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**Policy and Management Issues in Contemporary
Nigerian Education System**

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to highlight the policy and management issues in contemporary Nigerian education system. Through rigorous intellectual analysis of the major segments of the Nigerian education system comprising pre-primary, primary/basic education, secondary education and tertiary education, it was observed that government's efforts and gestures (on education) are foundational and would require further work and consolidation in

order to achieve better results. The paper is made up of: abstract, introduction; clarification of concepts and discourse on policy and management issues in the Nigerian education system. The paper recommended among others that the federal ministry of education should strive to play appropriate warehousing roles in policy leadership, and the need to upgrade facilities for teaching and research, cannot be over emphasized.

Key Words: Contemporary; Education; Management; Policy; System

Introduction

Given the role that education plays in the individual and collective lives of a people, no amount of consideration put into its improvement can be too much. And given the abysmal level to which its quality has descended in Nigeria, any consideration given to its resuscitation now cannot be too soon but rather belated. Nigeria has witnessed policy reversals and somersaults in several sectors; this is particularly noticeable in the education arena. It is however curious how successive leadership expects to achieve or galvanize development through the instrumentality of education. It is pertinent to note that a nation's level of development is mirrored by and dependent on the quality and quantity of human capital which is linked directly to human resource development and it is germane to state that education is the pivot.

It can be extrapolated from the above that any nation that seeks to attain development, especially very rapidly and on a sustainable basis must not only invest massively in education and technological acquisition, the policy that drives education must be consistent, enduring, pragmatic and reliable. The management of policy in terms of human, financial and material resources must be given adequate and timely attention.

Various administrations/regimes (at the centre) in Nigeria have been striving to make education a tool for national development through the

National Policy on Education which spelt out the philosophy and objectives that drive investment in education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2004). The individual and societal needs; realities of the Nigerian environment and contemporary global demands seem to underscore the goals of the National Policy on Education in Nigeria which took its cue from the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and a follow-up seminar in 1973 comprising stakeholders in education, voluntary agencies and external bodies to deliberate on appropriate framework/policy on education. The result of these was the final document titled the “National Policy on Education” with a maiden publication in 1977, the second, third and fourth editions were done in 1981, 1998, and 2004 respectively (FRN, 2004:4). The policy and management issues involved in the different tiers of education (from pre-primary to tertiary) are discussed in sequence after the segment on clarification of concepts.

Clarification of Concepts

Policy

Policy is a prime-mover for all important activities in a people’s life. This is captured in Anderson’s (Anderson 2003:1) assertion thus: “Public Policies in a modern, complex society are indeed ubiquitous. They confer advantages and disadvantages, cause pleasure, irritation, and pain and collectively have important consequences for our well-being and happiness.” Policy has been defined by McKinney and Howard (1972:66) and Adamolekun (1983:142) as “course setting involving decisions of the widest ramifications and longest time perspective in the life of an organization.”

Anderson (2003:2) after noting that “Public Policy also may be viewed as whatever governments choose to do or not to do”, and classifying such as perhaps being “...adequate for ordinary discourse,” provides “a more precise definition of policy thus: “...a policy is defined as s relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or

matter of concern”. The characteristics of this definition are as follows: the first is that policy is relatively stable. The second is that policy is purposive. The third is that policy is a course of action to be followed. This entails, as Anderson posits that “policies consist of courses or patterns of action taken over time...” (Anderson 2003:3). Policy consists of two major parts-goals and strategies for attaining the goals which translates to management.

Management

Strategies and goals underscore policy implementation and these shall be considered under the concept of management herein.

Yalokwu (2006:4) citing Stoner and Wankel opines:

Management is a process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the efforts of members of an organization of an organization and using all other resources to achieve set goals. A process is a systematic way of doing things and management is a process because all managers, regardless of their personal aptitudes or particular skills, engage in certain interrelatedness achieve their desired goals.

Discussing management in the same vein as above, Robbins (2001:2) says,

in the early part of the twentieth century, a French industrialist by the name of Henri Fayol wrote that all managers perform five management functions: they plan, organize, command, coordinate, and control. Today, these have been condensed those down to four: planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

Robbins asserts:

since organizations exist to achieve goals, someone has to define those goals and the means by which they can be achieved. Management is that someone. The planning function encompasses defining an organization's goals, establishing an overall strategy for those goals, and developing a comprehensive hierarchy of plans to integrate and coordinate activities (Robbins, 2001:2).

The next responsibility of managers is that managers are also responsible for designing an organization's structure. We call this function organizing. It includes the determination of what tasks are to be done, who is to do them, how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom, and where decisions are to be made.

The other functions of management are leading (and it must be emphasized that this is crucial and central to organizational effectiveness); employee motivation, directing, effective communication, controlling through periodic monitoring of the organization's performance against set goals/objectives. In other words, management entails planning, organizing, leading and controlling. This has been reinforced by the classical, human relations and behavioural theorists in their various contributions on elements and principles of management.

Education

Education implies bringing up or training, strengthening of the powers of body and mind. However, because education has been highly bastardised in Nigeria and many people who have been to school regardless of where, what, why, how and how long, now claim to have been educated, there is the need for a more terse definition, particularly one that distinguishes education from mere qualification.

Dore (1976:8) underscores this point thus:

the best effect of schooling, the way it alters a man's capacity and will to do things, depends not only on what he learns, or the way he learns it, but also on why he learns it.

He corroborated "that is at the basis of the distinction between schooling which is education and schooling which is only qualification, a mere process of certificating... or 'credentialing' as American sociologists have recently started to call it"

Dore (1976:8) then goes on to define education by saying:

Most people, when they speak 'education', have in mind a process of learning –be it disciplined training or by freer more enjoyable methods of experiment which has mastery as its object. Knowledge may be to meet some criterion for self respect: the boy who persists with his reading practices so that he too can have his turn reading the lesson in church; the older social scientist who settles down to learn about computer to keep up with his younger colleagues. It may be sought for profitable use; the merchant's son learns accountancy in order to become a better and richer merchant. It may be sought out of respect for some conception of a professional calling-as when the doctor reads reports of the latest discoveries about kidneys in order to be a better ,more conscientiously self respecting doctor. In any case, whether the mastery is an end in itself or whether the knowledge is mastered for use, and whether that use is a practical one or mere self indulgent pleasure, it is mastery of the knowledge itself which counts.

This is in contrast to qualification or certification or credentialisation, about which Dore notes that:

The process for qualification, by contrast ...is concerned not with mastery, but with being certified as having mastered. The knowledge that he gains, he gains not for its own sake and not for constant later use in real life situation- but for the once-and-for-all purpose of reproducing in an examination. And the learning and reproducing is just a means to an end- the end of getting a certificate which is a passport to a coveted job, a status and an income.

Dore (1976) sums of the distinction between education and qualification by aptly saying: “If education is learning to do a job, qualification is a matter of learning in order to get a job”.

This is what education is, but because it is so akin to qualification and because qualification is so much easier to acquire and even these days to steal via outright forgery of certificate or via examination malpractices, quite a number of today’s Nigerian youths go for, and have qualifications rather than education and this is why many Nigerian workers merely get jobs rather than do jobs.

Education Policy

There exists in Nigeria, a national policy on education contained in a document, the most current edition of which is 4th edition (2004). Its first edition was published in 1977 (National Policy on Education, 4th edition 2004:4). This does not mean that there was no education policy pre-1977. The current document on the national education policy divides the subject into four broad categories – pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education – and provides a set of policies to govern each category. Each category as discussed below opens up with its own definition. This makes it superfluous to indulge in further definitions here. The next section discusses the policy and management issues of each category of education one after the other starting from pre-primary, and ending at tertiary education.

Pre-Primary Education

The National Policy on Education (FRN,2004:11) which shall be referred to as NPE in short defines the early childhood pre-primary education as “the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten”. It stated further in paragraph 12 of the policy document that the responsibilities of government for this level of education shall be to promote the training of qualified teachers in adequate number, contribute to the development of suitable curriculum, supervise and control the quality of such institutions, and establish pre-primary sections in existing public schools.

Viewing the above, it is difficult to fault the intention and sincerity of purpose on the part of government. These were reinforced by the objectives of pre-primary education as spelt out in paragraph 13 which include: effecting a smooth transition from the home to school; preparing the child for the primary level of education; providing adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work; inculcate social norms and the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys; develop a sense of co-operation and team spirit; learn good habits, especially good health habits; and teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms through play. Necessary action lines for achieving these objectives were given in paragraph 14 which include among others: producing textbooks in Nigerian languages, setting and monitoring minimum standard for early child care centres in the country; and ensuring full participation of government, communities and teachers associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities.

It is however regrettable that the issues contained in the pre-primary education policy are mere statement intentions and desires rather than policies; policies being both goals and strategies for achieving them. For example the curriculum and criteria for assessing learning

outcomes in some cases are non-existent. In some other circumstances, the basic knowledge of child psychology required for managing and guiding the development of child psychomotor skills are alien to proprietors of such centres, as well as their teachers and this is attributable to either ignorance or inability to pay competitive remuneration geared towards attracting competent and qualified teachers or minders in the right quality and quantity. It is also pertinent to draw attention to the dearth of classrooms, offices, equipment and infrastructural facilities occasioning a net negative effect on early childhood development.

Basic Education

Basic education in Nigeria is of nine-year duration comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. The national policy on education says that it shall be free and compulsory, and should include adult plus non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for adults and out-of-school youths (FRN, 2004:13). Paragraph 17 of the National Policy on Education states that primary education is that given in institutions for children aged six to eleven, and that since the rest of the education system is built on it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. The duration for this level of education is currently fixed at six years.

The goals of primary education are as follows:

- inculcating permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- giving citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- moulding the character and developing sound attitude and moral in the child;

- developing in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment;
- giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity;
- Providing the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality (FRN, 2004:14).

The above goals form the basis of primary education in all states of the federation. The federal government expressly guarantees that this level of education shall be free, universal and compulsory. The curriculum, facilities/infrastructures, services to be provided, methods of learning and other basic issues were clearly documented in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:15-17).

Here again, as laudable as the aforementioned goals are, we regret to say that they look and sound to us as mere statements of intentions and desires rather than policies. For one thing, they are two bogus if this colloquialism can be accepted, and for another, no management preparation as to plans, organization, structures, leadership and coordination mechanisms exist to pilot it. It is trite to express that illiterate recipient of the poor quality input from the society and from unfocused pre-primary school managers will not advance learning in anyway.

In giving vent to basic education, the federal government came up with the Universal Basic Education Commission to be run through an appropriate structure comprising a Board with decision-making powers, chairman, secretary and other administrative positions. In view of the concurrent status of education in the Nigerian federal practice, states were also encouraged to establish their Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) with appropriate structure, funding and operational modalities. This appears to be the Nigerian government's response to achieving goal number two of the UN Millennium

Development Goals (achieving universal basic education). Whatever it is, it needs a more coherent management mechanism to achieve designed results.

It is important to emphasise that the Universal Basic Education Commission has repeatedly lamented the failure of some state governments to access and use the funds. Where such funds have been accessed and collected, it has been diverted to political patronage. Some states have been known to put their counterpart funds used as bait to draw federal government support quickly back into their pockets and not used it for education, (*This Day*, 2011: 03). The foregoing bears eloquent testimony to the workings and management of the basic education scheme in Nigeria. The question that arises logically out of this is: how much success can one expect of a laudable idea (like this) designed to address the problem of illiteracy in the country? The success cannot be much because the policy is a mere grandiose set of intensions without a management strategy of implementation.

Secondary Education

This is defined as “the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage” (FRN, 2004:18). The broad goals of secondary education shall be to prepare the individual for: (a) useful living within the society; and (b) higher education. The specific objectives are so varied and ambitious as those of the basic education and are contained in paragraph 22a-h. Core subjects; pre-vocational electives; non-prevocational electives in junior secondary school and core; vocational electives; non-vocational electives in senior secondary school are clearly spelt out in the policy document (FRN, 2004:19-22). Issues such as methods of certification and general provisions were documented in paragraphs 28-30 (page 23-24).

In some states, secondary education is managed by Ministry of Education through the Post-Primary Schools Management Board under the relevant civil service structure, while in others; it is managed by the Teaching Service Board or Commission. In the

Federal Capital Territory for instance, there is the Secondary Education Board taking care of SSS 1-3 and each of the six local government areas has a zonal office. The Department of Policy and Implementation ensures the implementation of education policies with respect to quality assurance, while the Education Resource Centre is for measurement and evaluation of programmes.

In a review on secondary education, *This Day* (2011: 3) affirmed that “over 67 percent of the eligible population is not in any formal school system. They are also not in vocational training institutions, as most of such schools have long disappeared”. What this translates to is that the policy document is a mere fiction as able-bodied young men and women are barely literate and without basic skills, therefore the future of these vibrant and energetic youths is in serious jeopardy. Predicated on the statistics given above, it can be persuasively argued that section 6 of the EPN dealing with “Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal education and section 7 on science, Technical and vocational education is mere rhetorics and would require serious tinkering with by the policy leadership through the Federal Ministry of Education.

Tertiary Education

This is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotronics including those institutions offering correspondence courses (FRN, 2004:36). The goals of tertiary education in Nigeria are broadly stated in paragraph 59 of the policy document on education to include the following:

- a. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- b. develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- c. develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;

- d. acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- e. promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- f. forge and cement national unity; and
- g. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The above goals are to be pursued through teaching, research, and development; virile staff development programmes; generation and dissemination of knowledge; a variety of modes of programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich etc; access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES); maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies; inter-institutional co-operation; dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services.

In giving expression to the above goals, paragraph 61 of NPE states that all teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching. With respect to funding and administration, paragraph 62 and 63 are quite explicit. Whereas paragraph 62 affirms that “to supplement government funding, universities and other tertiary institutions are encouraged to explore other sources of funding such as endowments, consultancy services and commercial ventures”, paragraph 63 avers that “the internal organization and administration of each institution shall be its own responsibility” (FRN, 2004:37). The document further lists the traditional areas of academic freedom for tertiary institutions to include: selecting their students, except where the law prescribes otherwise; appointing their staff; teaching, selecting areas of research; and determining the content of courses.

It is germane to state that the control and general management of tertiary institutions devolves on National Board for Technical

Education (NBTE) which regulates polytechnics, monotronics and technical colleges; National Commission for colleges of Education (NCCE); and National Universities Commission.

The National Board for Technical Education is a principal organ of the Federal Ministry of Education specifically created to handle all aspects of technical and vocational education falling outside university education. It was established by Act NO. 9 of 11TH January, 1977, also refer to Act 16 and 9 of 1985 and 1993 respectively. Apart from providing standardized minimum guide curricula for technical and vocational education and training, the board supervises and regulates, through accreditation processes, the programmes offered by technical institutions at secondary and post-secondary levels. It is also involved in the funding of polytechnics owned by the federal government.

The mission of NBTE is to promote the production of skilled/semi-skilled technical and professional manpower, to revitalize and sustain the national economy, reduce unemployment and poverty through the setting and maintenance of high standards, provision of current and reliable information for planning and decision making, sourcing and disbursing of funds and adequate linkages with industry.

There are at present 110 approved tertiary technical institutions and 159 technical colleges being supervised by the Board with ownership ranging from federal to state governments and private entrepreneurs. The NBTE possesses the requisite administrative structure, resources and logistics to carry out its responsibilities.

The specific goals of polytechnics are:

- i. Providing full-time or part-time courses of instruction and training in engineering, other technologies, applied science, business and management, leading to the production of trained manpower;

- ii. providing the technical knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of Nigeria;
- iii. training and imparting necessary skills for the production of technicians, technologist and other skilled personnel who shall be enterprising and self-reliant;
- iv. training people who can apply scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems for the convenience of man;
- v. Giving exposure on professional studies in the technologies (NPE 2004:41-42).

Pursuant to the above (specific) goals, government shall adopt measures to: develop and encourage the ideals of polytechnic education through students industrial work experience and improving immediate and long-term prospects of polytechnic graduates and other professionals with respect to their status and remuneration.

The above goals (broad and specific) are lofty and commendable, but belie the current technological and development status of the country. This calls for more pragmatism and focused attention/action on the part of managers and policy leadership in technological and vocational education in Nigeria. One other issue deserving mention is the preponderance of arts and social science courses in the polytechnics. It is curious to observe the running/teaching of these courses in institutions designed to provide technical capacity and technology-based education for the nation.

Paragraph 70 to 79 in the National Policy on Education (2004:39-41) deals with Teacher Education. These comprise specific goals; mode of training; nature and type of institutions covered; and general provisions. The National Commission for Colleges of Education is the regulatory agency for teacher education in Nigeria. It was established by Decree (now Act) 13 of 17th January 1989 (Amended Act 12 of 1993) as a completion of a tripod of excellence in the supervision of higher education in Nigeria.

The establishment of the commission derives from the importance accorded to quality teacher education by the federal government. The commission strives to pursue goals of quality assurance in teacher education and its pride is based on the seminal philosophy in the National Policy on Education (2004:39) which states that “no education can rise above the quality of its teachers...”

The specific functions of NCCE are as follows:

- a. Make recommendations on the national policy necessary for the full development of teacher education and the training of teachers.
- b. Lay down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education and accredit their certificate and other academic awards after obtaining thereof prior approval of the Honorable Minister of Education.
- c. Approve guidelines setting out criteria for accreditation of all colleges of education in Nigeria.
- d. Determine qualified teacher needs of Nigeria for the purpose of planning facilities and in particular prepare periodic master plans for the balanced and coordinated development of colleges of education.
- e. Inquire into and advise the federal government on the financial needs of the colleges to enable them meet the objectives of producing the trained qualified teachers of the country.
- f. Receive block grants from the federal government and allocate them to colleges of education.
- g. Act as the agency for channeling all external aids to colleges of education in Nigeria.
- h. Harmonise entry requirements and duration of courses at the colleges of education.

- i. Collate, analyse and publish relevant information relating to teacher education in Nigeria.
- j. Advise on and take measures to improve the immediate and long term prospects of technical and business education teachers with respect to status and remuneration.
- k. Provide encouragement for women to enter a wide range of pre-vocational courses in technical education.

The commission is structured accordingly to enable it achieve the goals and objectives of quality teacher education (enumerated above) in Nigeria. The commission is headed by an Executive Secretary, and it comprises the following departments: Academic Programmes; Planning, Research and Statistics; Physical Planning and Development; Finance and Supplies; Personnel Management. Detailed functions of these departments should not bore us here, except that it is important to note that the academic programmes department has as part of its functions the following: curriculum development for teacher education, particularly courses offered in Colleges of Education; accreditation of courses for the award of NCE; making recommendations for entry requirements and duration of courses in colleges of education; making recommendations for pre-vocational, technical, agricultural, business and home economics programmes; laying down and reviewing when necessary, the standard to be allowed in teacher education; carrying out evaluation and assessment of NCE in-service teacher programme; laying down the method of assessing students for the award of NCE. The units in this department are: Education; Sciences; Language; Arts and Social Sciences; Library.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned goals and measures targeted at realizing them, it is observable that there is much to be done in making the teaching profession (especially at the level of NCE holders) more attractive as it concerns remuneration and professionalization which is yet to be taken seriously. The Nigeria Teachers Institute (NTI) and the Teacher Registration Council (TRC)

would require better collaboration in order to achieve the desired results. In this regard, it behoves managers of the education sector to adopt proactive measures aimed at achieving synergistic effect of these bodies for optimal outcome.

Apart from the broad goals of tertiary education as stated in paragraph 59 of the National Policy on Education (2004:36-37), paragraph 64-69 deals with specific goals, mandates, establishment of private universities and general provisions. The agency of government charged with control and regulation of university education in Nigeria is the National Universities Commission. It was established in 1962 as an advisory agency in the Cabinet Office. However in 1974, it became a statutory body and the first Executive Secretary in the person of Professor Jubril Aminu was then appointed. As an agency under the Federal Ministry of Education, the commission has a governing Council, currently headed by Professor Shehu Galadanchi. The current Executive Secretary is Professor Julius A. Okojie who assumed office on August 3rd, 2006.

The commission has metamorphosed from a small office in the cabinet office to an important agency of government in terms of development and management of university education in Nigeria. The vision of NUC is to be a dynamic regulatory agency acting as a catalyst for positive change and innovation for the delivery of quality university education in Nigeria. It has the mission of ensuring the orderly development of a well coordinated and productive university system that will guarantee quality and relevant education for national development and global competitiveness (NUC, 2010:1).

It has the following specific goals: attainment of stable and crisis-free university system; to work with Nigerian universities to achieve full accreditation status for at least 80% of the academic programmes; to initiate and promote proficiency in the use of ICT for service delivery within the commission and the Nigerian universities system; upgrading and maintenance of physical facilities in the Nigerian university system for delivery of quality university education; to

match university graduate output with national manpower needs; to foster partnership between the Nigerian university system and the private sector. The mandates of NUC include: approval of courses and programmes; determination and maintenance of minimum academic standards; monitoring of universities; accreditation of academic programmes; provision of guidelines and processing of applications for the establishment of private universities (NUC, 2010:1-2). To enable the commission achieve the above listed mandates and goals (broad and specific), it is structured appropriately with the Executive Secretary responsible for the day-to-day running, there is a Deputy Executive Secretary and seven Directors.

Despite all the efforts by NUC at ensuring quality university education in Nigeria, there are damning reports that “the Nigerian education system now produces unemployable graduates” (*This Day*, 2011:4). It proceeds to define unemployable graduate as “a person with a certificate telling a lie about what he/she can do. If, in addition, the graduate is illiterate, it means that he/she failed to acquire the requisite skills at the level of basic education and was progressively certified (fraudulently of course)... given a university degree in circumstances that must be controversial, on investigation”.

It has been similarly reported that “the universities also lose their best graduating students while retaining second rate academics, most of who can only turn out third rate materials” (*This Day*, 2011:3). Another issue raised is that of in-breeding and publication of departmental journals of doubtful pedigree. A major point here is that since promotion takes cognizance of publications, there is a tendency for weak academics to be promoted to levels of incompetence.

One other issue worthy of mention (although befuddling and controversial) is that of ranking Nigerian universities and global competitiveness. In a commentary on this, Idumange (2010:25) submitted that “no Nigerian... university made it to the best 200 universities worldwide”. It is even more pathetic to observe from this report that in Africa where Nigeria prides herself as giant, “in 2010,

on the list of first 100 universities... only five Nigerian universities were mentioned” in the following order: UNILAG (31st); OAU Ife (35th); UNILORIN (37th); UI (45th); and UNIBEN (87th). South Africa alone accounts for twenty-three universities out of one hundred. Analysts and commentators argue that inadequate funding and infrastructural deficits provide credible explanations for this sorry state, as we shall discover, the issue goes beyond these.

Idumange (2010:25) reported that the criteria for ranking Asian universities are: research quality; teaching quality; graduate employability; and internationalization. Okebukola (2008:25) documented that in worldwide university ranking, the following factors are weighty: academic peer review; employer review; faculty/student ratio; citations per faculty; international factors (as measured by international students and faculty in the institution).

In discussing the Nigerian experience with respect to university ranking, Okebukola (2008) explicated factors worthy of note to include: percentage of academic programme of the university with full accreditation status; compliance with carrying capacity (measured by the degree of deviation from carrying capacity); proportion of the academic staff of the university at professorial level; foreign content (staff): proportion of the academic staff of the university who are non-Nigerians; foreign content (students): proportion of the students of the university who are non-Nigerians; proportion of staff of the university with outstanding academic achievements (such as Nobel Prize winners, National Merit Awardees, fellows of academies); internally-generated revenue ability; research output of academic staff; student completion rate; Ph.D. graduate output for the year; stability of university calendar; student to PC ratio. Okojie (2010:7) corroborated that the above factors were employed in the 2004 ranking of Nigerian universities.

A thorough scrutiny of the above factors explains the dismal performance of Nigerian universities both at continental and global arena. Okojie (2010:18) buttressed further that in the January 2010

webometrics ranking of top 100 African universities, whereas UNILORIN came 55th in Africa and 5,846th in the world; OAU Ife took 61st in Africa, 6,265th in the world; UI ranked 63rd in Africa and 6,396th in the world. UNIJOS occupied 74th position in Africa and 7000th in the world; UNILAG took 79th in Africa and 7,246th in the world.

Idumange (2010:25) however attempted an explanation on the above state of affairs in the light of problems and conflict involving men, measures and resources. He identified inadequate funding for teaching and research, brain drain, academic wastage, decaying infrastructure, inadequate teaching, industrial strife, declining productivity, unnecessary politicization of education matters and budgetary inadequacies as serious challenges to the attainment of qualitative university education system in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education anywhere in the world is an instrument of human capital advancement and for achieving national development. The need for a national policy to guide education cannot be over emphasized; and such a policy must be targeted at and relevant to national needs, goals and aspiration. This paper attempted to explore concepts that are relevant to the topic: Policy and Management Issues in Contemporary Nigerian Education System. It progressed to discuss and analyze issue bothering on the major segments of education in Nigeria, namely: Pre-primary/Primary and basic education; Secondary School (SSS1-3) and tertiary education. The paper established that government's efforts and gestures with respect to education are foundational, but would require further work and consolidation in order to achieve better results.

The paper recommends the following:

1. The teaching profession should be made more attractive, especially at the lower levels of education through improved remuneration and professionalization. In this respect, there should be better collaboration and synergy between the

Nigerian Teachers Institute and Teachers Registration Council.

2. The Federal Ministry of Education should continually strive to play the appropriate warehousing roles in policy leadership.
3. Some forms of overhaul are required at primary and post-primary level, this should include a comprehensive capacity audit of the academic staff, strengthening of research capacity and criteria for promotion should not only be rigorous, but should capture input-output correlation.
4. Appointment into governing boards of tertiary institutions should be completely depoliticized, to enable individuals with relevant knowledge and exposure contributing their quota to the development of these institutions.
5. There is a need for better commitment and political will on the part of some state governments to making the UBE programme achieve the desired results, especially goal number 2 of the UN MDGs.
6. Judicious management of resources and striving to maintain stable academic calendar are very important for the survival of tertiary education in the country.
7. Upgrading of facilities for teaching and research, plus general infrastructural provision are also required in the tertiary sector.
8. A strong web presence, highly robust research culture, and better networking with foreign universities will go a long way in redressing the poor ranking of Nigerian universities in continental and global arena.

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