

POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY EDUCATION DELIVERY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA.

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A country that desires overall national development must invest adequately in the education of her citizens at all level. The Quality of education in the Tertiary Institution depends on the degree of involvement of the government with respect to policies made by the political office holders, instability in Government, strike action, pressure groups and students' demonstration. These factors infringes in the Quality of educational delivery. The paper further suggested strategies for the improvement of education sector; such as good working conditions, improved government administration and trade unionism. Based on the issues and suggestions raised in the paper, it was recommended that government should reach and respect agreement with trade unions to avoid labor disputes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an indisputable requisite for improving the social and economic conditions in a country and tertiary education plays a crucial role in technological development and advancement of any nation (Famade, 2003). In a developing country like Nigeria, education remains a potent factor for eradicating poverty and changing the misfortunes of underdeveloped nations. For education to be able to achieve these goals, a nation's educational system as well as its educational aims and objectives must be properly channeled and executed. Education can be seen as the artery that conveys opportunities, development and self-reliance, there is need for government to invest in tertiary education.

In the past years education in Nigeria has witnessed a rapid increase in students' enrolment and outrageous population. This lead to the establishment of

more institutions through government pronouncement and this follows by employment of more teaching and non teaching staff. In accordance with the above fact Ijaiya (2001) believed that Quality of education being provided for the Nigeria child has become a source of concern in recent times, concerned citizens and interest groups lamented the decadence in educational system. The educational system is characterized by inadequate funding, manpower, facilities and equipment. All these put together affect the quality of education.

In Nigeria, tertiary education is the focal point of higher education; it is the type of education given to an individual after secondary education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) revealed the goals of tertiary education as follows:

- Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;

- Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- Promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
- Forge and cement national unity and
- Promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

Against this background that the paper will focus on how Quality can be assured in Tertiary Institution. This paper examined the Concept of Quality in Education, Politics and the rationale of politics in Education, Political Factors affecting Quality in Education and strategies for improvement, conclusions and recommendations were made.

THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Quality can be defined as the ability of something to perform or serve the purpose it is meant or designed to serve. Thus, Okebukola (2002) sees quality to mean "fitness for purpose" in tertiary education program the quality of graduate and how well they are able to meet the challenges in the world of work. Quality in education according to Nwanna (2000) refers to the scale of input in the form of funds, equipment facilities and pupils alike and to the fact that the transaction and output of Institutions in the form of their product are acceptable, desirable beneficial, efficient and effective from the point of view of the government, society private agencies and stakeholders.

Maduwesi (2010) viewed quality as something that is relevant, which every member of the society considers good and stores to possess the above author Obiweluzor and Alonge (2013) sees quality as something

that is proved to be of high standard in terms of its efficiency and effective utilization.

The Quality of the educational system can be assessed by How adequate and accessible the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning are available.

Quality in Nigeria University education is a multidimensional concept that should embrace all its functions and activities, teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building, facilities equipment, services to the community and the academic environment (UNESCO, 1998).

POLITICS AND RATIONALE FOR POLITICS IN EDUCATION

The concept of politics has been well articulated by educators and social scientists on the subject. Politics is not just practiced by political parties but it is also in every aspect of work and life especially in Education. Politics is the science and act of securing and advancing the temporal welfare of a community organized as a state. The business of politics, therefore involves both the laying down of general principles and their application to concrete problems. The scope of politics is the temporal well being of the community as a whole. There is an implication that politics is applied in the solution of social, economic and technological problems of the nation, this deduction about politics agrees with the definition of Okeke (2007) who sees politics as a device intended for finding solution to social and economic problems by political means. Politics involves actions. Infact, it is an activity and as such cannot be reduced to a system of belief or a set of fixed goals, it's an unavoidable phenomenon in every society. Indeed, no society can think about having an established government without politics. Politics can be seen as a civilizing agent and a way of ruling in divided society

without violence. This implies that with politics, one can govern a society without violence, threat of wars. Politics is not all about subject in the classroom but it involves things like decision making, allocation of resources, and settlement of conflicts provision and management of education as well as provision of social amenities.

Rationale for Politics in Education

There are some obvious rationales or reasons for politics in education. These includes

1. Every educational system has a political goal.
2. Politics comes before education.
3. Education is a basic human right and its function is to develop the talents of individuals to the fullest possible extent
4. Politics determines the type of education of politics.
5. Education is the servant and product of politics
6. Education is regulated by government policies and politics.
7. The rising cost of education is largely met from the public purse.

One of the very obvious rational for politics in education is that every educational system has political goals and these goals are very essential to justify the existence of the system. The political goals of education in Nigeria include the promotion/inculcation of national consciousness and national unity and the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around. The goal also increase in the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at all levels as well as political participation for the people.

The several rationales for politics in education are because politics comes before education; this is evident in the traditional Nigerian Family. We are born

into families. These family are part of communities and towns, they are part of local government and its part of the state and the states are created out of the country and each of them are guided by Rules and regulations. Education act as something already in existence that brings about interaction between the society and politicians. Politics is part of history in which we are born into. It is the government that decides what is taught in schools.

The third rationale for politics in education is that education is a basic human right and its function is to develop the talents of individuals to the fullest extent possible to enable him participate freely within a free and democratic society. Since education is a basic human right, government has it as its responsibility to ensure that their citizens are not deprived of that right and it is indeed a crime to deny citizens of a nation the right to education. This is similar to parents denying their children right to food, clothing and shelter.

The fourth rationale for politics in education is that politics determines the type of education to be adopted. It is politics or politicians that determine whether a nation would adopt the comprehensive, capitalist, inclusive, democratic or socialist system of education.

The fifth rationale for politics in education is that education is the servant and product of politics. Education is not an end but the means by which human nature can be shape in the right direction to produce the harmonious state. But it politics that determine the kind of education and educational policies the masses get.

The sixth rationale for politics in education is because education does not function in a vacuum but has always been regulated by Government policies and therefore by implication, it is a necessary function of politics.

The seventh rationale for politics in education is because education involves funds and funds are spent

from public purse. The rising costs of education are met largely from public purse and must therefore be subjected to political accountability. The government which establishes schools must know where public funds are spent, how they are spent and why they are spent.

POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Political factors have to deal with policies, power, decision making and allocation of resources which affect Quality of Education at the tertiary level. They include all of the following:

1. Government policy
2. Instability of government
3. Pressure group
4. Teachers strikes and
5. Students riots / demonstration / unrest

Government Policy

Government policy constitutes one of the political factors that affect educational quality delivery. The Nigeria government has formulated a number of policies in education. The first comprehensive policy on education was lunched in 1977, revised in 1981, 1984, 1990. The most recent of this natural policy is the one published by the federal ministry of education in 2004. There are different policies such as pre-primary education, basic education, secondary education, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, science, technical and vocational education, tertiary education including open and distance education.

A free education policy at the primary school level would mean more pupils in school than a policy demanding schools to be paid. The Universal Primary Education UPE 1976 policy increase school population astronomically. It meant more facilities and equipment and more teachers. The Universal Basic Education Policy introduced by the Obasanjo administration in 1999 has

emphasis on basic education up to the Junior Secondary School Level. This policy has led to the employment of more teachers, the setting up of infrastructures and more funds. It has also led to sensitization and mobilization of target groups, regular supervision and monitoring of the scheme.

Similarly, if the Nigerian government introduces a compulsory science and computer education policy at the secondary school level the implication would be that all secondary school students would or must register for all the sciences and computer education. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) has it as matter of policy that all students who register for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination must pass English Language at credit level. The policy has guided schools in preparing students for examination. Nigerian Universities has it as a requirement, a credit level pass in English Language and Mathematics for admission into the Tertiary Institution irrespective of the course you are reading. (Recent decision by the government of the day, initially from late 1980s to 2012 if you are studying English language you require a pass in mathematics, it also affected post-graduate programmes in various Tertiary institutions in Nigeria irrespective of when you graduated without considering the adverse effect on individual who wants to further his career. Furthermore in 2013/2014 NUC came up with a decision that the pass level in every institution is no longer 40% but 45%, these political policies made by the government of the day affect tertiary education one way or the other.

The Federal Government has made it a policy of admitting 60 percent Science and 40 percent Arts in her Universities the obvious implication of this is that more students are admitted in Sciences than arts. All states in the north including Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Kebbi, Sokoto, Gombe, Jigawa, and Kano run a free education at secondary and University education because of their

desire to catch up with the South in educational attainment. These states therefore, give bursary awards to students in tertiary institutions.

The Nigerian government however has some obnoxious educational policies; these policies include quota system catchment areas, and educationally disadvantaged states. These policies are all aimed at entrenching the federal character system.

Instability in Government

Instability of government constitutes one of the political factors affecting education and consequently, tertiary institutions. Instability of government arises where there are coups and counter coups and where elections are rigged or where government has changed. There are frequent changes of government in Nigeria as a result of corrupt politicians or the selfishness of some military personnel who refuses to relinquish power. Each government that comes into power initiates its own programmes.

The Western and Eastern Nigerian government initiated Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in 1955 and 1957 respectively. The programme failed, it could not be continued because of poor planning and implementation. The government at that time did not train enough teachers, had inadequate classrooms and instructional materials for effective implementation of the programme.

The federal government introduced the Universal Primary Education Scheme in 1976. The programme was poorly planned and executed, classrooms were inadequate. Taiwo (1981) stated that Federal Government underestimated the cost of Universal Primary Education Scheme, without taken into consideration the facilities, personnel and funds need to carry out the programme.

The federal government introduced the modern mathematics programme in the school in the early

1970s; but the programme did not see the light of the day because of instability of Government. instability of government also affect funding of education by pronouncement of budgetary allocation made by different government, like in education, it is not the same allocation that has been given to education in different regimes, 3.128 trillion of 35.133 trillion is total allocation to education since 1999-2013 actually 1.290 trillion of 15.125 trillion is the effective real value, in 2015 Education budget was N369.6bn, it all depends on the government in power. The recent single treasury account has affected the university system in terms of finances, most universities in Nigeria in 2015 could not host the accreditation team due to lack of finance. Secondly most ongoing projects is on hold due to change in political office Administration this affects the tertiary Education in Nigeria

Pressure Groups

Pressure group in an organization, they seek to promote its particular interest within a society by exerting pressure on public officials and agencies. Ogbonnaya (2003) viewed pressure group as an association formed to pursue certain interest. They are association which cannot be influenced by government policies to take advantage of their members. Foley (2009) described pressure group as an organized social group which aims at influencing the behaviour of governments and administrations without seeking formal control of the government. Pressure group may be political, economic, religious, cultural or educational. They may be political in terms of political parties which seek to control political offices through elections. Examples include: All Progressive Congress (APC) Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP) etc.

There are formidable interest group in education, that negotiate for the interest of their member; these includes the Academic Staff Union of

Universities (ASSU), the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) and the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), the Academic Staff Union of University has influenced government to adopt a favourable policy in the areas of good working conditions; Salary and Retirement Age. 1992, 1996 and 2001, and 2013. The Nigerian Union of Teacher and initiated and influenced the setting up of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities strikes of 1992/93, 2009, 2013 paralyzed academic activities in the Universities for several months and lead to the loss of one academic year by most of the Universities. This affects the quality delivery in Tertiary Institution, the time students are supposed to be in school learning they are at home doing nothing.

Teachers' Strikes

Teachers' strike is another political factor quality delivery in Education. Strike refers to the act of stopping work in order to obtain a change in conditions of employment. Teachers' strike refers to the situation or periods when they stop work (teaching) in order to attract or obtain a change in their working conditions. Teachers usually embark on strike when their salaries and allowances are not paid or there is undue delay in payment for several months. The academic staff unions of Universities, an association of University Teachers, embarked on strike in 1992, 1996, 2002, 2009 and 2013 to force government to improve on funding in Universities, improve on infrastructure, earned allowances and improved working conditions. During this period in the University, the academic activities were grounded, no lectures, this affected the student for over six months sitting down at home, the resultant effect on the change in academic calendar and quality delivery; (what they have been taught has been forgotten and on resumption, it is on marathon to meet up with the school

calendar, whether the students follow or not it is to their detriment, it affect their academic performance).

Students Riots and Demonstration

This is a factor that affects education, students' riots, college riots and campus riots are precipitated by students, generally from a college or university; students crisis in Nigeria has always been a product of numerous factors including infrastructural decay, Management style (increase in tuition fees)s, national economic and political issues, when students embark on protests, lectures are affected. Many hours, days, weeks, months may be lost, the obviously affect quality delivery and their academic calendar adversely.

The schools authorities have no problems when students protest are peacefully organized, schools have their own trying moments when students protest are violent. It is normal for the Administration (Provosts, Rectors and Vice Chancellors) to close down their institution to avoid further breakdown of law and order and this decision taken is to forestall peace in the university community and the management will go on air to notify the public on the decision taken (closing down the school till further notice) in order for the students to leave the school, this adversely affect the Quality delivery in tertiary institution.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following strategies for are suggested to maintain Quality at the tertiary education.

Good Working Conditions

The theories of motivation and job satisfaction are paramount in every establishment. Motivation is concerned with how behaviour gets started, is emerged, is sustained, is directed, is stopped and what kind of job subjective reaction is present in the organism while all this is going on (Jones, 1955). On the other hand, job

satisfaction refers to the pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (Locke, 1968). With this definition, you can understand that no worker can work in a poor environment (poor office accommodation, furniture), inadequate workers, salaries and poor condition of service, when this entire one not in place, it bring about dissatisfaction. There is need for political office holders to improve on working conditions by providing workers with good office accommodation, furniture, improved salaries and wages. Good conditions of service, this will help to improve the Quality of education in the Tertiary Institution.

Trade Unionism

The trade union in higher institutions of learning (e.g. academic staff union of university, senior staff non-teaching, and junior non academic staff union), they serves as watchdog in the universities and they should work hand in hand for the interest of their staff, they help to monitor the excesses of the management in the tertiary institutions and where there is an agreement between the union, government and management, there is high productivity. The political holders should always look into the agitation of trade unionism. This will help reduce the strike action in school and improve the academic Quality in Tertiary Institution

Improved Government Administration

There is need for government to improve on political promises made in the aspect of funding, according to Nsa & Aniekan (2005), said that poor and irregular funding, inability to honour trade union conditionality and subsequent disruption of academic activities due to labour and student unrest are factors that contribute to poor Quality in Tertiary Institution. The political office holder should always adhere to the

policies of educational goals in order to achieve quality delivery in education.

CONCLUSION

Quality in Tertiary Education can be delivered if political office holders (Administration or Government in Power), can adequately fund and keep to their promises in the management of tertiary education. It takes a great of cordiality between and among the trade union, student unionism and management to maintain a peaceful living environment, facilities must be put in place, Academic Staff of Tertiary Institution should be very hard working and students should be serious. This will go a long way to improve on Quality delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregone issues and suggestions, the following recommendations were put forward:

- Government should provide adequate funds for use in payment of wages and purchase of equipment and facilities
- The government should put into consideration the bargains with trader unions and honour the agreement reached in order to avoid disputes with unions.
- Government should always have at the back of their mind that policies made on education like funding; free education that there is need for proper implementation placing to avoid failure of such policies, this will have negative effect on the learner and nation. So, there is need to consider the Quality delivery of such policies.

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