

# MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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## **Abstract**

*Considering the invaluable roles and contribution of education to meaningful individual, societal and national development, no one will dispute the fact that its proper management and administration should be a national concern particularly in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper attempts to examine the historical overview of educational management and administration in Nigeria. It also highlights some current problems facing Nigerian education such as cultism, examination malpractices political influence, policy implementation, corruption and inadequate funding inter alia. Moreover, the paper discusses the challenges ahead with a view to restoring the lost glory of our national educational system, especially in the areas of access, relevance, quality and standard of education. Finally the paper recommends that there is the need for proper and adequate funding of the education, training and retraining of all educational managers' administrator and policy makers.*

## **Introduction**

The invaluable roles and contribution of education in the development of an individual and the society cannot be over emphasized. Many countries including Nigeria, take education as instrument for the promotion of national development as well as effecting desirable social change (NPE, 2004) this perhaps, might be responsible for the continuous growing concern of all

stakeholders in education industry about the changes that are likely to affect it as well the implications such changes will have on the management and administration of education. There is therefore, the urgent need to really look into the future of our nations education Vis-a-vis the challenges ahead with a view to achieving efficiency effectiveness, quality and relevance in the entire system.

By discussing the challenges ahead, our nation's educational managers and administrator will be aware of their enormous responsibilities and be able to find lasting solution to the problem currently facing the educational sector and threatening the system. The paper examines the management and administration of Nigeria education from the historical perspective, highlights some of the endemic problems confronting the nation's education and the challenges ahead.

### **Concept Of Management And Administration**

In this paper, attempt shall be made to define the two concepts of management and administration with a view to bringing out the distinctions between them Adepoju (1998:11) observe that even though the two concepts have been used interchangeably, however there are several distinction between them; one of which is the fact that management is wider in scope than administration in other words, management implies a process of which administration is an aspect of such process. Resser in Babarinde (200:143) opines that management is the utilization of physical and human resources through co-operative efforts and it is accomplished by performing the function of planning, organizing, staffing directing and controlling on the other hand peretomode (1991) views administration as concerned with the performance of executive duties, the carrying out of policies and decisions

to fulfill a purpose, and the controlling of the day-to-day running of an organization. It is also the careful and systematic arrangement and use of resource (human and material), situations and opportunities for the achievement of the specify objectives of a given organization (Nwankwo, 1994). Administration is a sub- set of management.

### **Historical Overview**

Management and administration of education in Nigeria dates back to the commencement of Western education in the country. It has close link with the periods of the nations political history. Although, scholar, writers and experts in the field of education identify various periods concerning educational management and administration. For the purpose of this paper, the writers have identified three major periods:- the missionary period the pre- independence period and post-independence period. Gang, Udo and Akpa citing Nwankwo (1983:1), assert that “the administration and management of education in Nigeria, reflects the earlier impact of the various agencies such as the missionaries, British colonial government and the Nigeria themselves. Each of these agencies left foot print that have adversely guided the educational administration, management and supervision in Nigeria.

At the inception of western education in Nigeria around the 1840s educational management and administration was solely in the hands of the missionaries. This spanned between 1840 and 1887. Although, the colonial government made an educational ordinance in 1882, government was not interested in the management and administration of education it only made grants-in-aids available to schools.

The firs colonial government intervention in the national educational management, control and administration took place in 1887 with

promulgation of the first purely Nigerian educational ordinance between 1887 and 1960, the colonial government and the nationalists played significant roles in the national educational management and administration. There were many educational codes policies, ordinances and commission aimed at proper management and administration of education. The country's nationalists, having recognized the roles of education as an instrument of colonial liberation, played active part in the management and administration of the country's educational system.

At independence in 1960, the management and administration of Nigeria education rest on Nigerians themselves. This period witnessed active participation by non-governmental agencies communities and individuals as well as government intervention (NPE, 2004).

It should be noted however that although the Nigeria government got involved in the management of education as from the time of the Richards constitution of 1946 with the creation of regional governments, total management and administration of Nigeria education by Nigerian started after independence precisely. The most important giant step ever taken in the management and administration of the nation's education took place in 1969 with convention of the national curriculum conference which leads to the provision of the educational document christened national policy on education in 1977 that serves as guide to the direction of our educational practice. The administration of Nigerian education however, changed between the civilians and the military from 1960-1999 when the record of education industry in the country witnessed unstable educational policies.

Administration and management of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has actively experience a laudable and historic landmark as Nigerian, took complete control of their destiny in education. Indeed there are numerous

positive landmarks in education in Nigeria presently. In other words Nigeria has accomplished more in education than during the previous one hundred years of British colonial administrative rule of the country. This period of what we may call home grown. Nigeria educational administration management was greeted with several heights such as issues bordering on national education polices primary education secondary education the Universal Basic Educational (UBE) tertiary education as well as the institutional frameworks for regulating education. Successive governments in both state and federal have continued to allocate over 30% of their budget to education. The establishment of over 50 educational institutions within the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not a common achievement in the history of educational administration, management and development in the country. Above all some of the new educational institution have brought practical meaning to the concept of adaptive education by structural provision to realistically meet the challenges of the Nigerian local environment and solve priority problems. For want of valid statistics the equally more improve astronomical increase in the number of primary, secondary schools colleges of education and polyemis is not quantifiable here.

Inspite of this laudable efforts of successive state and federal governments in re-positioning Nigeria education on the world map, Nigerian educational system and it productivity in the 21<sup>st</sup> has continued to suffer serious set back; as a result of our misconceived and misdirected social values and corruption.

### **Current Trends And Problems Facing Nigerian Education;**

Since the dawn of the twenty first century, the following topical issues have tended to dominate the front burner of educational administration management and development in Nigeria. Attempts at having a cursory look at those problems confronting our nation's educational system will serve as a basis for us to have awareness of the new challenges ahead, if we are still very much interested in achieving our nation's overall educational objectives, more so in this era of democratic governance.

These educational problems include the following

1. **Crises In Education:** These have been identified by Nwagwu (2003) to be numerous, including crises of purposes and priorities, crises of demand for and expectations of education management; crises of inadequacy of infrastructure facilities, crises in curricula policies and activities crises of professionalism; crises in the classroom administration; crises of indiscipline among staff and students crises of staff utilization and management crises of scholastic achievements crises of policy formulation and implementation crises of records and information management; crises of effective supervision and inspection; crises of leadership and public confidence crises of values, mindlessness and anti intellectualism.
2. **Educational/Virtual Pedagogy:** Information and communication technology (ICT) is foisting on Nigerian education administration, its challenges and possibilities.
3. **Financial Problems:** That the entire educational sector in Nigeria is under funded is no more news corroborating this view, Obonya (1999:39) asserts that funding has become a vexed issue in discussion of education in Africa. This has also been the case in Nigeria. This problem reflect in poor teachege remuneration, shortage of (even-outdated) infrastructure facilities as well as misappropriation of the little available funds to education.

4. **Political Problem:** All sectors of the economy depend on happenings in the political sector, hence, the political instability in the country over the years shows its divesting effects on the educational system with frequent changes in our educational policies and programmes. The plurality nature of Nigeria does not even help the situation as managing education in a pluralist society like ours is a tedious task since there are many diverse interests to satisfy

5. **Social Problems:** Which make all educational stakeholders to doubt the quality, relevance and standard of our education. Such social problems include examination malpractices students cultism incessant strike actions, sexual abuse total breakdown of societal norms, values etc.

6. **Technical Problem:** Some technical problems are also affecting our nation's education, these problems revolve around dearth of reliable educational staff to carry out meaningful researches poor management information system among others. Obanya ((1999) observes that "our strategic thinking of the future of education in this country should in fact dwell seriously on informatics not just as a tool of management but also as a teaching research and in fact a routine activity too".

Generally, Nwagwu (1997) submits that during 1960 – 1995 when there was unplanned and uncontrolled educational expansion in Nigeria, Nigeria educational system is plagued with such problems as poor funding inadequate facilities, corruption in admissions, certification and examination malpractices, emergence of secret cults; frequent strikes and closures and abandonment of academic standards. All these existing problems are still prevalent in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Other problems of administration and management of our education system are

7. Attaining education for all (EFA) by 2015 via proper universalization of education especially using the universal Basic education (UBE) scheme
8. Discrimination against technical educational and their products as against university education and their graduates e.g. the case of polytechnic education.
9. Quality assurance in education across all levels from pre-primary to tertiary educational institutions is a worrisome issue in Nigeria.
10. University autonomy is seen as a panacea for better university administration, university funding quality assurance and access.
11. Deregulation or allowing the privatization of educational provision and management of all educational levels is becoming the vogue.
12. Gender Balancing In access to education is still not well addressed.
13. Capacity Building entrepreneurial curriculum perspective is being seen as the way forward in thinking education to job creation/acquisition
14. Attracting International patronage for Nigerian education is seen as an amelioration of the weight of funding of education.

### **The Challenges Ahead**

Having identified some of the problems facing our education on one hand, it becomes imperative on the other hand to highlight the new challenges with a view to getting our education managers and administrators as well as other stakeholders prepared.

**Access:** accessibility to education in Nigeria has been a major factor in the administration and management of Nigeria education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Nigeria, there is the urgent need to practicalise the conceptual deregulation view of education in order to make education within the reach of every citizen of the nation indeed as stated in section 1(9c) of the national

policy of education (2005) the government intention to continue to expand education and training facilities in response to need and make it progressively accessible to every individual to afford them with a far more diversified and flexible choice should be given serious consideration, since this is in line with one of the national goals of Nigeria which is the building of a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Relevance of education does not seem to be relevant to our aspiration and needs these days, Udoh, Akpa and Gang (1990) submit that after independence many educators expressed concern about the lack of relevance of the Nigeria educational system in meeting the pressing economic, social and cultural needs of the national. By relevance according to Longs (1999:14) means is the extent to which education can be used by the society to realize its dreams as well as contribute to recipients aspiration in life”.

If one critically examines our nation’s education, one agrees that our education is no longer relevant. The colonial heritage and mentality in form of having education that produces individual with Nigerian colour but British blood” still exists. Our local cultural, values have been totally neglected in favour of foreign ones.

Therefore, it becomes a challenge for us in educational management and administration to ensure that our education management and administration is in such a way as to be more relevant to our culture, needs and aspirations. Fafunwa (1995) maintains that Nigeria education must of necessity relate to the needs and aspirations of the child the community and the nation and also be tailored towards the rediscovery of our cultural heritage”. In essence we need to restore our local cultural heritage and values. Quality and standard: Akinkughe (1994) opines that” today we lament the glaring inadequacies in our educational industry: primary,

secondary special, technical, and tertiary Institutions in which there is abundant evidence of crippling inertia neglect and pervasive decay in values and standard". By implication, Nigerian education at present is of low quality and standard. One finds it difficult to believe that teaching learning activities take place in Nigerian schools. Emphasis should be laid on how to really maintain quality and standard in our education. This will make our certificate more acceptable.

**Student's enrolment:** There has been an increase in students overall enrolment in Nigerian schools, hence education demand is far greater than supply. The long commission (1991) according to Salim (1999) and Olagboye (1998) reported that the demand for education in 2001/2002 academic session rose from 72,719 to 95, 199. However managing students flow according to Obanya (1999) may not necessarily head to reduction in students numbers, rather, it could lead to rationalization of in-takes so that institution will not be biting more than it can chew. This however, is a challenging area because we should not delay students education in the name of rationalization since education is a natural and fundamental human right to all.

**Human resource development:** How to properly develop all the human resource in education is a new challenge in the management and administration of Nigeria education. Human resources are needed to harness other resource towards the realization of the educational goals; hence they should be well developed. Human factor makes the differences in all cases any where anytime.

**Result-oriented leaders:** among the factors that account for failure of the educational policies and programmes is leadership that lack managerial and administrative skills required to succeed. In this 21<sup>st</sup> it is a challenge for

us to source for qualified educational managers and administrators that can deliver there much needed results and achieve educational objectives.

**Discipline:** Maintenance of discipline in the entire educational system is a serious challenge ahead. There is gross indiscipline on the parts of virtually all educational stakeholder for example, there is rampant sex abuse, cultism drug abuse human trafficking prostitution, embezzlement school funds by school administrators examination malpractices and so on it is therefore great challenge for us to ensure that discipline is restored and sustained in the educational system.

## **CONCLUSION**

The discussion in this paper revealed that our nations educational system is plagued with multi-various problems notably social, political, financial technical quality, capacity building and crises. The challenges ahead towards addressing these problems were also highlight and therefore, there is need to ensure that all hands are put on deck in order to achieve our nation's overall aims and objective as contained in the national policy on educational (200) proper funding and complete autonomy in the administration and management of our educational system by professionals or experts are pre-requisites to having a total overhead education industry in the country.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the conclusion the following recommendations are made

- (1) There should be new orientation in order to have strong consciousness and commandment toward our nations educational development, management and administration
- 2 there should be proper funding of education by the government, non-governmental organizations, private individual parents and the society since no meaningful management and administration of any organization can take lace without adequate funding.
3. There should be continuous training and retraining of all educational mangers, administrator, policy – makers and implementers in from of workshops conferences and famines should be vigorously pursued and made compulsory.
4. The entire management and administrator of the nation's education should be in the hands of the professionals and expertise in the field. In order words political favouratism should be avoided.

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