

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN RIVERS STATE AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: AN ASSESSMENT FOR 2007-2015

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Abstract

There is no doubt that education plays a pivotal role in the development of any state. Consequent upon this, governments have initiated various policies on education to bring about the needed growth and development in the society. Successive governments in Rivers State introduced educational policies to boost manpower needs of the State. This paper assessed the educational policy of the Rivers State Government from 2007-2015, under the administration of Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, with a view to ascertain the level of implementation. It highlighted the various policies implemented by the State Ministry of Education in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the education system. Secondary data were collated from the Rivers State Ministry of Education for analysis. It showed that the government embarked on a robust implementation of its educational policy in an attempt to enhance the quality of education. The paper increased funding in the education sector, given its overall importance in the development of the society, amongst others.

Keywords: Assessment; Policy; Development, Education system, Implementation; Goal, Rivers State

Introduction

Education, no doubt, is the pivot for the development of any society. It is described as the process of moulding individuals in order to develop their natural potentials, as well as become engines of growth and development. Through the process of acquiring education, the individual is fit and balanced mentally, economically, politically, socially and morally to tackle the environmental challenges in the society. Man, is naturally equipped to face the challenges that come his way and a careful and sustained technique to achieve this is through education.

The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English defines Education as "(i) Systematic training and instruction (especially for the young in school, college, etc.) (ii) knowledge and abilities, development of character and mental powers resulting from such training". The concept of education has been examined from various perspectives by various scholars. It is a structured process of passing on knowledge, norms and elements of culture, values and skills from generation to generation. This brings to focus the assertion that education is a sustained activity geared towards the realization of a desired goal- the goal of societal development. It is important to state here that a functional educational system should train the individual to be self-sustaining, reliant and impact positively on the society.

The creation of Rivers State on the 27th day of May, 1967 from the defunct Eastern Region by the Military Administration of General Yakubu Gowon marked the beginning of a deliberated policy to introduce a sustained development of education in the State. Prior to then, the education policy in the area was directed by the Eastern Nigerian government with headquarters at Enugu. Consequent upon the creation of a new State and the appointment of a Military Administrator, it became obvious that the educational policies have to be targeted at the people. The Military Administration of Commander Alfred Papapreye Diète-Spiff set out the administrative structure of the new Rivers State with the constitution of an Executive Council. Chief E.J.A. Oriji was appointed Commissioner for Education Daminabo (2013). He was to implement the education policies of the new State. No doubt, there were a lot of issues to address as the entire country was just recovering from the effects of the civil war. Since the newly created State needed enormous human resources, it became evident that a sound and solid foundation should be laid, because it is the products of the system that would be the bearers of the flag of the State in future. Since then, Rivers State has had successive heads of the Ministry of Education.

This paper focuses on the initiative of the Rivers State administration from 2007 to 2015 in the education sector. This period spans a total of eight (8) years of the administration of Rt. Hon Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi. The choice for this period is based on the assessment that it witnessed increased activities in the educational policy initiative and implementation in Rivers State. It obtained data from the Rivers State Ministry of Education; a Ministry saddled with the implementation of the government policy in that sector, with a view to ascertaining how these policies were implemented.

Policy Making and Process

Public policy is a very important concept in the overall objectives of the attainment of the purpose of government. To appreciate the process of policy making, it is imperative to explain the concept public policy. However, it is not easy to give a one-stop definition of the meaning of public policy as different scholars have given various definitions of public policy. For instance, Dye (1981:5) defines public policy as whatever governments chose to do or not to do. By this those decisions taken by officials of government are regarded as public policy. To this end, they are directed towards the attainment of the goals of government. For Ayo (1985) public policy is any action taken by government in pursuit of certain aims. Here, public policy is geared towards the attainment of certain objectives. In his contribution, Mlekwa (1976) defines public policy as official statements determining the plan of action or what government wants to do. Friedrich (1975) sees public policy as the proposed course of action of the government or one of its divisions. From which ever position the definitions are viewed, it is important to point out that public policy is a course of action and it is directed towards the attainment of certain aims and objectives. For government, the business of government is geared towards the improvement of the living standards of the citizenry.

The literature of policy making and implementation is dotted with the views of scholars in policy making and policy making process. Torjman (2005) identifies steps in the policy making process as follows:

- selecting the desired objective;
- identifying the target of the objective;
- determining the pathway to reach the objective;
- Designing the specific programme or measure in respect of that goal;
- Implementing the measure and assessing the impact.

In their own contribution on the literature Obi and Anthony (2004:90) outline the policy making process as follows:

- Policy formulation;
- Policy promulgation;
- Policy education;
- Policy acceptance;
- Policy application;
- Policy interpretation;
- Policy control

In her contribution Onah (2013) identifies the following as stages of the policy process:

- Problem identification
- Policy formulation
- Legitimization/Authorization
- Application or implementation,
- Evaluation

It is pertinent to state that the policy making process is a rationale strategy applied by policy makers and implementers towards the attainment of the goals of government. Having established that public policy is aimed at addressing problems that arise in the environment- social, economic, political, cultural and environmental, the first process of policy making is the identification of policy problems. It is these problems that stimulate government action. In other words, a problem in the context of public policy is a condition that produces needs of dissatisfaction on the part of people for which relief or redress is sought. This is very much necessary as according to Allen and Dube (2012:12), the social conditions in which citizens find themselves during natural disasters can tell whether or not governments hold sacrosanct their responsibility towards the citizens with regards to recognizing, protecting and promoting human rights. Their attempt to examine the policy response of government on environmental issues is instructive. It brings to the fore the argument that denial of an individual the access to basic needs of life amounts to a gross violation of this fundamental human rights;

Governments adopt strategic measures to make the citizens lead a good life. To achieve this, the process of decision making and implementation must be approached in such a manner that it will meet the aspirations of the people. This is brought about by good governance. Constantinos (2006) identifies good governance as key to successful formulation of sustainable development policies in developing countries. This is quite instructive when considering policy response of governments, globally, particularly between developed and developing countries. It goes to stress how important this element is in addressing the myriad of developmental challenges faced by the citizens. This posture illuminates the views of scholars on the nature and character of politics in these countries. There have been arguments over the reasons for the backwardness of the underdeveloped

countries of the world. In this study, it is pertinent to point out that whether developed or developing, the states have laws and statutes which when strictly adhered to would enhance the fortunes of the people. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that a major feature that distinguishes the developed and underdeveloped countries is that the former is characterized by lack of accountability, probity and transparency. On the other hand, it is followed by lack of interest and the power of the people to check the excesses and abuse of office by officials responsible for the implementation of public policies.

Instructively, when a state initiates programmes and policies, they are geared towards the good of the citizenry. Those who are charged with the responsibility of these policies have the duty to discharge them for public interest and good. The link between policy formulation and implementation is critical in attaining development of any state. The nexus between policy formulation and implementation is what Achebe (1981) describes as bad leadership. Perhaps, it is this position that influenced Akinirade (2011:53), to describe leadership, good governance and sustainable development as likened to the Trinity concept that are inextricably interwoven such that obeisance to one is genuflection to the other. Good governance according to Akinirade (2011:57) is a general term used in development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee growth and development. It is a critical element that enhances public good. Citing the United Nations, he argues that good governance has eight characteristics which were developed by the Agency's Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services. Accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equitability and inclusiveness were among others identified.

The underlying factor is that these elements are essential in ensuring the efficiency of public policies that are directed towards enhancing the living standard of the people. All the elements identified point to the involvement of the involvement of the citizenry, hence making them prominent stakeholders on issues that involve decision making in the state. Accountability and responsiveness of those who hold political power in trust for the people is a hallmark of this system of government. There is no gainsaying that governance must be responsive to the plight and aspirations of the citizenry. A responsive government makes adequate preparations, anticipating problems that would affect the people. Conscious efforts are made to streamline the duties of government to avoid ambiguity in their activities.

A good policy must be targeted to address the welfare needs of majority of the people. Perhaps, this assertion was what Marshall (1979:2) had in mind when he argued that the avowed objective of the twentieth social policy is welfare. He further argues that:

A programme which takes welfare as its objective must be planned on the assumption that there is, normally, some correlation between the external conditions and the internal experience. It can then operate on the external conditions. But when actions reach the level of personal contact with the intended beneficiary, as it does at some point almost everywhere in the social policy world, then it becomes possible to modify the initial assumption so as to take account of individual differences in respect, both of the needs to be met and of the response to the kind of help offered.

The literature on public policy shows that there is a marked difference between public policy making process in developed and developing countries. In his attempt to explain what policy is, Torjman (2005) argues that:

Public policy determines the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. It affects the food we eat- how it is harvested, where it is distributed and sold and how much we pay. It controls the way in which we clean and monitor the safety of the water supply. Public policy sets limit on air emissions- though of late, government seems to be issuing warnings of poor air quality more than doing anything significantly to clean it up.

Education and Development

Amaele (2017: 23) citing Ezewu (1993) identified two major factors which inform the divers definitions of the concept of education. They are:

- i. Education is often married or linked up to other concepts such as schooling, training, etc and some philosophers define it in terms of those related concepts;
- ii. Apart from being a discipline of study, education is a transmission of the cultural heritage of a given society. So, as culture carries or changes from one society to another, so does the concept.

From the foregoing, we can see the inevitability of the gains of an effective educational system. The quality of education in any society has a lot to do with the development of such society. The Nigerian National Policy on Education enumerates the aims of Nigerian education as follows: “The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, as well as the acquisition of important skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of society.

From the general perspective to the Nigerian education policy, it is obvious that education is aimed at fostering growth and development in the society. That is why governments, the world over, make frantic efforts to make huge investments in the educational sector. The policy initiative and implementation of government in the enhancement of the quality of education for the overall development of the society cannot be overemphasized. To this end, successive governments in Nigeria have continued to make investments in the promotion of education in the society. The position of Nigeria in this regard is clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2014:3) *inter alia*:

Education will continue to be highly rated in national development plans because education is the most important instrument for change as any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education outlines that Nigerian schools should transmit the following: “right types of values”; “respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals; faith in man’s ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations and the respect for the dignity of labour”

There is no doubt that it is the responsibility of a good system to select values and aims to be achieved in education. It is also noteworthy that the purpose of education varies from society to society. However, the general purpose of education is to produce citizens who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction, especially in the cultivation of intellectual and development ideas necessary for self-development in the individual. In the words of Plato, education can only be good when it helps the educated lift up the eyes of the soul to gaze on that which shades light on all things (Ndu:1998). He also argued that those who acquire knowledge through education must retire to the cave to bring enlightenment to their fellow men. Plato not only saw education as development oriented, but ardently warned that society will be in a state of anarchy, chaos and motion without movement if those who rule are not properly educated. In this wise, society stands at a great risk if the system of education continues to remain poor. It is against this background that efforts are made by leaders to enhance societal growth through education. Everybody, be it man or woman, young or old, irrespective of background, is endowed with certain degree of knowledge and such knowledge needs a stimulant to extract it out of the subconscious. The stimulant is nothing other than education. It is also noteworthy to state that education involves inculcating the right attitudes, values and skills which a man needs in order to realize his potentials and capabilities as an individual and to be able to take active part in the development of his society. Being educated means being able to fit within events that take place in a dynamic society. Education enhances peaceful co-existence and harmony in the society; it engenders transformation and is the spring board for any form of development.

Education, as stated earlier, is directed at playing a major role in human existence and development. It should be aimed at providing for the moral development of the individual. When this is the case, the society would be better off and the desired peace and harmony would be achieved. Moral education is the educational and institutional arrangements made by society to enhance the autonomous moral development of the child.

The 3rd paragraph of the National Policy on Education 1977 (revised in 1981:2) states that: in order to make for the “integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards, amongst others, the following values:

- (1) respect for the worth and dignity of individuals;
- (2) faith in man’s ability to make rational decisions;
- (3) moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
- (4) shared responsibility for the common good of society.

To this end, it is noteworthy that education is aimed at developing the individual, morally, for the development of the society. No value attached to education by any government could be said to be too much. The individual is morally developed and equipped to play his or her role in the development of the society. The morally developed person is expected to have:

- (1) a good deal of factual knowledge;
- (2) a positive commitment towards the value of morality;
- (3) the ability to communicate with the other;

(4) the ability to understand the feeling of others and those of his own.

No doubt, these are positive qualities that engender social development, thereby making human existence worthwhile.

Nduka (2005), opines that the aims of moral education in the Nigerian school context are:

- (i) the promotion of the apprehension of, and intellectual commitment to norms;
- (ii) the development of such skills as the ability to make sound autonomous moral judgments, and
- (iii) the promotion of moral conduct.

He further explains that these aims could be achieved by inculcating certain types of knowledge and development of intellectual skills and dispositions. Such knowledge includes procedural knowledge of the fundamental moral principles, social institutions and roles, and so on

Data Presentation and Analysis

On the 25th of October, 2007, Mr. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi was declared the Executive Governor of Rivers State by the Supreme Court of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. On the 29th of January, 2008 the State government organized an Education Summit, after the administration had declared a state of emergency on the education sector.

In line with the mission and vision of the administration's philosophy, the Rivers State Ministry of Education was mandated to formulate the education policies of the State, to drive as well as implement same. The educational policies of the State were geared towards promoting and achieving the best educational standards and practices. In other words, the quality of education in the State would be compared with those obtained from anywhere in the world. It would also involve the application of international best practices to achieve this objective. In this regard, an all-round implementation of the policies became imperative. Thus, the vision statement of the Ministry was to provide free and qualitative Education to the entire population of Rivers State. Its Mission became to provide citizens of Rivers State with a standard and good education in partnership with the private sector, parents, non-governmental organizations and competent teachers in a conducive learning environment.

With a vision to revamp the education sector, administration embarked on:

- Construction of 350 Model Primary Schools in the State;
- Construction of 1 Model Secondary School in each of the 23 Local Government Areas of the State;
- Renovation and refurbishment of existing structures and facilities;
- Training and retraining of teachers;
- Taking over the payment of teachers' salaries;
- Award of scholarship to academic staff;
- Relocation of state-owned Rivers State University of Science and Technology to a befitting site;
- Increased budgetary allocation to the education sector;
- Adoption of public private partnership.

Source: Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2015

Analysis and Discussion

Construction of 350 Model Primary Schools: It was evident that the dilapidated structures could not provide a good academic environment. The situation was discouraging and needed complete restructuring. The administration embarked on the construction of 350 model primary schools in all parts of the State. It was the first phase of the entire process of re-building all the schools in the State. The resultant effect was that within a short time, primary schools started regaining their pride of place. Parents who had withdrawn their children to private schools started jostling to enroll them back to the public schools.

Implementation: A total of 154 schools were constructed during the period under review

Construction of one Model Secondary School in each of the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State: This was imperative because it was not proper for pupils to pass out from such beautiful environment provided for in primary schools only to find themselves in a secondary school that is decayed. The administration embarked on the construction of one (1) model secondary school in each of the 23 Local Government Areas in the State. Again, it was a project that required extreme political will to embark upon. It was expected that these schools would actually be model for schools. The schools were supposed to restore the moribund boarding system that helped mould students to be better citizens in the society.

Implementation: Only one (1) model school was completed and commissioned. The others were at various stages of completion

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Renovation and Refurbishment of Existing Structures and Facilities: While the administration was implementing the infrastructural developments in primary and secondary schools on phases, it also went ahead to touch on the facilities and structures of schools that were not included in that phase of the execution. This was the administration's policy not to leave any one behind. It was indicative of the administration's resolve to show that meant to touch all the schools in the State. To this end, there was renovation and refurbishment of existing structures in both primary and secondary schools.

Implementation: Two (2) schools were refurbished in this regard.

Training and Re-training of Teachers

Manpower development was also implemented to boost standards in the sector. Aware of the impact of an up to date work force in the education sector, the Ministry of Education embarked on training and re-training of teachers in the state. It was aimed at bringing the teachers up to date with international best practices in service delivery. The training which is in conjunction with the British Council was highly effective and productive. The results of the training programme manifested in the output of the teachers in the performance of their duties. The Ministry also initiated plans for an Education Resource Centre to pool intellectual resources for continuous re-training of teachers in the State under the mandatory continuing professional development programme.

Implementation: The administration carried out training of teachers facilitated by the British Council

Taking Over the Payment of Teachers Salaries

It was also evident that one of the things that demoralized teachers in the State was the payment of salaries. The salaries of primary school teachers were paid by the Local Government Councils. Most Councils could not pay staff salaries and this resulted to a situation where teachers were owed salaries for several months. It negatively impacted on their attitude and commitment to duty, as many teachers either turned their classrooms to markets or abandoned their classrooms to find means of fending for their families. The administration knew that this was detrimental to the policy of revamping the educational system. It took the step of taking over payment of teachers salaries. This action gave a huge relief to the teachers in the State as it meant that payment of their salaries was guaranteed. It re-kindled their commitment and dedication to duty.

Implementation: The Government completely took over the payment of salaries of teachers at the primary school level which was hitherto undertaken by the local government councils.

Structural and Facilities Upgrading in Tertiary Institutions in the State

The administration believed that the process would not be complete if it did not touch the tertiary institutions in the State. The sound foundation in the primary and secondary schools would be meaningless if there was nothing done about the tertiary educational system in the State. At the point, the tertiary institutions in the State faced myriad of problems.

The same was the case with the then Rivers State College of Education now renamed Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. It had also suffered the fate of dilapidation. The then Rivers State Polytechnic was not left out, as well as the then Rivers State College of Arts and Science. It was evident that no institution can function without adequate infrastructure. These institutions needed serious attention to function properly and the administration was determined to get them working again. In this regard, the administration initiated and implemented a massive structural and upgrading of the facilities at the institutions.

The then Rivers State College of Education has now transformed to a full-fledged University and has received tremendous support from the State Government to improve its facilities in order to meet with its new status of a full-fledged University. The Rivers State Polytechnic, as well as the Rivers State College of Arts and Science were not left out in the transformation. Presently they are carrying out their responsibilities in full capacity in line with the objectives for which they were set up.

Award of Scholarships to Academic Staff

As part of efforts to enhance the capacity to deliver quality service, the administration awarded scholarships to academic staff in tertiary institutions in the State, particularly the Rivers State University of Science and Technology. Such scholarships were necessary to motivate younger academics towards increased productivity and academic excellence.

Relocation of the State-Owned University of Science and Technology

With the need to expand the Institution and give it a befitting outlook, the administration decided to relocate the Rivers State University of Science and Technology from its present location at Npkolu , Oroworukwo to its a befitting site. It is the position of the administration that to achieve a proper academic excellence, environment was important. The State government believed that it was time to give the University its proper Status as the foremost University of Science and Technology in Africa.

Implementation: This project is still on the drawing board as the Institution is still operating at its original campus.

Increased Budgetary Allocation to the Education Sector

The administration demonstrated its commitment towards realizing this vision by increasing the budgetary allocations to the Education sector. Never in the history of the State has the Ministry received such fiscal attention. Policies are backed with finance in order to ensure their realization. Huge funds were invested in the sector to build both infrastructure and capacity for the overall development of the State.

Adoption of Public Private Partnership

It is obvious that government alone cannot realize the objective of taking education to an enviable standard. It needs the support of other stakeholders, non governmental organizations, agencies, etc. to achieve its objectives. The Government under the aegis of the Ministry partnered such organizations to achieve its objectives.

As a show of its commitment to improve the society through education, the Rivers State Ministry of Education successfully invoked the Rivers State Child Rights Law, which stipulates that parents should be prosecuted for denying their children the right to education. Education is the right of every body and the Rivers State government believes that nobody, irrespective of his/her status, should be denied the right to knowledge through education. This is not a healthy development for a society that is looking into the future. The Government held parents responsible and punish them accordingly, for denying their children access to basic education which it has provided for free.

The Ministry distributed books to all the schools in the 23 local government areas of the State. The distribution of books aside from being the cardinal element of the free education programme of the State Government was also used as strategies to get parents enroll their wards in schools. The early distribution of these books has eliminated the challenge of low enrolment at the start of the school year

A total of 228 secondary schools received free books. By this a total of 116, 527 students have received free books in the 2011/2012 Academic Session.

There is also the distribution of school uniforms to primary school pupils

The Rivers State Ministry of Education in realization of the need to revolutionize education and make it a model focused on 12 key areas of thrust. They include Free Education, Teaching Force, Teacher Training, Curriculum Development, Student Enrolment, Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Penetration, Learning

Achievement, E-readiness, Infrastructure Development, Schools Based Manpower Committee, Quality Assurance.

Infrastructure Development

It is imperative to point out that a total of 477 model primary schools are being constructed by the Rivers State Ministry of Education. Out of which, 247 have been completed as at March ended. 29 of the schools completed are fully functional and in use. Below is the detailed summary of schools completed in the various Local Government Areas.

Furniture: Contract for the furnishing of 133 model schools were awarded to various contractors, out of which 70 schools were completed, while the remaining 63 are at advanced stages of completion.

Landscaping: 119 schools were landscaped in addition to the 29 already completed schools.

Fencing: Contracts for the fencing of 218 schools were awarded. 148 have been completed and the remaining 70 at various stages of completion.

E-Learning

The Ministry awarded contract for the equipping of 75 schools with ICT facilities, out of which 36 are fully equipped. The remaining 39 are at various stages of installation. The Ministry also deployed ICT facilities in the 29 functional primary schools and trained staff of these schools on how to effectively utilize them.

Free Education

The Rivers State Ministry of Education ensured that the policy of free and quality education was maintained throughout the State. It distributed free books to primary and secondary schools in the State. The 23 local government areas were all beneficiaries of this programme. The distribution of books to primary school pupils apart from being the cardinal element of the free education programme of the State government was also used as a strategy to get parents to enrol their children early at the beginning of the school year, thus eliminating the challenge of low enrolment at the beginning of the school year.

The understated figures show the local government areas and number of schools that benefited from the free books scheme in the 2011/2012 Academic Session:

For the secondary schools, a total of 228 schools in Rivers State were beneficiaries. 116, 527 students received free books during the 2011/2012 academic session.

Further breakdown of the statistics shows that students in Senior Secondary School 1 received a total number of 37,932. Students in Senior Secondary 2 got 38, 703, while students in Senior Secondary 3 received 39, 890 books.

The Ministry distributed uniforms, shoes, bags, sport shoes and sports wears to pupils as a deliberate policy of government to make education attractive. It is part of the free education policy

Teaching Personnel

The Ministry initiated an accelerated recruitment of qualified teachers. In addition to their recruitment, they were be trained and given the proper induction.

Curriculum Development

The Ministry concluded the domestication of the national curriculum on education with the support and input of external consultants. It also carried out Adaptive Training of teachers at all levels for the implementation of the updated curriculum. The implementation of the new curriculum commenced in the 2011/2012 academic year and all the schools have adopted it in both the teaching and learning process.

The Early Child Care Development and Education Penetration

The Ministry sustained the Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDDE) coverage and there was significant increase in enrolment in 2011, despite the fact that the programme continued to be challenged by dearth of trained teachers. With the level of investment in the educational sector in the State and the level of monitoring and implementation, the Ministry recorded significant improvement in the quality of learning which is reflected in results of students fielded for external examination.

Tertiary Education

With the transformation of the Rivers State College of Education to a full-fledged University, the Ministry has made significant impact in the Institution. The Ignatius Ajuru University became fully functional with 6 faculties and 36 Departments, 513 academic staff and 809 non-academic staff. Over 5,700 students were been admitted into the Institution since it became a full-fledged University.

Quality Assurance

The issue of quality assurance and effective service delivery was paramount to the government. In this regard, the Rivers State Executive Council approved a Draft Bill for the establishment of an Agency on Education Quality Assurance in the State.

Schools Management

The Ministry also evolved strategies to maintain the facilities on ground.. In this regard, a proposed Amendment to the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Law 2005 captioned “The Rivers State Universal Basic Education (Amendment) Bill 2012 was sent to the Rivers State House of Assembly. The Bill was aimed at creating management committees in primary and junior secondary schools. It proposed that members of the committees should be remunerated in order to attract commitment. The Management Committees proposed was to be headed by a retired Head Teacher of a primary school (for the School Management Committee of a primary school), or a retired principal of a junior secondary school (for the school management committee of a secondary school). The Ministry set in motion machineries for the training of members of the committees immediately the Bill is passes into Law.

Conclusion

The period under review witnessed a robust implementation of the policy on improving the standard of education in Rivers State. This is premised on the defining

philosophy that education is a platform for the development of any society. In this regard, the administration evolved measures aimed at achieving its policy objectives. The policies initiated seemed comprehensive as it involved all the tiers of government, including both infrastructural development and capacity building. Although the administration had the posture of a free education policy at the primary school level, it was mindful of aiming at maintaining a high quality of education, hence the introduction of a quality assurance mechanism. Throughout the twenty three local governments in the State, the education sector received a major boost that if sustained would yield the desired result. These policies were well-intended to enhance capacity and manpower development in the society. The sustainability of the policy has the capacity to impact on the overall development of Rivers State. However, the result of the model secondary schools to be located in each of the 23 local government areas was abysmally poor as it was able to complete only one of such schools, although the others were at various stages of completion as at the time the tenure of the administration elapsed. It was also unable to complete the building of the proposed 350 model primary schools in the state. Part of the reasons was the huge finances required to carry out these projects.

Recommendations

From the foregone, the following are recommended:

- i. Government should endeavour to carry out projects considering the level of finances at its disposal. This is to ensure that they embark on projects which they can be able to complete before moving on to another one. This is to avoid a situation where a number of projects would not be completed before the end of tenure of an administration;
- ii. There should be increased funding in the education sector, given its overall importance in the development of the society;
- iii. Successive government should endeavor to complete projects that were initiated by their predecessors. This is to avoid truncating of laudable projects and wastage of public funds;
- iv. It is imperative to evolve continuation of policies in order to achieve the values and gains of government programmes and policies;
- v. The process of policy making and implementation should be broken down in such a way that policies are not initiated and abandoned.

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