

# Politics of Leadership and Implementation of Educational Policies and Programmes of Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This paper examines issues of politics of leadership and implementation of Educational policies and programmes of tertiary institutions in Cross River State with a view to determine the problems are situated and suggest the way forward. It examines the concept of politics of education, concept of leadership, meaning of planning and generation of policy, and the implementation of policies and programmes. It highlights the functions of the various educational bodies responsible for the oversight and implementation of government policies and programmes. The paper discusses issues of politics of leadership, control and management of education and the Federal and State level and Cross River State in particular. The paper suggested the ways forward to include increase in budgeting in the educational sector to meet the UNESCO standard of 26%, training and retraining of teachers and the need for political stability and continuity in governance. Recommendations were made among others to include the need for political leaders to have the political will to implement their programmes as stated during their campaigns and avoid policy summersault and adhere to continuity, adjust as the need arises and avoid wastages in tandem with realities and the needs of the nation and state on ground.

**Keywords:** Politics, Leadership, Implementation, Educational Policies, Programmes

## INTRODUCTION

The achievement of goals and objectives in any sector of development in any nation of the world is guided primarily by sound policy framework backed up with effective administrative dispensing strategies informed by forward looking decisions. It has been observed that most of the problems or crises that has bedeviled the education sector are traceable mainly to issues having to do with policy and implementation of the programmes. Opinions differ in academic circles as to whether the fundamental crises in the education sector are attributable more to the inappropriateness of policy framework and quality of administration or to policy implementation lapses. Ojiah (2004). Owuamanam (2002), even argue about the application of poor administrative strategies most times. Experts conclude that the poor state of Nigerian education is the product of policy bungling and visionless administrative strategies.

University education is a necessity for any nation that aspires to grow educationally, politically, economically, socially, technologically to compete favourably with other nations. It is a type of education given to individuals who are of age to attain or obtain higher degrees. It is the apex of learning and must be encouraged in accordance with the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2008:50). The goals of tertiary education include;

- a. Contribute to national development through high level manpower training;
  - b. Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities informal and formal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians;
  - c. Provide high quality career counselling and life long learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work;
  - d. Reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market.
  - e. Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service;
  - f. Forge and cement national unity and
  - g. Promote national and international understanding and interactions
- Tertiary educational institutions shall pursue these goals through;
- a. Quality teaching;
  - b. Research and development;
  - c. High standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources;
  - d. Staff development programmes;
  - e. Provision of a more practical based curriculum relevant to the needs of the labour market.
  - f. Generation and discrimination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which enable students to succeed in a knowledge based economy.
  - g. A variety of modes of programmes including fulltime, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich, etc;
  - h. Access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF);

- i. Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES);
- j. Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies
- k. Supporting affordable, equitable access to tertiary education through scholarship and students loans
- l. Inter-institutional co-operation and linkages and
- m. Dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services.

The success and achievement of the organizational goals of the university depends on the leadership and governance by the university management. Leadership is perceived as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goal achievement. The leadership in an institution can always be regarded as effective if it has achieved the established objectives in its day-to-day goal achievement efforts. Effectiveness is determined by productivity, stability, morale, turnover rate, degree of integration, maximization of individual potentialities, and values contributed to the society (Jiayeoba, 2003). It seems that leadership effectiveness in university management could be gauged through such indicators like efficiency in management, quality of infrastructure and equipment outfit, work morale and attitude level, academic standard, level of cultism and examination malpractice, and perception of the institution by the community.

### **Concept of Politics of Education**

In Nigeria, education is one of the vital tools utilized by the political class to enhance their legitimacy and control the machinery of government and the administration. This is the reason why the aims of educational policy should be derived from over-all national goals and should be integrated with political decisions associated with other aspects of national life. Okunamiri (2005) defines politics as consisting of struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. Most of the earliest definitions of politics emphasize units of behaviour etc. these definitions tend to centre on three essential ingredients namely (i) the event of authority and control (ii) the predominance of public interest and actions (iii) the element of institutionalized legitimation and accountability in the way activities are performed. Thus politics is seen as the act of who gets what and when in the affairs of the group. Hence educational policy should reflect the interest of the citizens and the state.

Nnoli (1986:3) refers to politics as the struggle for and exercise of power, authority and influence in a society. Nnoli (1986:9) aptly defined politics as all those activities which are directly or indirectly associated with the seizure of state power, the consolidation of state power and the use of state power. Nigerian politics has come to mean the allocation of social services, amenities and various government facilities to the various groups in the country. It is nowadays an adage in Nigeria politics "that who sits on the throne decides". This is because a leader who is at the helm of affairs like the president or the governor makes policies on several issues and takes decision with his or her cabinet. During the implementation of these programmes like in the education sector, he ensures that his personal interest and that of his pressure groups are considered first before others.

This is based on the premise that politics of education refers to the social and political contexts of education. The main objective is to identify and examine the various social and political factors, influences, issues and problems which affect education production processes and to identify the possible strategies for harnessing and controlling such factors, influences and problems for the benefit of educational administration and planning in the society. The philosophy and content of education as expressed in curricula, syllabi and textbooks have tended to reflect the dominant ideologies and policy outcome of government. Politics of education involves a complex inter-relationship among interest groups, politicians, bureaucrats and knowledge brokers. These actors cutting across the whole educational structure want schools to serve particular goals and needs as they define to suit themselves.

### **Concept of Leadership**

Leadership is about relative influence since a leader is someone who has more influence over the others than they have over him or her (Fageyinbo, 2005). It is about building and maintaining a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships as well as involving management issues that include the co-ordination, support and monitoring of schools as organization. It is the process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective (Akhilshahani, 2010). Leadership is very strategic in every successful organization. If leaders at all levels of our education system are alive to their responsibilities, the standard of education will not fall. Therefore, leaders must strive to embrace the new trends in leadership. The person at the helm of affairs in the organization is a leader. He ensures that effectiveness, efficiency and proficiency within the organization is enhanced (Erkutlu, 2008). Leadership has been defined from various points of view as there is yet to emerge a universally accepted definition of the concept. It is a complex process where a leader influences the people within the organization in order to accomplish a mission, task or objectives and direct the organization in a way that makes it cohesive and concurrent (Northhouse, 2007).

Peretomode and Peretomode (2008) defined leadership as the art or process by which a member of a group or organization persuades, inspires or influences the attitudes, behaviours and actions of others or their activities so that the group or organizational members will work willingly, cooperatively and enthusiastically

towards the accomplishment of set goals. Leadership according to Nakpodia (2009) is the process of solid influence which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the group for the accomplishment of a dominant task. The central theme of leadership is getting things accomplished through people.

It is generally accepted that the quality of leadership in an organization, be it religious, social, business, education, military or otherwise affects to a large extent, the success or failure of that organization. Leadership is an input into an organization and involves inter-personal influences on initiated structures and acts that result in a consistent pattern of group interaction aimed at productivity and individual fulfillment. This is done by applying leadership attributes such as belief, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills and appropriate styles.

To perform effectively and achieve success, leaders must depend on the situation they find themselves as well as the nature of the organization, as different situations require different leadership abilities and skills and styles. Leadership is indispensable in any organization. It is all about social influence which one person is accorded support by other group members to achieve laid down objectives. Aguba (2009) stressed that leadership being both the adhesive that binds the group together and the catalyst that triggers employee motivation can have a major influence on organizational performance for it is one of the crucial factors that lead to success. Therefore, the administrative functions like planning, staffing, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling among others would be ineffective without good leadership.

Some of the leadership styles include: autocratic leadership style, democratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, leadership styles. Also we have according to Blake and Mouton (1964);

- i. Improvised leadership:- Minimum effort is made to sustain organizational membership. This is an abdication of responsibility and the lack of leadership is obvious.
- ii. Task-oriented leadership:- Emphasis is placed on work, but good relation is incidental. Production is the main concern, so close supervision and authoritarian style is noticed and interaction is strictly official. This style agrees with the assumption of theory X and formal authority is used to exert conformity and ensures high productivity.
- iii. People-oriented leadership:- Focus is the needs of people and production is incidental. The leader emphasizes sound interpersonal relations and keeps organizations goals ambiguous or general so as to make room for the personal needs of members, which is contrary to organizational goals. Leader makes concerted effort to avoid conflict and develops a high morale among members.
- iv. Balanced leadership:- This style tries to achieve equilibrium in the organization by striking a balance between high production and good relations. Extreme positions are avoided and a middle course adopted between formal and goals of the organization are neglected.
- v. Integrated leadership:- There is high concern for both production and people when a leadership style is balanced. Work is accomplished by highly committed and motivated people and effort is made to achieve high degree of congruence between organizational goals and the personal goals of members. This style has faith in members. So there is participation, communication is open and free to aid team work and group decision-making.

A leader is expected to encourage his followers to develop willingness not only to work but to work with zeal and confidence. To achieve this, a leader amongst other attributes;

*Is to possess basic innate intelligence, have good sense of judgement, be emotionally mature, be zealous, exude self confidence, be versatile, have initiative and have task-relevant knowledge (technical) skills. He is not to stand behind a group to push himself before the group as he facilitates progress and inspires the group to accomplish organizational goals (Wehrich & Koontz, 2005).*

### **Meaning of planning and generation of policy**

Organizations are set up to achieve different purpose or objectives which guarantee their survival and continued existence. The achievement of organizational goals involves planning, thus planning is the first and basic of all management functions. Planning according to Okwori (2011) is a rational and intelligent process of preparing or arranging a set of decisions for future actions directed at achieving goals and objectives by the best means (methods) possible. It is basically future and goal oriented. This is from where policies are being generated. It calls for effective utilization of resources for the achievement of organizational goals. Planning is a process of establishing priorities for future actions in an attempt to solve economic problems which stem a thought to the goals, aspirations and priorities of a nation. To plan well, you must know the needs, the goals desires and aspirations of the people you are planning for. For example, you must know the needs of Nigerians to plan for Nigeria education. You need to be acquainted with the environment (society) and know the demands of such society. People accept things that are of positive value and benefit to them. If you intend to carry them along, then you must plan to meet such desires, hence the need to be conversant with every segment of the environment

before planning. Since development takes place over a long period of time, planning is designed to achieve development in a continuous and spiral process. Thus, therefore planning is not only concerned with goals and objectives and policy formulation, but also how to achieve the goals and objectives which is the implementation of the programmes laid down. It calls for effective utilization of resources for the achievement of organizational goals. Planning helps a person to be prepared because it is a blue print for action that leads to good results.

The plan starts with a set of inter-related decisions that is referred to as plan. As efforts are made to carry out these decisions, the people are involved in a feedback system of new information. The new information reveals errors and unexpected events as well as new possibilities. The information therefore calls for changes in the original decision in order to achieve better results. Educational planning therefore is the application to education itself of what real educators seek to instill in students- it is a rational scientific approach to problems in education. This approach involves identifying objectives and available resources, examining the implications of alternative courses of action and choosing wisely among them, deciding on specific targets to be met with the best means systematically. Educational planning is therefore much more than drafting of a blue-print. It is a continuous process of planning, of where to go, how to get there and by what best way. By this, planning helps to attain larger and better aggregate results with limited available resources. It must therefore reflect the societal and individual problems and needs.

It is a common saying that failure to plan is planning to fail. This presupposes that every success achieved through this plan, policy formulation and implementation of the programmes is the outcome of a good plan. Therefore we need planning for many reasons including the following as it is the foundation and bedrock of educational policies and its implementation of the programmes.

1. Determine the objectives and goals of the educational system and device means of achieving them
2. Align our limitless needs, desires, expectations and aspirations with our available and limited resources in pursuit of desirable educational goals;
3. Decision-making about the educational system in terms of programmes and operations is a product of planning;
4. Planning ensures that provisions are made for the different competing sectors of the education system;
5. Planning helps to reduce and avoid wastages in the educational system;
6. Investment made in education demands planning to ensure adequate dividend such as production of and well developed students and adequate manpower for the country;
7. Planning in education helps to ensure quality of education provided which will meet the challenges of the global world.

### **Meaning of educational policy implementation**

Educational policy implementation is the process of carrying out educational objectives or plans of action. It is the stage where the policy or policies formulated are tested to see how real they are. Eggonwan (2001), stated that it is at the policy implementation stage that the policy becomes operational through the passing of legislation. Educational policy implementation is different from educational policy formulation in that educational policy formulation is just the stage where policy makers take decisions as to what is to be done and how it would be achieved.

In Nigeria, policy generation and implementation involve major interest groups and stakeholders in education. These include the Federal and State ministries of Education, the National universities commission, the National Board for Technical Education, Educational Research and Development Council, the state school Management Board, the state secondary Technical Education Board, the state Universal Education Board, the Local Government Education Authorities, the National Council for Nomadic Education and the National Business and Technical Education Board among others.

The federal government through the Ministry of Education controls education. this is done under the leadership of the minister of Education. The Minister of Education is appointed by the president of the country and subject to senate approval. The federal government works in conjunction with the state and local government to ensure that the goals of education are achieved.

### **Setting of policies and standards**

The following Ministries are responsible for policy-making and setting of standards in education at various levels; the Federal Ministry of Education is the government body that directs the affairs of education in Nigeria with the following responsibilities.

1. Formulation of a National Policy on Education, in order to ensure uniform standard and quality control;
2. Collecting and collating data for the purpose of educational planning and financing;
3. Maintaining uniform standards of education throughout the country;
4. Advisory services in respect of all level of education below the tertiary level;
5. Controlling the quality of education in the country through the supervisory role of the inspectorate

- services department within the ministry.
6. Harmonizing educational policies and procedures of all the states of federation through the instrumentality of the National Council of Education;
  7. Effecting cooperation in educational matters on an international scale;
  8. Developing curricula and syllabuses at the National level in conjunction with other bodies;
  9. Coordination of non-formal education including adult education, vocational improvement centres, correspondence courses, etc.
  10. Coordination of national school examination and relevant teacher examination testing and evaluation;

### **The State Ministry of Education**

Peretomode (2001) listed the following as the functions of the state Ministry of Education.

1. Administration of the entire education system in the state;
2. Implementing National Education Policy at the state level;
3. Making regulations for the admission of students into state schools and withdrawal of students from schools;
4. Planning and developing education in the state. Inspection and supervision of both administrative and academic components of schools;
5. Examination and certification of primary school teachers
6. Award of bursaries and scholarship to deserving students of the state;
7. Funding of educational institutions including state universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, school of nursing and so on;
8. Co-ordination and harmonization of educational activities throughout the state;

### **NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NERDC)**

The Federal Military Government set up the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERDC) in 1971. It was set up as a way of implementing the recommendation of the 1969 curriculum conference. To back up the establishment, Degree No. 31 promulgated in 1972 with retrospective effect from 1971. In 1988, the council was renamed National Educational Research and Development Council. Since then it has contributed a great deal to the harmonization of the curriculum and syllabuses of intuitions at all levels.

### **FUNCTIONS**

- i. The council is responsible for researches in Education and Curriculum Development which are eventually implemented. It disseminates information on researches of the education ministry, universities and teachers organizations. The research activities assist in curriculum development for primary and secondary schools;
- ii. The body identifies materials for more effective teaching purposes and publishing them to use by teachers and learners;
- iii. Organizing workshops aimed at designing and recommending more appropriate teaching materials for schools;
- iv. The body promotes the professional growth of teachers through the organizing of in-service training course for them in training colleges and secondary schools;
- v. It has to liaise with other educational agencies at home and abroad, and also sponsor many educational researches into crucial educational problems in Nigeria;
- vi. To ensure that adequate facilities, such as books, classrooms, laboratories and equipment are provided for effective learning;

### **THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION (NCE)**

The council is composed of the Honourable Minister of Education and the State Commissioners for Education. The body for colleges of education was set up by Decree No. 3 of 1989 to streamline the activities of the colleges of Education in Nigeria. The council members meet on rotation basis at Federal and State capitals to consider current issues on education and make recommendations in the light of national objectives of education. The state commissioners are expected to adopt such policies to suit their peculiar environment.

### **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (JCC)**

This agency plays advisory role to the Federal Ministry of Education on education matters. It is made up of professional officers of the Federal and State Ministries of Education, representatives of faculties of Universities, Nigeria Union of Teachers, National Manpower Board, Institutes of Education and other similar bodies in the nation. They deliberate on professional aspects of education such as quality in education, mobility of teachers, affiliation of Teachers Colleges to Institutes of Education or Universities. It covers education below the

university and professional levels. The joint consultative committee works through a committee known as the reference Committee of the Joint Consultative Committee. The committees are for primary education, secondary education, teacher education, technical/vocational education, educational planning and administration and educational services.

The Reference Committee is made up of representatives of Ministries of Education and Institutes and Faculties of Education. This committee's main job is to discuss all memoranda submitted by the Ministries of Education or any agency and make recommendations for further deliberation by the Joint Consultative Commission. Although the NCE and the JCCE are advisory bodies, their recommendations are usually directly or with some modifications to suit the respective states.

#### **Some of other functions of the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) include**

- i. To determine the manpower needs of the country and making recommendations and providing guidelines according to the universities to ensure that their programmes and courses of study are related to the needs of the country;
- ii. To determine the appropriate policies in relation to specific educational issues and problems as may be referred to it from time to time by the Federal Government;
- iii. Making use of its members who are experts in education to provide professional advice to the Federal Government whenever the need arises;
- iv. Providing a national forum for the disseminating and exchanging of educational ideas among the states of the federation;

#### **NATIONAL UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (NUC)**

The National University Commission (NUC) was established in 1962, and it became a statutory body in 1974 by Decree No. 1 as a statutory body in order to give it the proper scope to perform its function. The Decree gave the Commission broad responsibilities and functions which are geared towards coordination, developing and financing of Nigerian Federal Universities.

#### **FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (NUC)**

1. To advise on the establishment and location of new universities and other degree granting institutions in Nigeria;
2. To prepare, after consultation with all the State Government, the Universities, the National Manpower Board and such other bodies as it considers appropriate, periodic master plans for the balanced and coordinate development of universities in Nigeria. These plans include;
3. The general programs to be pursued by the universities in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to national needs and objectives;
4. Recommending the establishment of new faculties and postgraduate institutions in existing universities;
5. Advising governments on the financial needs of the university education in Nigeria;
6. To receive grants from the Federal Government and disburse them to the universities;
7. Collating, analyzing and publishing of information relating to university development and education in Nigeria;
8. Undertaking periodic review of terms and conditions of service of university staff;
9. Acting as an agency for the channeling of external aids to Nigerian universities, bearing in mind the country's foreign policy and security, etc.
10. To make such other investigation relating to higher education that the commission may consider necessary in the national interest;
11. To carry out such other activities as are conducive to the discharge of its functions under its Act;

#### **School programmes**

People throughout the world attend one school or the other. The quality of schools varies widely among countries. The industrialized nation like Australia, Canada, Japan, the United States of America and most European nations have well established educational systems as compared to underdeveloped and developed countries, Nigeria inclusive. The most important thing to note in any school situation is the nature of programmes that are necessary towards the attainment of educational values of the learner in particular and the nation as a whole.

Ademola and Waheed (2006) refer to programmes as activities which are crucial for the realization of a set of objectives. This means programmes of a school/institution imply various activities the school is engaged in, in order to fulfill the curricular and extra-curricular objectives the school is established to achieve. This calls for the system to carry out successful plan and implementation of each programme which compliment each other. The school programme is a list containing details of items, institution (Webster, 2005). School programmes cut across all levels of educational institutions from the kindergatarn through each level has its educational programmes peculiar to it. According to Webster (2005), a school programme could be a

curriculum or syllabus for a course of study. It also involves consideration of the process of teaching, which is the methodology.

Tertiary education, according to the world bank, (2002), is central to the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depend and the promotion of lifelong learning practices necessary for updating people's knowledge and skills. It stressed further that for tertiary institutions to fulfill their educational, research and respond effectively to changing education and training needs and adapt to a rapidly shifting tertiary education landscape. (World Bank, 2002).

According to the former Minister of Education Mallam Ibrahim Shekaru at a world conference forum in London in 2015, he said that education was critical to Nigeria's future, and that the Federal Government's commitment to ensuring quality teaching and learning was paramount and not negotiable. He went further to say that the administration of president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan had made funds available to tertiary institutions across the levels to cater for the needed infrastructure and facilities that would enhance the teaching and learning processes. That education is the core of the transformation agenda and access and quality are the key goals of the education sector. The question is; now that there is a new government in place and party, have feasible for this continuity? This is one of the basic problems of policy implementation and programme implementation in Nigeria.

### **Cross River State Education Reforms**

On 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 the former Commissioner for Education of Cross River State Government, Professor Celestine O. Basse presented an address at the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the National Council on Education held at Cultural Centre Complex, Calabar. His address was titled "The Challenges of Educational Reforms in Cross River State". In this address, he stated that at the inception of the administration in 1999, the operational indices of quality education were at appalling level. That the government at the time was confronted with an avalanche of systematic problems that required a series of proactive interventionary measures to restore congenial environment for teaching and learning. These problems were;

- a. Deteriorating physical infrastructures (e.g. classroom blocks and the non availability of the structures in some cases);
- b. Declining productivity on the part of teachers, arising principally from low morale, absence of training and retraining programmes and dearth of teachers particularly in the sciences and mathematics;
- c. Lack of teaching and learning aids such as basic textbooks/writing materials for students and teaching aids for teachers;
- d. Non availability of data on students' enrolment as well as inaccurate statistics on available teachers and their subject areas;
- e. Lack of adequate logistics and personnel to carry out effective monitoring and supervision of schools;
- f. Drastic fall in the quality of education occasioned by the unwholesome mass-promotion of pupils/students to higher classes regardless of their performances in the promotion examinations;
- g. High rate of cultism and other antisocial activities culminating in an increase in the drop-out syndrome;
- h. The educationally disadvantaged status of the state reflected in the dearth of critical manpower of Cross River State origin;

Guided by the resolution at the education summit of 2000, government began the task of repositioning the educational system in the state through the formulation and implementation of educational policy and guidelines, based on sustainability, quality and standards.

### **ISSUES**

The important role of university education in nation building is no news again across the world. Countries and continents are faced with the challenges of how to enhance their ability to apply knowledge based solution in addressing numerous development challenges they face. (Ramphela, 2004). The National Policy on Education, FRN, 2004 (Revised) stated that Higher Education should among other things aim at;

- a. The acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value-orientation for its survival and
- b. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community.

This, therefore situates universities and research institution at the centre of efforts by public and stakeholders to ensure that development is achieved across all spheres of life. This is why it is said that the strength of African Universities and Research institutions determines the pace of development in the continent while the weakness of such institutions portend a key index as well as contribute to its poverty. (Sawyer, 2004:217). Sawyer paints a clear picture of the key role universities can play in ensuring that nations within the African continents, Nigeria inclusive, keep up with the wave of development movement across the world. The quality, availability and access to good university education has become indices and determining factor for development, hence it has been described as an important tool in any human society which makes man to develop faster than other creatures. (Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe, 2012).

In Nigeria, the debate on the need to explore ways of ensuring even availability and access to quality education among component states in their various geo-political zones in the country have been on for decades. According to Ifenkwe (2013:9), “in the years past, it was difficult to get the Northerners to accept formal education. This led to a wide disparity in educational achievements between the north and the south and brought the notion of educationally-disadvantaged states among which is Cross River State. The situation has, however changed today at all levels”. Going by these challenges facing states and Federal government between different zones of the country, it is pertinent to ask how far has the situation changed. Lots of efforts are being made by governments all over the country, including those in the northern states and some in the south-south including Cross River State. But the question that is being asked is whether our political leaders are actually following the right direction in the effort to bridge the gap through implementation of policies and educational programmes.

### **Issues of politics of leadership and policy implementation in education**

The success of any organization is largely dependent on a sound and good leadership. This is because policies and decisions which can help to direct the activities of an organization to success, have to be executed by the leadership. Leadership is an essential factor among all social animals. The need of leadership stems from the fact that each organization or group has needs to be met. In the world over, there are certain policies, reforms and developments in education that have some political undertones, similarly, certain political issues have found expression in the policies and programmes recommended and adopted for education. In Nigeria, there are some political issues that have influenced education directly which include;

- i. Control and management of education

#### **i. Control and management of education**

With the government’s commitments on the skills required for more rapid growth of the economy and the provision of basic knowledge to the citizens of this country, there came an increased financial commitment and support from the Federal Government to the educational systems in this country, especially the Higher Education. The rationale for such commitments is predicated upon the doctrine of the Human capital which implies that without the required stock of skills, physical capital accumulation will be unable to lead to a rapid economic growth, Okwori (1995). Based on the huge funds committed by government in the provision of education for the citizenry, it became incumbent on it to assert some degree of control on educational operations in the areas of policies, and implementation of her programmes especially in higher education.

Consequently, the Federal Government funded institution such as universities; this objective is achieved through the National Universities Commission (NUC), while in the states Universities either the office of the secretary to the state Government or the state ministry of education sees to the country of universities and/or other tertiary institutions in the state. This is what this paper seeks to examine in politics of leadership and implementation of educational politics and programmes of universities in Cross River State.

The nature of the content is essentially in the form of ensuring, through a more systematic method of auditing, monitoring and supervising, that proper expenditure of funds for federal projects (and state projects for state owned institutions) and data necessary for accurate financial planning and projection is collated. In this paper, the universities are; University of Calabar, Calabar (Unical), Federal College of Education, Obudu which are Federal Government owned and Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH), College of Education, Akamkpa, Institute of Management and Technology, Ugep which are owned by the Cross River State Government. These arrangement appears to have provided some measures of accountability in the use of scarce resources in running these institutions. The implication of this however, is that the nature of courses offered in these institutions reflect the interest of the governments that established and/or finance them. However, universities are no longer to decide on what courses to offer or facilities to provide except those approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC), as well as what caliber of students to admit except those recommended to them by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). This, no doubt, will tell greatly on the quality of schools input into the university system.

Before the establishment of Jamb, each university conducted its Matriculation examination in which a large number of candidates were subjected to rigorous and a highly competitive examination during which the best students were admitted. The present method of admission through JAMB, constitutes an infringement on the traditional university autonomy and academic freedom which the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have and are still advocating for. The university council no longer exercise full control over the internal governance of the university while the traditional power of senate to exercise full control over what academic programmes its university should pursue is drastically eroded.

During the 1979 electioneering campaigns in Nigeria, different political parties sought to capture votes of the electorates by promising among other things, better educational opportunities. They made these promises because of the absolute faith which the politicians as well as the electorates have in education, it was not political gimmicks. They regarded education as a government responsibility and an instrument for national unity, political socialization and economic development. The faith in education as the “magic wand” for



societal progress and modernization is given credence by the National policy on Education (NPE 2004 in Okunamiri in 2005:15) which states that;

*Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise, but a huge Government's compete and dynamic intervention and active participation. The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effective national development.*

In Nigeria, education is perhaps rooted in the western classical philosophy, that he who controls the education of the young people controls the future of the nation. Political parties on assumption of office try to fulfill its election promises. An example is worthy of note is when four out of the five political parties in the second Republic did imply radical educational developments in their states. The unity party of Nigeria (UPN) significantly poised free education at all levels. The implication of these political creeds on education is the tendency for education to be free at all levels in some states and not free at all levels in others. While some states offered, inter alia, bursaries and scholarships to all their students in Higher institutions (like the unity party controlled states) others maintained minimal public responsibility for the costs of secondary and tertiary levels education.

Consequently, the dichotomous educational policies and programmes in the different states due to political party inclinations tended to tilt the educational systems expansion especially the higher education in a way that it would be tremendously rapid in some states but relatively slow in others. The political party impact on educational development in the country might have party impact on educational development in the country might have in the long-run subverted other laudable political objective such as equality of opportunity to education, bridging educational gap, even education growth and development as well as the use of education to promote national unity. It is pertinent to note that the dramatic development in the politics of Higher Education sector was the decision by both the federal and state governments to locate two universities in a town of a young state that had not enough infrastructures. This trend has continued to establish new universities in state governments have continued to establish new universities in states that are not economically viable to even sustain one university. This is also applicable to other forms of higher education.

The implication of the proliferation of universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria which was the outcome of the bid by the politicians to impress the electorates without taking into consideration the financial implication, is the tendency for these institutions to be inadequately funded for expansion and development programmes. In Cross River State, we have Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), University of Calabar, Calabar (unical), Federal College of Education, Obudu, College of Education, Akamkpa, Institute of Management and Technology, Ugep.

These institutions are handicapped financially and are unable to provide the adequate human and physical resources needed to attain that level of academic standard which is expected of them. Furthermore, the proliferation of higher education due to political influence has given rise to over production of graduates who are jobless because the political system has failed to provide job opportunities to match the outputs from these institution. In Cross River State, some of these institutions were cited because of satisfying some influential politicians and the some of the products of these institution are yet to secure employment.

#### **The way forward**

##### **i. Training of teachers**

In order to achieve the national objectives through education, quality teachers are required for quality education. Therefore the teacher training institutions and colleges of education have to be strengthened. This calls for addressing these issues in College of Education, Akamkpa, Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar, Federal College of Education, Obudu and University of Calabar, Calabar which this paper is premised on. In addition, the institutions have to be conversant with the quality of teachers required to realize educational objectives and implement the provisions of educational policy and programmes implementation.

##### **ii. Politics stability**

Politics determines the direction of an educational system. Incessant change in government does not favour the achievement of educational objectives. This calls for political stability and stable educational policies. The new government that came on board on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2015 both at the Federal and State level have started tackling the education promises and programmes of their parties. Interestingly Cross River State is being ruled by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while at the Federal level is the All Progressive Congress (APC). This is where policy summersault comes to play and inconsistency. They are addressing this sector from their own party programmes and mindset. The leadership will appoint those to be in-charge and direct the affairs for the next four years not mindful of what they met on ground by the previous administration. This has been the problem of educational policies and programme implementation in Nigeria of which Cross River State is a very glaring example where we have federal and state tertiary institutions. There is need for continuity and stability, where there are areas that need to be improved upon, this should be done meticulously and not to abandon previous projects, policies and programmes that are viable and relevant to the achievement of the objectives and avoid wastages of

manpower and materials.

- iii. There is an urgent need to update the state of our higher institutions and overhaul them by fighting the anomalies inherent in them in tandem with the realities on ground, needs of the nation and the well-being of the people. Universities should operate in a conducive atmosphere to be in a better position to seek the truth, understand the truth, impart the truth, uphold and sustain the truth. The search after truth is a fundamental responsibility of scholarship and inquiry. It calls for improved management of strategic plan for each university. There is also need for improved teaching and learning quality, support of innovation and moderation of teaching and learning activities with the aims of improving and relevance to graduate employment.
- iv. Increase in funding in the education sector to meet the UNESCO standard of 26% currently it is between 8%, 9% and 10%.
- v. The increase is to cater for infrastructural needs in these tertiary institutions and the training and retraining of academic staff and non-academic staff. The manpower needs attracts research, teaching and improvement in ICT and entrepreneurship education.

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

It is obvious that there already exists a library of informative suggestive suggestions made by experts that is capable of turning around the education sector. What is required is the political will to implement such proposals as the re-ordering of priorities in order to mainstream education, human capital development targeted at motivating the educational work force in particular the teachers whose rewards remain in heaven. There is the urgent need also to resuscitate the inspectorate division of the ministries of education which ought to regulate the performance and conduct of teachers and administrators.

Tertiary institutions and their supervisory agencies should ensure that the curricula are reviewed from time to time and that effective labour market mechanism, such as tracer surveys and regular consultation with employers and alumni, is indispensable for adjusting the curricula to meet the changing needs of the industry. There is need to emphasize and strengthen policies on entrepreneurship education with back up support with financing by relevant banking financial agencies in this direction. Otherwise the country will continue to face the challenge of turning out large numbers of unemployed graduates on yearly basis due to labour market gap mismatch and disconnect between these institutions and the employers of labour and enable these graduates to open shops and manage their own business, even when they cannot get paid employment. They should in turn be employers of labour.

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