political system. For Hoyle (1989), education policy means general statements that contain principles, regulations and rules that govern, influence and determine the decisions on how to educate the citizens, where to get them employed, who to teach them and to finance their education. In Nigeria, new educational policies evolve to meet the demands of individuals and interest groups; meet the demands of the larger society and to meet the world technologies change and development (FRN, 2014). Bozimo and Sanda (2007) identify major modes of the influence of ideology on the planning of education policy and programme. These are:

1. The approach and plan to provide education services depends largely on the ideology of the ruling political party.
2. The ideology of the ruling party dictates who funds education.
3. The ideology of the ruling party determines who controls the educational institutions.
4. The ideological camp, which a country belongs, dictates the type or form of education in the country.

Thus, this policy stipulates the various ways of operating the education system. Thorough examination of the interface between political system and educational policy formulation is essential to establishing the relationship existing between the two. No doubt, Bozimo and Sanda (2007) stress that education is provided by means of political system, it derives its authority and resources allocation from the political system. It is therefore important to note that no educational systems can survive without the financial support and protection of the government. According to FRN (2014), the government determines direction of the education system by formulating and interpreting educational laws and policies, and also establishing standard for measurement of educational quality. There is always political or social purpose behind any educational policy. In Nigeria, there are several considerations ranging from religious, ethnic, political and economic that seems to determine the direction of policies.

Impact of Education on the Development and Well-being of Society

Education forms the essence of all societal actions. People's action reflects their level of

exposure and experience. What they do is what they know and have learned, either through instructions or through observation and assimilation. Any time people make no effort to learn, their mind will always analyze the similarities as well as the differences within the context which makes the topic stand out or seem different. This notion holds that the potential to learn more abounds in the mind and the limitation to expanding the horizons of knowledge is attributed to self-doubt, social, emotional or economic constraints. For Angerer (2003), most people believe that education is a necessity, they tend to use it as a tool for reaching a specific target or personal mark, after which there is no further need to seek greater education.

Nonetheless, the importance of education in society is indispensable and cohering, which is why society and knowledge cannot be ever separated. Education is self empowerment. Receiving a good education helps empower people, thus making them strong enough to look after themselves in any given situation. It creates awareness of the happenings in a given surrounding as well as the rules and regulations of the society. Through knowledge, one can be able to question authorities for negligence or discrepancies. At this point in time, one can avail himself of his/her rights as a citizen and seek improvement in the structural functioning of governance and economy. Therefore, development comes when people know where improvement is necessary for the greater good of mankind and education helps in realizing all the potentials and qualities of a human being.

Another importance of education is that it helps a person gain sufficient academic qualification so that he/she can be able to get suitable employment at a later stage. Angerer (2003) claims that a decent employment would be combined with hard-earned remuneration or salary through which you can look after your personal expenses. While you earn for yourself, you gradually begin to realize the true worth of money and how hard it is to earn it. You realize the significance of saving for a rainy day and for unforeseeable contingencies. You feel empowered because there is a new sense of worth that develops within you, and you feel the need to be independent and free from any further financial support (Arnold, 1995). This aside, education in contemporary time exposes learners to things they should do in order to sustain themselves and focus on self employment especially in this age where white collar jobs are not handy.

People, who have adequate education, steer the path of development and progress for their country. It is these individuals who go ahead and become teachers, scientists, investors, welfare activists and politicians who work together to form the very backbone of the society. Without this pool of intellect, the economic and social framework would crumble and fall, paving way for anarchy, degradation and violence. While there tends to be an intricate balance of growth capable of being maintained, there is a continuous rise in progress in all quarters of life, such as personal growth and development of the nation as an entity. This progress has a very important role to play for the coming generations which will reap the benefits of our hard work as they develop further. At the same time, the negative impact of human actions shall have its collateral damage on the coming generation as well. Based on this, there must be exceptionally prudent measures about decisions making and the actions likely to be taken in the present. Education has become one of the

clearest indicators of life outcomes. Such outcomes range from social status income, empowerment to predictor of attitudes and wellbeing of individuals in the society. In fact, when it is well with members of society, it is well with such society because they are the ones to initiate developmental ventures that will overhaul the system. FRN (2014) posited that education has the strength and stability to cause significant changes and thus have some effects on the society. From time immemorial, quality of life, values at social and individual levels, spiritual and material progress have been direct products of education. Bozimo and Sanda (2007) explain that the form and methodology of education have been undergoing constant and consistent transformation with changing times. In ancient times, education was very intimately connected to religion and the social values of the day. But, during the recent centuries the scope of education has increases enormously to include much more than what it did previously.

Wherever education flourishes, we can expect great refinement in the civilization attitudes, social development and responsive administration. In modern times, we see far reaching impact of education in all spheres of life and in all corners of the globe. There are revolutionary changes in the understanding of the nature and the truths of the universe. But in the evolutionary history of education many great intellectuals, scientists and philosophers made great sacrifices in sticking to the truths they discovered. Angerer (2003) points out that the needs of human beings and their consumption levels have risen sharply, bringing about enormous pressure on the natural resources and aggravating the pollution levels. Thus, there seem to be sudden birth of various diseases, health hazards and natural disasters because of the human greed and over exploitation of nature.

In other words, it is only education with its powerful research and development tool that has the capacity to solve these problems and also it can prevent the degeneration at all levels. Whenever there was absence of education, in parts of the world, there were dark ages, cruelty and uncivilization. But with quality education, there is enlightenment, good quality life and upwards swing in science and technology. Societies that are impacted by education are characterized by peace, development, order and refined culture. Thus, education brings improvement in public health, social amenities and living standards. Higher level of education are associated with a wide range of positive outcomes- including better health and wellbeing, higher social trust, greater political interest, lower political cynicism and less hostile attitudes towards immigrants. Level of education is the strongest predictor of outcomes compared to age, gender, income, employment status and marital status. This reflects in all models except the outcome of wellbeing and health.

The education effect is both robust and relatively stable over time, with little variation in the surveyed population across a range of decades. The effect is particularly marked for the outcome of social trust which becomes stronger within the same people as they age. Across all education levels—low or high—people who report that they are satisfied with their education level and have incorporated education as part of their identity are benefitting psychologically. Education is an instrument for national development of the individual and the general development of the society.

CONCLUSION

Education makes life easier as many new branches of science and technology have originated and finding solution to the new problems and challenges. Education has been operating as a moderating force on society in various ways. Many social evils have been eradicated through education. Many social reforms have succeeded due to the advent of education. It is an antidote to the challenges in the society. New discoveries, inventions and innovative ideas abound as the product of modern education and have provided many with abundant opportunities of livelihood. All the goods that education has brought into the society notwithstanding, there are some negative impacts. Criminals, antisocial elements and terrorists are now making use of modern science and technology to destroy the fabrics of the civilized society. However, education if properly utilized has the capacity to boost the dignity of life and can act as the source of sustenance and vitality to the society.

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