

Historical Analysis Of Educational Policy Formulation In Nigeria: Implications For Educational Planning And Policy

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Abstract

This paper attempts a trend analysis of educational policy formulation in Nigeria and also examines the implication of Nigeria's experience on both educational planning and policy making in the country. It traces the formulation of educational policies right from 1914 (when Lord Lugard amalgamated the Lagos colony, Southern and Northern protectorates, and his wife named the region Nigeria) up to 2004: the current moment. The British colonial administrators introduced an indirect rule policy in her colonies in West Africa. Indirect rule was an administrative system, which Lord Lugard introduced into Nigeria. It was a system of administration, which the tutelary power recognized the existing traditional, structure and used such for the administration of the Lagos colony and Southern and Northern protectorates. The policy restricted the spread of both Christianity and Western education to the Northern protectorate. This accounts for the gap in the level of educational development between the North and the South. This has implications for both planning and policy formulation in education. The colonial administrators adopted British form of education in Nigeria. The colonial educational policy did not address adequately the aspiration of Nigerians. Hence, the 6-3-3-4 educational policy was introduced. The policy sought to introduce a functional technology – based education, which could sustain the economy. The Nigerian experience has a lot of implications for planners, who should be conscious of our local peculiarities, particularly the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian society and the gap in level of educational development amongst the different segments of the society. It is essential for policy formulators to begin to initiate policies that will promote unity, equity and even development of education in the country.

Introduction

Certain historical antecedents have impact on how educational policies are formulated and implemented in Nigeria. The Lagos Colony, Southern and Northern protectorates were British colonies, which were amalgamated in 1914 and named Nigeria. The territory remained a British colony till 1960 when it attained independence. The colonial administrators introduced an indirect rule policy. Indirect rule was an administrative system, which Lord Lugard introduced into Nigeria. It was a system of administration in which the tutelary power recognized the existing traditional administrative structure, and used such for the administration of the Lagos Colony, and the Southern and Northern Protectorates. The indirect rule policy recognized the Islamic education in the Northern Protectorate; hence the Christian missionaries were restricted from spreading both Christianity and Western education to the region. This accounts for the gap in the level of educational development between the North and the South. This has a lot of implications for the planning of education in Nigeria. Of recent, the Federal Government has put in place several educational policies (such as the quota admission, the educationally disadvantaged and less disadvantaged

areas policies etc.) with a view to reduce the gap in North-South level of educational development.

The colonial administrators adopted British form of education in Nigeria, hence the following school systems: primary, secondary, sixth form and higher education were introduced. Consequent upon the attainment of independence, it was discovered that this system of education did not meet the aspiration of Nigerians; hence the current 6-3-3-4 educational policy was introduced in 1977. The policy sought to introduce a functional technology-based education, which could sustain the economy. The colonial administrators administered education through the use of certain education ordinances and education codes, such as the 1882, 1887, 1916, 1926, 1946 and 1926 Education codes, (Ijaduola, 1998 and Ogunu, 2000). These codes and ordinances were used as guidelines to administer education in the colony. They served as the basis for the modern day educational policies, education laws and techniques of educational administration in Nigeria. The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 put education in a concurrent list, hence both the central and regional governments could legislate on education. This has a lot of impact on the present arrangement. There are thirty-six state governments and the federal government in Nigeria, each of which could legislate on education.

The 1882 Education Ordinance

Education legislation began in Nigeria with the introduction of the 1882 Education Ordinance for British West African territories that is Lagos, Gold Coast (now Ghana), Sierra Leone and Gambia. It prescribed the following criteria:

- (i) Award of grants for organization and discipline, with special grants for schools, which obtained high percentage of, passes, and thus attained high standard of general excellence.
- (ii) A capitation grant for each subject
- (iii) A capitation grant in proportion of the average attendance at school.

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

The 1887 Education Ordinance

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

The 1916 Education Ordinance

The 1916 Education Ordinance and the Code were approved on 21 and 24 December, 1916 respectively. They were the results of Lord Lugard's efforts to cater for the whole country as education was based on good character and usefulness to both the individual and the community. The ordinance tried to reorganize the school system in Nigeria. It also recommended that grant-in-aid be offered in the following percentages:

- (i) Tone of the school, discipline, organization and moral instruction – 30 percent.

- (ii) Adequacy and efficiency of the teaching staff – 20 percent
- (i) Periodical examination and general progress - 40 percent
- (ii) Buildings, equipment, sanitation – 10 percent

The ordinance paved way for increased financial participation by Government, full-cooperation between the government and the missions and asserted government's firm control over education. The Amended Ordinance No. 8 of 1919 gave more powers to the inspector by allowing them to inspect any school, whether assisted or non-assisted and also empowered the Education Board, upon the recommendation of inspectors, to close non-performing schools.

The 1926 Education Ordinance

In the month of March 1925, a memorandum on Education Policy in British Tropical Africa was dispatched to the colonies as the basis for the British colonial education policy. The need to provide a *modus operandi* for this memorandum and the necessity to stop the mushroom primary schools from operating in Southern Nigeria provided the impetus for this ordinance. The ordinance was a landmark in the development of education in Nigeria and an outcome of the recommendations of the 1920 Phelps – Stoke Commission on Education in Africa. Its terms of reference include:-

- (a) To inquire into existing educational work in each of the areas to be studied;
- (b) To investigate the educational needs of the people in their religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions;
- (c) To ascertain the extent to which these educational needs were being met; and
- (d) To make available in full the result of the study.

The report of this commission geared the British Colonial Administration to demonstrate increased interest in African education. It issued its first educational policy in 1925. The 1925 memorandum outlined guidelines for operation in the colonial educational system. This policy consisted mainly of the recommendations of the Phelps-Stoke Commission. These include the following:-

- (i) Establishment of advisory boards of education that will assist in supervision of educational institutions.
- (ii) Adaptation of formal education to local conditions
- (iii) Study of vernaculars in schools
- (iv) Thorough supervision and inspection of schools
- (v) Education of women and girls
- (vi) Emphasis on religious training and moral instructions (Osokoya, 2002).

While the recommendations of the 1926 Education Ordinance are:-

- (i) Making registration of teachers a pre-condition for teaching in any school in Southern Nigeria.
- (ii) Disallowing the opening of schools without the approval of the Director of Education and the Board of Education.
- (iii) Authorizing the closure of any school, which was conducted in a way that was in conflict with the interest of the people or the host community.
- (iv) Specifying the functions and duties of supervisors or mission school inspectors.
- (v) Expanding and strengthening the existing Board of Education by including the Director and the Deputy Director of Education, the Assistant Director, ten representatives of the mission and other educational agencies.

- (vi) Regulating the minimum pay for teachers who were employed in an assisted school (Osokoya, 2002 and Fabunmi, 2003).

The 1948 Education Ordinance

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

The 1952 Education Ordinance

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

The Regional Education Laws

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

The constitution contained three lists. These are:

- (i) Exclusive legislative list, which contained items upon which only the federal legislature or parliament could legislate, i.e. make laws.
- (ii) Concurrent legislative list, which consisted of items upon which both the federal and regional legislatures could make laws.
- (iii) Residual legislative list, which comprised items which were within the exclusive legislative competence of the regions.

The regions quickly exploited this constitutional provision and made regional laws. The outcome of this exercise was the Education Law of 1955 in Western Region, the Education Law of 1956 in Northern Region and the Lagos Education Ordinance in 1957.

The Ashby Report of 1959

In April, 1959, the Federal Government of Nigeria constituted the Ashby Commission to investigate and report Nigeria's manpower needs for a period of twenty years (1960-1980). The Commission led by Sir Eric Ashby, comprised three Nigerians, three Americans and three Britons. The Commission reported:

- The imbalance between one level of education and the other
- Limited admission opportunities for primary school leavers
- Few school teachers were qualified and certificated
- That the Nigerian education was parochial and literary
- Imbalance in the development of education between the North and South.

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

The Education Edicts of 1966-1979

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

The Education Laws of the School Republic (1979-1983)

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

- (i) The government policy shall be directed towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.
- (ii) The government shall promote science and technology,
- (iii) The government shall strive as and when practicable, provide
 - (a) Free, compulsory and universal primary education
 - (b) Free secondary education, and
 - (c) Free adult literacy programme

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

The Education Edicts of 1983-1999

Consequent upon the return of military administration in 1983, several decrees were promulgated by the Federal Military Government to guide and regulate the conduct of education. Such include, Decree No. 16 of 1985, which was promulgated on National

Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institution's Decree No. 20 of 1986 which changed the school calendar from January to December to October to September, Decree No. 26 of 1988, which proscribed and prohibited the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for participating in trade union activities and Decree No. 36 of 1990, which revoked the proscription of ASUU, and many other decrees.

The education laws of 1999-2004

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

Implications for educational planning and policy

This historical analysis of educational policy formulation in Nigeria has a lot of implications for both educational planning and policy. Most of the colonial educational policies had the shortcoming of not taking into account our local peculiarities and not involving Nigerians in their formulation. It is also essential to integrate all the good parts of earlier education policies, whether colonial or post-colonial, into any proposed education policy. The participatory model of planning education and formulating educational policies is the most appropriate for a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. Nigeria has about three hundred and fifty four ethnic nationalities. Each of these groups strive to get the best and a fair share of the available educational services (Fabunmi, 2003). In order to minimize conflict and protest, it is good for both educational planners and policy makers to involve adequate representatives of the society, particularly stakeholders in education, in educational planning and policy formulation.

Conclusion

This paper is of the view that educational policy formulation in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era when the British colonized the region. The adopted British educational policies did not meet the local peculiarities of Nigeria and the aspirations of the local people. Hence, the need for a truly Nigerian educational policy. The current national policy on education is the first indigenous educational policy.

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