

SECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY AND CURRICULUM PROVISIONS IN NIGERIA: MATTERS ARISING AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Secondary education is received subsequent to primary education, and prior to tertiary stage. Secondary education is indispensable for national development. Nigeria has comprehended its importance and, therefore, successive governments since independence in 1960 have prioritized secondary education and have advocated policies to improve its quality. The National Policy on Education (NPE) and other adjunct policy documents were established to guide secondary education in Nigeria. The National Policy on Education asserts that the success of any system of education can be realized only with proper planning, competent administration and adequate financing; in addition, the management and day-to-day administration should develop on the basis of the life and social ethnics of the community which they serve. Keeping in mind the importance of National Policy on Education for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this study provides an insight into its policy and curriculum provisions. At first, the concept of policy and policy analysis are defined. A brief glance of the secondary education policies in Nigeria from 2000 to 2016 follows. Subsequently, we present an overview of the curriculum provisions for the policy. Finally, certain consequences of the policy were noted as well as some strategies were suggested for better implementation of the policy.

KEYWORDS: Educational Policy, Secondary Education, Curriculum Implementation, Basic Education, Teaching Methods, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is high priority on the agenda of all governments, who are constantly under pressure to analyse the outcomes of education policy and its implications for management in education. More and more educational planners have apprehended the fact that most limitations and prospects they face are mostly the consequence of the decisions made by policymakers. Consequently, planners are giving greater attention to policymaking issues; however, simultaneously, policymaking is evolving into a complex and reform-based process. Nowadays, educational planners are more concerned whether their policies are capable of solving prevailing problems. Their concerns also extend to policy implementation, that is whether the prevailing conditions are suitable for actualization of their policies. For a further understanding of these aspects, this paper presents an insight into policymaking and its implementation. This paper explores the role of Nigerian National Policy of Education and its importance for secondary education.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS OF POLICY AND ANALYSIS

Ball (2015) defines policy as a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors. A policy regulates the functioning of government and related private

institutions, especially in areas catering to services intended to solve a given problem (Mansfield & Thachik, 2016). Combining the features of all definitions put forth, this study defines policy as the proposed goals and courses of action that government and other stakeholders intend to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. Furthermore, policies are considered as the direction, the guide and the way for accomplishing specific goals or objectives.

According to Collins English Dictionary (2014), analysis is defined as the following:

The division of a physical or abstract whole into its constituent parts to examine or determine their relationship or value.

- The separating of any material or abstract entity into its constituent elements.
- The process of studying the nature of something or of determining its essential features and their relations.

Analysis evaluates whether the aim of the objectives were fulfilled. On analyzing educational policies can help to comprehend the effect and actualization of educational goals. Sabatier (2005) defined analysis as a process of looking at the different parts or components of an object with a view to determining the status, nature, prospects and problems. Analysis incorporates assemblage and information scrutiny.

On the basis of the aforementioned definitions, analysis is considered the process of breaking a complex topic, issue or substance into simpler issues for better comprehension. It is mandatory that each part be examined and understood its purpose; in addition, the linkage between each aspect must be evaluated. The type of analysis is based on the area of interest and its purpose. However, analysis requires action. For instance, information collected regarding educational programmes is not simply for philosophical reflection but to ensure that its drawbacks are eliminated thereafter. It is essential that analysis be implemented with an objective, as it can serve as a benchmark for refining all programmes including policy.

Secondary Education Policies in Nigeria from 2000-2016

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE), the highest educational policy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), provides an elaborate account of all policies regulating secondary education. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2015) considers the NPE as a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards and requirements for quality education delivery in Nigeria. It is a legal document elaborating on the guidelines, principles, philosophy, procedures, rules and practices regarding the operation of various education systems. As the document is legally valid, it is essential that all educational activities be operated in accordance to it; furthermore, the actions of various stakeholders and actors in education must be guided by the national policy. Iman (2012) observed that this policy commenced in the aftermath of Nigeria's participation in the First Conference of Africa Ministers of Education held in Addis Ababa in 1961. This was the first educational conference held post-independence. The members at the conference adopted a resolution to increase educational prospects on the continent. They realized the importance of education to meet post-colonial and international needs. As an outcome of the conference, Nigeria conducted innovative curriculum conference in 1969. At the conference, policy guidelines on standards, procedures, strategies and coordinating roles for qualitative delivery were formulated; these guidelines were in line with the Addis Ababa resolution. Ultimately, the first edition of the National Policy on Education was framed in 1977. The policy was revised in the second edition in 1981. The third edition was put forth in 1998 and the fourth edition in 2004. Further revisions were made in 2007 and 2013 as the fifth and sixth editions, respectively. However, the fifth (2007) edition was a draft and the publication of the 2013

(sixth) edition is yet in progress after its approval by the 59th session of the National Council on Education (NCE) on 28 June, 2013. The current operational secondary education policy in Nigeria is the fourth edition published in 2004.

Contents of the National Policy on Education Relative to Secondary Education

The NPE is divided into thirteen (13) sections. The sections as enlisted in the 2004 NPE include the following:

- Section 1 – Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria
- Section 2 – Early Childhood/Pre-primary Education
- Section 3 – Basic Education
- Section 4 – Primary Education
- Section 5 – Secondary Education
- Section 6 – Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education
- Section 7 – Science, Technical and Vocational Education
- Section 8 – Tertiary Education
- Section 9 – Open and Distance Education
- Section 10 – Special Education
- Section 11 – Educational Services
- Section 12 – Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education
- Section 13 – Financing Education

Only sections 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are associated with secondary education, are these are elaborated in this paper.

Section 1 – Philosophy and Goals of Education in Nigeria

The National Policy on Education (NPE) strives to improve national growth using education as a tool. Therefore, a country can frame policies on education only with foreknowledge regarding the general philosophy and ambitions of the nation. The NPE is formulated on the basis of the following philosophies of Nigeria:

- Maintain solidarity and harmony for one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice.
- Foster inter-African unity and world peace through understanding.

The Second National Development Plan of Nigeria has five main national objectives. These objectives are essential for the foundation of the National Policy on Education. The objectives comprise the creation of the following:

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;

- A united, strong and self-reliant Nation;
- A great and dynamic economy; and
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The Nigeria's philosophy of education guarantees equal educational opportunities for all citizens and strives to integrate sound principles in an individual to produce effective citizens. In addition, the philosophy stresses on education at all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary, both inside and outside the formal school system.

The outcome of instruction in all levels of education must strive to inculcate the following values:

- Respect each individual, realize their worth and maintain their dignity in all environments,
- Have confidence in man's adeptness to make rational decisions,
- Inculcate moral and spiritual standards in both interpersonal and human relations,
- Share responsibility for achieving common good in the society,
- Advance emotional, physical and psychological health among all children and
- Attain competencies elemental for self-reliance.

The philosophy for education should be in harmony with Nigeria's national objective. Therefore, it must cater towards self-realization, improved human relationships, better individual and national efficiency, valuable citizenship, national consciousness, and national unity as well as social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. The national aims and objectives of the education philosophy are the following:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- Instruction regarding appropriate values and attitudes to ensure the existence of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- Focusing the mind to gain a better perception of the world around;
- Attaining correct skill sets that improve one's abilities and competencies, both mentally and physically, for an individual to live successfully and contribute to the development of society.

Section 5 – Secondary Education

Secondary education follows primary education and is obtained prior to the tertiary stage. Primary education as highlighted by the FRN (2004) in the NPE aspires to prepare the student for the following:

- Useful living within the society and
- Higher education.

The objectives of secondary education include the following:

- Provide opportunities for further education, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- Advance diversified curriculum to meet the differences in talents, opportunities and prospects;

- Offer trained manpower in the areas of applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- Cultivate and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- Motivate students to self-improve and aim to attain excellence;
- Foster National unity stressing on the importance of the common ties that uphold our diversity;
- Raise a generation that can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens; and
- Be skilled with technical and vocational skills essential for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

Therefore, both the federal and state governments should control, finance and administer secondary education in Nigeria. Other voluntary agencies should also contribute to the growth and development of this sector. Setting up and managing secondary schools in Nigeria is the administration domain of the Post-primary Schools Service Education Board and Commission and the Secondary Education Board.

The NPE (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN) 2004) specifies that the broad aims of secondary education within the overall national objectives are to prepare its citizens for useful living within the society and for higher education. This goal has been unchanged in all revisions. This implies that success in school activities is a major goal irrespective of the eclectic mix of policies and assumptions faced by a school. The policy stipulates the 6-3-3-4 structure, Universal Basic Education, core and elective subjects for every student, in proved access to secondary education to citizens irrespective of sex, social, religious and ethnic background; and compulsory completion of three years of junior secondary education.

In addition, the policy states the following:

- Secondary education should be of six-year duration and be given in two stages, at junior secondary school stage and a senior secondary school, stage, each stage being of three year duration (FRN, 2004). (However with the introduction of the UBE, junior secondary schools are now referred to as basic 7-9.)
- Students who leave school at the junior high school stage may then go out on an apprenticeship system or some other school for out-of-school vocational training
- Government welcomes the contribution of private proprietorship and voluntary agency to the running of secondary education, but will regularly monitor and set controls for ensuring quality conformity to standards.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to see that training in citizenship goes beyond the usual civics lessons and aims at inculcating sense of fair play, honesty, self-sacrifice for the good of others
- Great vigilance will be exercised to fight the rising incidence of drug abuse in schools
- Government will cater for dropouts and those who cannot get access to formal education by providing opportunities for self-education, e.g. in the form of correspondence courses
- Government will work towards improving the quality of secondary education by giving support to measures that will ensure effective administration. These will include the selection of persons of the right calibre for principal ship of schools, the mounting of induction courses for newly appointed principal

- Support services and facilities such as Libraries, ICT, teaching aids, laboratories should be made available in schools
- The teacher pupil ration shall be 1:40.

Elsewhere in the policy, section 10, subsection 11, it was stated that:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category are scarce, government will continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in Guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling will also feature in teacher education programme (FRN, 2004, p. 14-43).

As it stands, the foregoing are national secondary education policies as contained in FRN (2004). Other policies related to the secondary sector include:

- Blueprint and Implementation Guidelines for Universal Basic Education (Federal Ministry of Education, (FME) 2004),
- Ministerial Initiative in e-education for the Nigerian education system (FME, 2004);
- Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector (RNES, Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2009),
- National Education Management Information System (NEMIS, FME, 2009),
- National School Health Policy (2006);
- National Book Policy (FME, 2008),
- National Quality Assurance Policy (NQAP, FME, 2010),
- 4-year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector (4SPDES, FME, 2012).

These and other policy documents are adjunct policies and are relevant not only for secondary education but also for all other sectors. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) and associated policies provide the standards to be maintained while altering the educational system. The policy values the role played by education and realizes that it must be sensitive to demands of the changing society. Nigerian's evolving society demands newer skills of its citizens and a re-definition of the concept of what constitutes an educated citizen: a self-motivated person with the ability to think, solve problems, and use higher-order intellectual skills to process information and make informed decisions (Nigerian Education Research and development Council, (NERDC) 2015). The new curricula and standards seek to strike a balance between the quantity of necessary knowledge and skills on the one hand, and the acquisition of intellectual, social and citizenship dispositions on the other. Reforms in vocational and professional education have also been noted, where diminishing needs for specialists have resulted in producing a population with general working skills applicable to a range of occupations.

In Anambra State of Nigeria, the PPSSC, in addition to the National education policies, have issued a number of policy directives on staff punctuality to schools, continuous assessment, staff and students' discipline, students' admissions, school supervision, fund raising, resource allocation and utilization, staff job allocation and promotion,

posting and transfer, granting of staff leaves, in-service training among others. These policies guide the activities and programmes in schools, the timeframe for performing school activities and the standards of performance for both staff and students. The schools were directed to these policies through formal circulars issued to secondary school principals. The principals were responsible for its effective implementation (Akudo, 2015 Eze, 2015). Thus, school level actions largely determine the success of the policy directives.

The education system is supposed to be job oriented (NERDC, 2015). Therefore, junior secondary school (JSS) curriculum integrates studies with pre-vocational courses. Students at the end of the JSS course are expected to branch out, subject to their ability, interest and academic performance. They may choose varying academics, business and technical programmes which include arts/science/social science academic subjects. Those that proceed to senior secondary will also study a range of core and elective subjects.

The Nigerian policy document advocates that the new challenges and new opportunities for the Nigerian society, such as development of democracy and market economy, the process of globalization, the vast amounts of information, rapid changes and fragmentation of the society (FRN, 2015) be considered while formulating policies. The secondary education policies predict functional and qualitative secondary education for Nigerian citizens. It is hoped that secondary education should help an individual and the society at large to respond to the challenges and to take advantage of the new opportunities (Kolo, 2015). The government has also undertaken steps to provide comprehensive information available to parents about every school (FME, 2015). It further stated that schools and their SBMC are accountable to their local authority and to State Education Boards for their national test and examination results. Schools are also accountable for how they spend resources and can be challenged by auditors within the Boards and ministry of education. In addition, schools should be accountable for achieving a minimum level of performance, because tax-payers have a right to expect that their money will be used effectively (NERDC, 2015). All these necessitate essential reforms in the educational system of Nigeria in order to increase its efficiency, improve accessibility to education, create conditions enabling continuing education and life-long learning, ensure the quality of education that conforms to global standards and meets the needs of the modern Nigerian society.

Section 11 – Educational Services

Educational service in the policy document helps to facilitate the implementation of educational policy for the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of education system. Educational services are rendered in the school system as guidance and counselling services and staff training/development programmes e.g ICT training. Educational services are provided in all the educational institutions in order to boost students' and staff competence. The goals of all educational services shall therefore include:

- To develop, assess and improve educational programmes;
- Enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers;
- Make learning experiences more meaningful;
- Make education more cost effective;
- Promote in-service education; and
- Develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools.

Section 12 – Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education

To successfully administer and manage the education system, there is need for proper planning, efficient administration and supervision of the education system. According to the FRN (2004) in the NPE, administration is a function of organization and structure, proprietorship and control, inspection and supervision. For the management and administration of education, the various levels of government – federal, state and local governments, including financial institutions, private organizations and individuals, corporate bodies, NGOs, supervisory bodies, international organizations and voluntary agencies contribute towards this course. Education is a shared responsibility by all the above mentioned. The objectives of planning, administrative, inspectorate, supervisory and financial services in education are to:

- Ensure adequate and effective planning of all educational services;
- Provide efficient administrative and management control for maintenance and improvement of the system,
- Ensure quality control through regular and continuous supervision on instructional and other educational services; and
- Provide adequate and balanced financial support for all educational services.

To accomplish these objectives, federal and state governments shall maintain an adequate fund the inspectorate and education planning departments of the ministries of education. However, the functions of these institutions have been discussed in the NPE (FRN, 2004).

Section 13 – Financing Education

Education is an expensive social service and that requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of education programmes. The financing of education is a joint responsibility of the federal, state and local governments and private sector. In this connection, government welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities, individuals and other organization. Relevant sectoral bodies such Education Tax Fund has been established to respond to funding needs of education (FRN, 2004). In addition, other funds from which the burden of financing education can be eased are:

- Industrial Training Fund
- National Science and Technology Fund.

To implement the national policy on education will involve all levels of education, different educational bodies and agencies to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the policy.

CURRICULUM PROVISIONS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY

Globally, the curriculum is considered fundamental to educational institutions. Curriculum has been defined as prescribed course of studies, which students must learn in order to reach a certain level of education (Edozie, 2016). It is the totality of content and experiences which are planned and delivered for people through their education, wherever they are being educated, to meet the emerging demands for education in the world.

Nigeria operates a two tier curriculum structure for secondary schools. The first-tier is the last segment of the 9-year Basic Education Programme. It is important to note that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme was introduced

in Nigeria in 2000. Under this new scheme, free education was extended to cover the junior secondary schools. Thus, all children of school-going age will receive nine years of uninterrupted formal education (6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary). According to Awofala and Sopekan (2013), the 9-year Basic Education Programme de-articulated the junior secondary component from the senior secondary school and aligned it with the primary school. The implication of this is that the minimum level of education for every Nigerian child is Junior Secondary School (JSS) year 3 and on successful completion pupils will be awarded the minimum qualification of Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) at the end of the 9-year basic education schooling to replace the Junior Secondary Certificate Examination. With this arrangement, pupils need no entrance examination into the junior secondary schools since the terminal examination for primary 6 pupils had been abolished. However, with the take off of the UBE scheme in the country, it then became imperative that the existing primary and junior secondary school curricula be reworked to ensure the realization of the goals of the UBE programme. Table 1 shows the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum structure listing relevant subjects for each level.

Table 1: 9-year Basic Education Curriculum Structure with Relevant Subjects

Lower Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 1-3)		Middle Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 4-6)		Upper Basic Education Curriculum (JSS 1-3)	
Core Compulsory Subjects		Core Compulsory Subjects		Core Compulsory Subjects	
1	English studies	1	English studies	1	English studies
2	One major Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba)	2	One major Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba)	2	One major Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba)
3	Mathematics	3	Mathematics	3	Mathematics
4	Basic Science and Technology	4	Basic Science	4	Basic Science
5	Social Studies	5	Social Studies	5	Social Studies
6	Civic Education	6	Civic Education	6	Civic Education
7	Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)	7	Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)	7	Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA)
8	Christian Religious Studies/Islamic Studies	8	Christian Religious Studies/Islamic Studies	8	Christian Religious Studies/Islamic Studies
9	Physical & Health Education (PHE)	9	Physical & Health Education (PHE)	9	Physical & Health Education (PHE)
10	Computer Studies/ICT	10	French Language	10	French Language
		11	Computer Studies/ICT	11	Basic Technology
				12	Computer Studies/ICT
Elective Subjects		Elective Subjects		Elective Subjects	
1	Agriculture	1	Agriculture	1	Agriculture
2	Home Economics	2	Home Economics	2	Home Economics
3	Arabic Language	3	Arabic Language	3	Arabic Language
				4	Business Studies

Source: Nigerian Educational research and Development Council, (NERDC, 2013).

It is essential that all students chose at least one elective subject; however, the upper limit is three in junior secondary school. Nevertheless, when the 9-year basic education curriculum in 2008 was implemented, students in JSS 1-3 had to tackle 12 compulsory subjects.

In addition, the NERDC developed a new curriculum structure for the 3-year senior secondary education, which could be categorized into the following 4 streams: Humanities, Science and Mathematics, Technology, and Business Studies. All students, irrespective of their field of study, had to study five compulsory cross-cutting core subjects:

English Language, General Mathematics, One Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies, Computer Studies/ICT and Civic Education. In short, the new Senior Secondary Education Curriculum structures entails 5 compulsory subjects and several elective ones. Table 2 shows the core subjects in the four specialized fields of study.

Table 2: 3-Year Senior Secondary Education Curriculum Structure

Senior Secondary Education (Humanities)		Senior Secondary Education (Science/Mathematics)		Senior Secondary Education (Technology)		Senior Secondary Education (Business Studies)	
1	Nigerian Languages	1	Biology	1	Technical Drawing	1	Accounting
2	Literature-in- English	2	Chemistry	2	General Metal Work	2	Store Management
3	Geography	3	Physics	3	Basic Electricity	3	Office Practice
4	Government	4	Further Mathematics	4	Electronics	4	Insurance
5	Christian Religious Studies	5	Agriculture	5	Auto-mechanics	5	Commerce
6	Islamic Studies	6	Physical Education	6	Building Construction		
7	History	7	Health Education	7	Wood-work		
8	Visual Arts	8	Home Management	8	Home Management		
9	Music			9	Food & Nutrition		
10	French			10	Clothing & Textiles		
11	Arabic						
12	Economics						

In Nigeria, the subjects for basic and secondary education are organized in a cumulative manner. The curriculum subject lays the foundation at primary six, which will be elaborated in junior secondary school. Thus, the syllabus is connected systematically through each level of education. These steps would ensure success at the senior secondary level. The content of these subjects is age specific. The subject content are organised around concepts, ideas, generalisation, themes, problems and topics. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to adopt student-centered, activity-based minds-on and hands-on approaches to organize students' learning.

MATTERS ARISING FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The problem of education in Nigeria lies in the implementation of policies, and not in the formulation. Bandele and Ajayi (2013) too agree. They noted that the educational planners in Nigeria formulate impressive policies but do not endeavor to implement them successfully. This issue is because of misconceptions and sustainability in educational policy and the actualization of the policy objectives. Awofala and Sopekan (2013) noted the widely expressed misconception with the introduction of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum. This curriculum abandoned the 6-3-3-4 system of education and adopted the 9-3-4 system. Awofala and Sopekan lamented that critical stakeholders in education including teachers and educator, for long held, and even till now hold to this misconception as evident in the write-ups of some scholars in education and interviews granted the Nigerian press. They clarified that the approved three-level structure for the Basic Education Curriculum, namely: Lower Basic Education Curriculum for Primary 1-3; Middle Basic Education Curriculum for Primary 4-6 and Upper Basic Education Curriculum for JSS 1-3 is also misconstrued that the country now runs three basic education schools that is lower basic school, middle basic school and upper basic school. This wrong perception is strongly held by top class private schools and some tertiary institutions staff schools that are up till today still using the nomenclature of lower basic school, middle basic school and upper basic school. Such misconception have to be dispersed through adequate grassroots sensitization and encouragement.

Only NERDC should be responsible for disseminating the necessary information and knowledge regarding the changes in the new curriculum. It is not enough for the government to provide money for the review of the school curriculum and not provide the needed support for its eventual implementation in the classrooms.

Any educational policy and its curriculum must meet the emerging realities and needs of the society, so that it has relevance with societal changes. Major policy and curriculum provisions in the National Policy on Education of Nigeria focus on providing learners with abilities of learning new skills and knowledge for effective living in the midst of rapid economic and technological change. However, this has resulted in newer curriculum trends that have significant implications on how teachers should teach. If the curriculum is effectively implemented, it would enhance the inculcation of the generic skills of creativity, emotional intelligence, and entrepreneurship, inquiring, reasoning, conceptualizing, problem-solving and communicating. As Awofala and Sophekeama (2013) rightly observed, by applying these skills, students are not only expected to construct their knowledge of the subject matter but also to establish confidence and positive attitudes toward the subject matter.

Globally, there is constant change and this has increased the urgency to address the issues of the policy and curriculum. For example, the curriculum comprises three programmes: programme of studies (involving academic subjects and disciplines), programme of activities (involving experiential and incidental learning experiences) and programme of guidance (involving professional helping and advising offered to learners. These three programmes imply that an effective curriculum is founded in sensory-rich experience, uses a concept to integrate content, knowledge, and skills from multiple subject areas, offers students several activity choices, and extends relevant learning beyond the classroom into real-life situations. This implies that policy implementation through well-defined academic, guidance, and co-curricular activity programmes. The schools must strive to challenge students with a variety of experiences which will allow them to make appropriate decisions in their lives. The programmes must suit the developmental needs of the students, so they may understand themselves as unique individuals and develop their fullest potential through an enriching curriculum.

Moreover, secondary education students have some positive traits and characteristics which should be harnessed in promoting their educational development. They are curious, imaginative, sensitive and creative. Curriculum delivery will accommodate these and other social and psychological characteristics manifested by children. Suffice it to say that the wide range of ability levels of students creates the need for a variety of teaching methodologies and activities to match the needs and characteristics of the students. This should be taken mean the engagement of innovative teaching strategies such as guided inquiry, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and expository methods to empower the students and to make them more effective and efficient. The teaching methods will help students to move through the stages of planning, acting, observing, and evaluating. Such stages prepare students for tasks they will encounter during higher education and in the workplace.

Educators also need to know what kind of technology-enhanced intervention works best for their learners and what steps they need to take to implement change. There is a compelling evidence of the benefits technology-supported curriculum delivery can offer. These include:

- Greater choice and autonomy for learners
- More student engagement in school-sponsored technology activities and tasks
- More efficient working practices for learners and staff

- Increased access through flexible or alternative modes of delivery
- More personalised, authentic and relevant learning experiences
- Enhanced assessment and feedback
- More timely and cost-effective administrative processes

The task of curriculum advocacy, sensitization and ultimate implementation should not be left in the hands of NERDC alone as critical stakeholders in the education industry should help in disseminating the necessary Information and knowledge that would keep members of the public and end-users abreast of the changes in the New curriculum. It is not enough for the government to provide money for the review of the school curriculum and not provide the needed support for its eventual implementation in the classrooms.

STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING EDUCATIONAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In the face of the numerous problems of educational policy in general and secondary education policy in particular, the following strategies are suggested for improvement:

- Detailed analysis of the implications of major government policies such as promulgation of Universal Basic education (UBE) and changes in the curriculum structures. They should be validated in relation to (a) requisite resources (in the immediate, medium to long-term future) and (b) changes in the existing policy and regulatory framework.
- Vacancies for specialists in Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects to be filled. Initially, this can be implemented at Nigerian Certificate Examination (NCE) level at Colleges of Education. The Faculties of Education in the nation's universities should also consider it expedient in mounting B.Ed or B.Sc (Ed) degree programmes in Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects.
- Policy makers should reform education not to satisfy the government in power but to improve education.
- More funds should be allocated to the NERDC to specifically organize advocacy and sensitization workshops for teachers on the newly reviewed secondary education curriculum.
- School staff should conduct action research of school-level policy implementation and liaise with the Ministry of Education to translate that information to policymakers for their decisions about public investments in the education system.
- Government should recognize their role in designing the evaluation and assessment framework. They should encourage discussions and consultations with all stakeholders. They should desist from enacting one policy on top of the other and rather focus on allowing much time for the implementation of existing policies.
- Educational policies must be communicated must in a clear, concise and simple manner. The language employed must be simple and precise to avoid misunderstandings and confusion.

- To achieve the policy on diversification of the curriculum, teacher training institutions should improve on how they prepare teachers to carry out high-quality instruction, offer students challenging course work, extend learning time for students who do not meet challenging standards, and share current research on effective school improvement models.
- To realize the aims of secondary education policy, school leaders should initiate efforts towards setting high expectations, increasing student access to technical studies, improving students' problem-solving skills, and providing work-based opportunities for student learning so that the students are actually prepared for useful living and higher education.
- Educational policy which leads to an expansion of student numbers and/or the curriculum will have implications for the resources needed for assessment. These need to be investigated fully before the policy is enacted and the resources provided during implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

Policy is a statement expressing educational goals and the measures to attain them. The goals originate from the ideological principles of a nation. An analysis of secondary education policies in Nigeria from 2010-2016 highlight the fact that a nation's policy on education is government's way of realizing national goals by using education as a tool. This is relevant to secondary education where several policy and curriculum provisions are made in the Nigerian National Policy on Education. No policy on education, however, can achieve its goals without appropriate policy implementation strategies. The Nigerian National policy on Education analyzed in this paper makes it apparent that the secondary Nigerian education system is value-laden and aims at the betterment of the citizens in order that they may live a better live and contribute to the advancement of society. However, the implementation of the policy is a challenge. Effective policy implementation at the various levels of the education system is mandatory. Suggestions have been put forth in this paper on the strategies to improve educational policy.

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