Impact of Political Influence on Educational Sector in Nigeria

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Abstract: Education plays vital role in any community, communities are guided by laws and order, shaping and molding issues on education that are formulated through educational policies. This rightly shows that implementation of educational policies operate within the political framework of the community. Political instability has led to inconsistent policies due to the rapid turnover of education ministers with different interests and lack of educational expertise. This implies that the educational policies are influenced by the political administrators in the country. This paper takes a critical look into the impact of political influence on educational sector in Nigeria. The relationship between both of them, the positive and negative influences from the environment by the political actors, various policies made during the civilian and military administration, and steps taken to rectify the challenges encountered in the political environment through unfavorable policies.

Key words: Education, Politics, Impact, communities, policies, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the impartation of knowledge. According to Aliyu (2001) he defines education as the method by which a society transmits from one generation to the next its knowledge, culture and value. Education started at home which is informal education a means whereby parents teach their children how to do house chore, home training and some assignments. Education plays prominent roles in the life of our young one, according to Fafunwa (2004) he defined education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives.

According to Hosper (1972) he explained that the more one comes to know or understand a particular concept, the richer ones fact of the concept becomes, therefore everyone’s knowledge is improving every day because what one knew many year ago has been improved on as at today. As opined by Abdu (2003), democratic ideas became interwoven with the belief that education was the only path to auseful and productive life. As it could been seen in the lives of leaders no matter their background once one is able to acquire education there are possibilities for one to rule and issue directives that will benefit the society.

Politics is the governing and administering of people, according to American political scientist, Harold Lasswell, politics is define as who get what, when and how. Politics play prominent position in our environment as it is back up with power and how one uses the power in the society. According to a Nigerian author Okeke (2007) He sees politics as a civilizing agent and away of ruling in divided society without violence.

Political influence on education in the context of this study refers to the success of good educational policies issued by the government on the citizen, as formulation of policies are sometimes influence by the political parties in power which sometimes being criticize by the opposition party.

Since the inception of colonial administration in Nigeria till the contemporary political dispensation, educational sector in Nigeria is administered through the national policy on education which has gone through many modifications as knowledge increases through technological advancement educational policies too are not left behind. During the colonial era, education policies initated was in line with European education system: primary, secondary, sixth form and higher education were introduced; their education system is to train people so as to achieve the colonial mission, these could be seen in the introduction of Christianity into villages and communities in Nigeria.

After the attainment of independence, it was discovered that the colonial system of education did not meet the need of Nigerian; hence the 6:3:3:4 education policy was introduced. The civilian and military regime in Nigeria formulated different policies that may sometimes have political undertone to achieve their political agenda.

II. IMPACT OF POLITICS ON EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN NIGERIA

Planning, administration and management of educational sector are influenced by the political party in power. Likewise, during the military era decrees on education were issued. One could trace the unfavorable condition of Nigeria educational sector to the political office holder's, because many of the offices are administered by politicians who are not competent in the position they are occupying but because of party affiliation they are in the office. Nigeria nation practices federal system of government, federalism allows duplication of offices for example there are minister of education and minister of state for education.
In the present civilian government in Nigeria, there are observations that technocrats are not placed in their area of specialization, examples can be sited in mining and steel the minister is a historian. Power, works and housing the minister in charge is a professional lawyer. The minister of education is not an educationist just to site some few cases. Although there is a slogan among the politician which goes thus: (idea is needed) Educational sector is a sensitive sector because educational policies are to move with time and also the educational curricular. Politicians in Nigeria have been criticized by their veto power of nominating and announcing vice chancellors of some universities on national radio without following due process.

Political offices are occupied by party members who campaigned and spend money during election period. This applies to the various sectors in the country including educational sector. Political affiliation has led to wrong placement because of their financial and human contribution during election period.

Nigeria is a large country with population of 195,875,237 according to statistics figure 2018, for any political party to succeed in winning election the party must have manifesto that will capture the need of the citizen and education is a good tools through which this can be achieved, also human connections, underground works and money to give to all party members during campaign.

Education and politics are related because education is an agent which transmits political culture. Education plays prominent role as an agent of transmitting political education such as political socialization which mold people into the political class in a community.

The educational system is in a way an extension of the political system, because education system is funded by the government of the day hereby propagating government policies. Therefore both the educational sector and the political institution work hand in hand in the formulation of policies for the smooth running of the educational sector, that is, politics has influence on education right from the policy formulation stage to the implementation stage.

As education improves every day, the political scene also does, as education helps in keeping the political institution stable, it organizes training in order to improve the political institution. Obanya (2002) perceived politics and education as interaction in the fullest and best sense for stimulation of the desire for better things and the urge to attain such better things.

Education and politics cannot be separated because education is the primary agents for selection and training of political elites.

According to Almond and Coleman in Okwori and Ede (2012), the family, the church, community, school, work group, voluntary organization, media of communication, political parties and government institution are among the agents of socialization within the primary and secondary structures, through later or manifest procedures that give the individual the pre-political citizenship education or experience.

Formulation of policies in educational institutions in Nigeria sometimes lead to strikes and protest, example could be sited concerning the earn allowance paid into the universities by the federal government to the Academic Staff Union of Nigeria Universities (ASUU) and Non-academic staff in Nigeria universities that led to protest and national strike from December 2017 till March 13th 2018

III. SOLUTION

There should be proper monitory on educational projects so as to guide against mis-management of funds. There are lots of un-completed projects in primary, secondary and higher institution in the country. Abandon projects can be seen in some of our universities, that is the reason why universities staff are encouraging visitation panel from the National Universities Commission because there are poor financing, poor management and poor monitoring. During accreditation of some universities programme, this is a period when some infrastructures will be put in place. Classrooms will be built, laboratories will be equipped with the necessary equipment, and more lecturers will be recruited. Programme accreditation period should not be the only period when universities should be financed. There should be constant improvement in the university curricula and in physical needs.

Education in any country is not relegated to the background; this is so because qualitative education is included in the manifesto of every political party in Nigeria. There are lots of reforms on education from the military administration from 1966 till date but more reforms are needed.

President Buhari administration from 2016 till date included in the political campaign the provision of meal for students during break time. This is to relieve the financial burdens of parents and to encourage children especially in the northern part of Nigeria to go to school as there are high figures of illiteracy. This is a welcome idea but there should be proper monitoring of the funds.

Furthermore, education in the northern part of Nigeria has been hampered by insurgency, during president Goodluck administration 2011, Chibok girls’ secondary school Bornu state was invaded by Boko Haram an Islamic group that kicked against western education, the abducted girls were rescued through the payment of ransom by the federal government.

In February, 2018, 110 girls of technical college Daphi Yobe state were abducted by Boko Haram. The military are still searching for the abducted girls but have not been able to know the whereabouts of the girls until after some months. Information got was that some men in military
uniform came in military buses shot into the air; the students of the technical college were scared because of the gun shot and were running for safety. The abductors pretended as if they were military men on rescue mission by so doing the girls boarded their buses and they went away with the girls of Dalphi technical college Yobe state Nigeria. The school girls were rescued through the payment of ransom by the federal government and not all of them were released.

In the Northern part of the country, many of the schools do not have fences and gates. The abduction of students especially girls are scaring parents from sending their children to schools. The federal and state government should protect students from being abducted as the federal and state governments are the chief security officers of the country.

Here comes the relationship between politics and education because of the issue of the abducted school girls, series of meetings are on, policies on recovery mission were issued out, aircrafts are on surveillance, troops were sent to Yobe state and environ. Protection of the various schools in the country is paramount as parents are discouraged from sending their wards especially girls to boarding school in the northern part of the country because of their safety.

IV. CONCLUSION

Politics is concerned with governance, administration and management. Politics cannot operate in a vacuum; it must have political actors who will formulate policies in the community, state and country. In any community education is part of the issues to be discussed and administered like others such as health, social amenities and so on. Therefore, politics serve as a compass to the operation of a community state and country. It also proffer solution to the problems emanating from the policies formulated. The influence, impact and relationship of politics and education in the concluding part is that both cannot be separated they influence one another, have impacts on one another and relate with themselves. Politics serves as a guide for education.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should allow educational institutions to exercise their autonomy. screening for the position of a vice chancellor should be done within the particular university and finally ratify by the university governing council instead of federal governing interference by fixing the positions with their party loyalist.

Political influence, religion, ethnicity and god fathers should not take pre-eminence over good education system as these will lead to educational decadence.

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