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QUESTION: The Development and Structure of Educational Institutions in Nigeria.

ANSWER.

Up until 1914 western education system in Nigeria had no definite philosophy. The British Government had not taken any decision regarding the definite shape of education in its colonies. The education ordinances only ridiculously complicated the system without reflecting the conditions and aspirations of the Nigerian people for future development. In this unit, attempt is made at getting you acquainted with the efforts made at developing a philosophy of education based on the aspirations of Nigerians. Discussion on the educational development that took place in Nigeria from 1919 and beyond will be made with a view to consolidating your knowledge of the trends of educational development in Nigeria over the years. The impacts of these developments will similarly be highlighted so that you learn how to further the course of education in this country.

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN NIGERIA

The reports of the two Phelps- Stoke’s committees that visited West Africa in 1920 and East and Central Africa in 1924, criticized the system of education being given to Africans as being classically book based. They accused the missionaries for following the ideals prevailing in their home countries, which might not work functionally in Africa. The reports further condemned the subjects being taught to Africans as being direct copies of the subject contents from British and America schools with little attempt to use local materials in the teaching of the subjects like history and geography.

The two commissions however recommended that:

1. Education should be developed along the vocational and cultural lives of the people.

2. The needs of African societies to met through education so as to promote development.

3. Educational and Religious responsibilities of Government should be effectively organised and supervised.

These criticisms and recommendations undoubtedly laid the foundation for the evolution of the colonial educational policies in Africa, for it influenced the British Government to asses sits responsibilities on education to its colonies. In 1923 therefore, it decided “to approve the establishment of an advisory committee on native education in tropical areas to advise the Secretary of state for the colonies on matters of native education and to assist him in advancing the progress of education in the British tropical Africa”(Adesina)The committee worked tirelessly and produced a thirteen point memorandum, which provided for the first time, a sound basis for Nigeria’s educational policies. They are as follows:

1. Government should control educational policies and cooperate with educational agencies. Each territory should have an Education Advisory Board on which all educational interests should be represented.

2. Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions ofthe various peoples, conserving as far as possible, all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting them where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution.

3. Government should be concerned with religious and character training.

4. Education service must be made to attract the best men from Britain, whether for permanent career or for short- service appointment.

5. Grant should be given to aid voluntary schools which satisfy the requirements.

6. African languages, as well as English, should be used in education.

7. African teaching staff must be adequate in number, in qualification, and in character, and should include women.

8. The system of specially trained visiting teachers is commended as a means of improving village schools.

9. A thorough system of inspection and supervision of schools is essential.

10. Technical Industrial training should best be given in a system of apprenticeship in government workshops. Instructions in village craft must be clearly differentiated from the training of the skilled mechanic.

11. Vocational, other than Industrial training should be carried out through a system of learning in government departments.

12. The education of girls and women is of vital importance, though with its own problems. Educated mothers mean educated homes. Health education is important..

Therefore, there must be trained women teachers. Education must provide for adult women as well as schools for girls.

13. A complete education, including infant; secondary education of different types;technical and vocational schools and institutions, some of which may hereafter reach university rank, for such subjects as teacher education, medicine, agriculture and adult education. The education of the whole community should advance pari-passu.

(Adesina)The ordinance of 1926, the colonial development act of 1929 and the 1948 educational ordinance merely re-echoed the provisions of the Phelps-stokes recommendations, which led to the decentralization of education and got the government to be more involved in the control and supervision of education. Curriculum content became more expanded and the training of indigenous teachers pursued more vigorously.

Between 1945 and 1970, Nigeria began to develop its higher education system. The various committees reports set to examine the possibility of developing the sector were studied by the government with a view to implementing the recommendations right away. In line with this therefore, the Government studied the Elliot commission reports, which was established in 1943 to examine the possibility of establishing university colleges in Nigeria, the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Sierra Leone.

The report suggested the establishment of the university college, Ibadan, which came into being in 1947. In 1959, the government appointed another commission headed by Eric Ashby “to conduct an investigation into the Nigeria’s need in the field of post secondary school certificate and higher education over the next twenty years”. (Fafunwa)

This was the first time in Nigeria’s history that “Nigerians, represented by the minister of education, decided to examine the higher educational structure in terms of the needs of the country”. (Ibid)This afforded the Nigerian educationists to work, for the first time, together with their counterparts from Britain and America to fashion out the best practicable suggestions in the field of education. It was also the first time that a comprehensive review of education in Nigeria was undertaken by experts. The recommendations of the commission, which paved the way for the development of higher education in Nigeria is as listed below:

1. The Federal Government should give support for the development of new university planned for 1955.

2. A university should be established in the North using the old site of the Nigeria College in Zaria as its base.

3. A university should be established in Lagos with day and evening degree courses in business, commerce and economics.

4. University College Ibadan should move from its conservative position, widen its curriculum and develop into a full university.

5. All Universities in Nigeria should be national in outlook.

6. There should be wider diversity and greater flexibility in university education.

7. All the universities should have B.A (Education) degree courses.

8. Courses in Engineering, Medicine, Law, Commerce, Agriculture, etc, should be offered.

9. The new Nigerian universities should be independent of one another and each should confer its own degrees.10. A National Universities Commission should be set up to have undisputed control over the affairs of the universities; particularly, in terms of finance, staff and courses.

Looking at the trends in the development of education since the ‘40s’, you will notice that the development was becoming increasingly systematic. Series of educational plans right from 1942 saw the upsurge in the development of primary, secondary, teacher and university education. These will now be considered separately.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The development of primary education after independence was based on the Ashby recommendations. The Government of the Northern Region felt that the greatest need was to accelerate the expansion of the primary schools. Its aim was to attain the Ashby report target of 25% of children of school age to be in school by 1970. The Government also designed a programme that was to advance the region into Universal Primary Education as soon as possible. At the same time infrastructures were to be laid in terms of post-primary facilities in order to ensure a balanced education development. The Eastern and Western Regions were already enrolling a high proportion of primary school population through their universal primary education programmes. However, problems were becoming enormous because of poor quality staff and falling standards amidst the high cost of education. The East had to scrap its own UPE and directed its attention to teacher training with a view to achieving high quality work in the schools. In the West, the successful implementation of the UPE since 1955 left them with the time to concentrate on raising the standard of teaching in schools.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Post Independence development of secondary education centered around the following problem areas:

1. The expansion in primary education created a high demand for secondary education.

2. The Ashby Commission had called for increased number in the secondary school population and a revision of its curriculum.

3. Some commissions appointed to review the educational system found out that the content of secondary school education as well as the methods of instruction in such schools were inappropriate.

4. Other problems identified included the over emphasis on book education in the secondary schools. Pupils despised manual work. Science curriculum was poor. All these contributed to the so-called falling standards in education.

Government saw the root cause of all these problems as the poor quality and quantity of secondary school teachers. The graduate teachers were in very short supply. Government tried to have expatriate teachers to meet this demand. But paying for the passages and allowances of the expatriate teachers meant much on the lean resources of the regional governments. And, worse still, many of these hirelings stayed only for a term of two years or three and refused to renew their contract.However, to meet the increasing number of secondary school students, Government opened many new secondary schools. Generally, the curriculum was English Language, Mathematics, History, Geography, Religious Knowledge, Local Languages, Fine and Applied Arts, General Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. French was introduced gradually to replace Latin and Greek. The grammar school kept its lead and remained the darling of both parents and students. The higher school i.e. sixth form was not so successful except in a few government well established schools with enough graduate teachers and laboratory equipment. This was because the curriculum was tailored to meet the requirement of foreign examinations. Available resources in the schools could not meet these.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDCUATION

After independence the government of the Northern Region established twelve craft centre sand three technical schools all over the region. A technical institute at Kaduna admitted students from all parts of the North. By 1960, the Eastern Region had thirty-three technical and vocational institutions of various kinds. A College of Technology, now the Institute of Management and Technology was established at Enugu. In the Western Region, government established four trade centres and the women’so ccupational centre at Abeokuta. A Technical Institute now the Auchi Polytechnic was established at Auchi. In Lagos, we had the Yaba College of Technology and the Yaba Trade school at Surulere.It is important to observe that a number of the bigger industrial firms like the United African Company (UAC), departments and corporations like the Public Works Department (PWD) or the Ministry of Works, Posts and Telegraph (P&amp;T), the Nigerian Railways and the Nigerian Coal Corporation had technical schools in which they trained artisans in their specific industries. Last but not the least are the roadside mechanics who acquire their skills from self-employed artisans while many girls acquire skills in needle work, sewing, catering and domestic science from such roadside artisans as well.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

After independence, teacher education had two major problems – low output of teachers and poor quality of the teachers produced. To meet the two problems government granted the provision of additional Grade II Training Colleges and extra streams to the existing ones. To make up for the poor quality, government approved the up-grading of most of the Grade III Training Colleges to Grade II. Then, new Grade II Teachers’ Colleges were to be established. Unfortunately, the Ashby recommendation for the establishment of Teachers’Grade I Colleges was not vigorously pursued. However, the Western Government introduced the Ohio Project, a normal science centre admitting teachers with Grade II teacher’s certificate. Lagos had the Government Teachers’ Training College at Surulere. The Eastern Region established a science centre at Umudike, near Umuahia for the production of Teachers Grade I Certificates. Soon, the Teachers’ Grade I programme gave way to the Nigerian Certificate in Education(NCE) for the preparation of teachers for the lower forms of secondary schools and for the teacher training colleges. They were three-year – programme institutions. The Advanced Teachers’ Colleges as they were initially called were established in Lagos in 1962, Ibadan 1962 (but in 1964 it became Adeyemi College of Education Ondo), Zaria in 1962 (but moved to Kano in 1964) and Owerri in 1963. In 1968 one was established at Abraka in Bedel State but took the name College of Education. When the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was established, it took the lead in starting a new teachers programme known as the B.A., B.Sc. and B.Ed in Education. This meant that a student could combine education courses with one or two teaching subjects and offer them throughout the student’s four years to graduate. This replaced the traditional system of taking a degree before coming for a one year diploma in education.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

By 1960, the University College Ibadan had established itself as a reputable institution of

Higher learning. It was also making a great contribution to the man-power needs of Nigeria. But the need for a larger out-put of University graduates was increasingly felt and commonly expressed. For example, as far back as 1955, there were serious thoughts and attempts to establish another University. Ibadan was criticized for its low annual intake said to be conditioned by its residential nature. Partly because of these criticisms, the Federal Minister for Education, on behalf of the Federal and Regional Governments appointed the Ashby Commission. The commission’s recommendation gave support to the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Ife, Ile-Ife and the University of Lagos, Lagos. It was after 1970, that state governments joined in the establishment of Universities while the Federal Government started to establish Universities of Technology and others for Agriculture. Each of these 21 states of the Nigerian Federation nearly has two Universities.

**THE ROLE OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

In the area of primary schools, private enterprise did not feature much. This was left solely in the hands of the voluntary agencies and government. Some corporate bodies like the University of Ibadan and other universities at Nsukka, Ife, Lagos and Zaria tried to establish primary schools for the convenience of their staff. In the post secondary sector, local communities and individuals helped the government by establishing and running some secondary schools. Most of these private schools were not grant-aided from public funds and so turned to commercial and vocational subjects which attracted students. This gave rise to numerous private commercial secondary schools which were established after independence.It is true that most of these institutions were poorly equipped; but they supplied the secretarial staff which enabled the Nigerian bureaucracy to stand when the colonial staff left in 1960. The period 1931-1959 witnessed a lot of local community participation at spreading science education in Nigeria as individuals, groups and communities set out to establish more secondary schools in the country.Prominent Nigerians who studied abroad like Professor Oyerinde, Professor EyoIta, N.D, Chief Daniel Henshew, Rev. O. Offiong and Alvan Ikoku saw the need for technical/vocational education. They formed a National Education Movement and later opened secondary schools that were somehow technically oriented. The schools emphasized the training in such trades as printing, carpentry, tailoring and bakery (Eke, 1998). Many of such schools were opened in Lagos, Calabar, Ibadan, Aba, Port-Harcourt, Ikot-Ekpeme and Arochukwu.

THE 1969 CURRICULUM CONFERENCE

The National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos in September 1969 was a major land marking the history of Nigerian education. What was unique about this conference was that, it was not a conference of experts and professionals. Rather, it represented a conference of a cross section of the Nigerian society: trade unions, farmers, religious organizations, university lecturers and administrators, businessmen and women, youth clubs, and ministry officials.The curriculum conference was not concerned with reparing a national curriculum, nor was it expected to recommend specific contents and methodology. It was to review the old and identify new national goals for Nigerian education, bearing in mind the needs of youths and adults in the task of nation building and national reconstruction. The conference identified the following areas as crucial to the attainment of the conference objectives.

1. National philosophy of education

2. Goals of primary education

3. Objectives of secondary education

4. Purpose of tertiary education

5. The role of teacher education

6. Functions of science and technical education

7. The place of women’s education

8. Education for living

9. Control of public education.

The objectives of the 1969 curriculum conference culminated in the articulation of the current national policy on education, which spelt the objectives and the direction that education should follow. Of particular mention was the overhauling of the 7-5-2-3 system of education to the much popularised 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria. The system reduced the number of schooling years from seventeen to sixteen and expanded the scope of studies of each level of education in the country. Not only was the scope of education expanded, there relevance of the system to the overall development of the country was also envisaged in the new document. The document had since been put into practice and its impact is being felt across the country.

THREATS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The threats facing the development of education in Nigeria are multifarious in nature.

Educationists over the years have pointed that the current National Policy on education was conceived and hatched at a time when the country’s economy was buoyant. But its real implementation started at a time of tight economic situation. This, according to them, was the major factor hindering the realization of the objectives outlined in the policy document. It is equally true that there was an increase in population and expansion of the facilities at all levels of education in the country. The facilities became over stretched and more are required to make the desired impact. It is equally true that the management and maintenance of these facilities are capital intensive, which the government alone cannot bear now. There is the need therefore to mobilize the various segments of the society to complement the efforts of government towards realizing the goals set in the national policy. Many educationists have continued to question the sincerity of government in its determination to forge the country’s education system ahead, viewing from the continued decrease in government budgetary allocation to the sector over the years. Further misgiving son the quality of supervision by the various tiers of government remained unclear and much is needed to convince the public about the seriousness of government in this regard. It is equally disheartening to observe that capital projects in the education sector are not being giving immediate attention. There are no visible plans to expand the already overstretched facilities in all the levels of education well. Instead, much emphasis is now laid on the development of roads, rural electrification, polio eradication and so on. This does not posit that developments in these sectors are worthless. Rather, they should be considered secondary to the development of education, which is primarily concerned with the development of all the faculties of man, his attitudes and skills. Of what significance is life when illiteracy, hunger, disease and general under development are the ugly faces of our lives? Where will Nigeria be tomorrow if its educational system remains ensamples, incoherent, uncoordinated and unfounded today? Another major setback to the realization of the goals of the national policy is the corrupt tendencies of some officials, who will divert or make useless the allocations made to the sector. In the end, the money appropriated for education will not be spent for the purpose it was budgeted. Nigerians must change if the country is to move forward. We must change our country for our own good. It is an irony that education is the vehicle through which the most needed change in our attitudes and value system can achieve.

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