The Politicization of Education in Nigeria: Implications for School Leadership

Sylvanus P. Idiong PhD
spidiong@gmail.com
Akwa Ibom State College of Education
Afaha Nsit, Nigeria
spidiong@gmail.com

Asukwo S. Nseabasi PhD
asukwonseabasi@gmail.com
Akwa Ibom State College of Education
Afaha Nsit, Nigeria

Francis Tete, PhD
legbaraadaaka@gmail.Com
Basic Sciences Unit
Poma University of Medical Sciences, Port Harcourt
Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The work seeks to examine political issues in Nigerian Education. It employs the philosophical methods of enquiry, namely, critical reflections, analysis and speculation. The paper is relevant to stakeholders in education, viz, Government, Ministry of Education, Educationalists, Teachers, Parents, Politicians, School Managers and Administrators. The position of the researcher is that politicization such as ethnicity, religion and god-fatherism have multiplier effects on Nigeria Education. If politicization is discouraged, Nigeria stands a better position in her educational developmental processes.

Keywords: *Education and Politics; Politicization of Education; Political issues in Nigeria Education; multiplier effects on Nigeria Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is imperative for any meaningful development of any country. Thus, the significant progress in education of so many countries is possible through the wings of their intellectual capacity. Any developing country that does not sincerely invest heavily in educational sector cannot achieve her set goals. Besides the blame game: Government blamed for poor financing of education, educational managers and policy makers blamed for lack of effective policy making

and management, Nigeria education is suffering from virulent politicization, such includes ethnicity, religion, and god-fatherism. However, the high rate of this politicization is a significant indication that whoever controls the educational system controls the political life of the nation. It is in a bit to checkmate this situation that this paper ex-rays and addresses its adherent challenges.

THE CONCEPT: Education and Politics:
Education
There is no general acceptable definition of education among scholars. It could be viewed from various perspectives. Etymologically, the word "education: is derived from the Latin words:" educere and "educare" "Educare" meaning to mould, make or nature. Proponents of this term perceived education as the act of making or moulding from not thing to something. On the other hand, "educere" means to lead out, to draw out, bring up and to uphold. Proponents of this concept viewed education as a process of leading an individual to uphold the inbuilt qualities in him/her.

As a moralist, Plato conceives education in term of moral training. Aristotle sees education as the process of developing a sound mind in a sound body. O'connor (1985) defines education as the process by which society through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately transmits its cultural heritage. Wosu (2016) opines that education is that acceptable process which enables the learners to study and learn those skills, attitudes, competencies, values of the society in readiness to live a meaningful life and to contribute to the development of that society. According to Idiong (2023) Education has remained the main driving force for significant development and building up of the nation. Education involves some aspect of socialization which involves the acquisition of knowledge and learning of skills, attitudes, behaviours, etc. Education can be seen as an activity, product and a discipline.
The concept of education is very broad and wide. It involves all the conscious processes by which one develops abilities, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to man and the society.

POLITICS
The concept 'Politics' is a complex activity. It could be assessed as activities aimed at improving someone's status or increasing power within an organization. Politics is a set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations between individuals such as distribution of resources or status.

For Nnoli (1986) Politics is the struggle for and exercise of power, authority and influence in a society. Technically, politics is seen as the act of government, the exercise to control within the society through the making and enforcement of collective decisions.

POLITICIZATION OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA
There are so many reasons while education fail in its responsibility to produce good leadership as well as good fellowship in the society. One of the major reasons is the politicization of education in Nigeria.

The political system in Nigeria has influenced educational system. The success or failure of any educational system depends on the political system of the area concerned. Education cannot be separated from politics because it is an aspect of political needs of the society. For this reason, the Federal Government is involved in education at all levels be it primary, secondary and university levels. Adesina (1978) stated that there is no problem marrying politics with education. He further assessed that in analyzing politics, the national aim of making education available to every child, the idea of using education to wipe out hunger, illiteracy, ignorance and diseases are on the whole less educational than political. Education in Nigeria has been regulated by the government policies and therefore by implication has been a necessary function of politics. Almond and Coleman (1960) posit that all political systems tend to perpetuate their culture, ideas and structure. This could be achieved through education.

However, the system has failed to produce good leadership and fellowship in the society. This is because people recruited to pilot the affairs of the sector are selected based on primordial considerations of ethnicity, religion and god-fatherism. The propelling factors for the manifestation of these identifies in Nigeria education sector could be clannish or sectorian conception of social life which most people associate it to political elitism and manipulation of the mass mind. Staffing and the admission processes of students is also influenced by this politicization. In recent times, educational positions of authority are motivated by primordial factors. The position of Vice-Chancellor, Provosts, Rectors, Principals and other heads of schools are kept for the indigenous people of the institutions' host communities. If the positions are occupied by "non indigenes", the process of institutional governance and administration becomes frustrated. In some cases, the recruitment Criteria are watered down in order to accommodate these primordial interests. Such system is not healthy for the development of education because it excludes those who merited the positions. Due to politicization of education, many scholars have relocated to their "indigenous homelands" or areas considered to be relatively peaceful. This has led to the cross fertilization of scholarship in Nigeria University impossible due to unfriendly nature of the Nigerian societies to foreign scholars. The derogatory space for this development is ever expanding. Take for instance, the renaming of the University of Lagos to Moshood Abiola University by the Federal Government of Nigeria led to violent demonstration among students in Lagos, majority of them were Yoruba. Tracing the problem, it will be revealing that it was associated with the memories of the June 12, 1993 Babagida's annulled election.

Cumulatively, so many Nigerians who lack good job are poor and have no political connection. It is in this context that Timawus (2010) remarks that a political system that rewards school dropouts with more honours and income than a university professor in a whole lifetime is fit to breed Boko Haram.

Possible Recommendations
1.Education sector should be strengthened through adequate funding and investment.
2. Teacher training and professional development should be proritized

3 Educational reforms should be implemented to address issues of corruption and mismanagement in the education sector.

4.More opportunities should be provided for students to participate in civic engagement and community service.

5. Collaboration between the education sector and other sectors, such as health, agriculture, and technology should be encouraged.

CONCLUSION

The interplay of politics and education is not novel in Nigeria. Over the years, the planning, administration and management of education has been under the influence of political arrangements. However, Nigeria must appreciate and implement educational system which recognizes that without a democratic development of society, a more democratic system of education cannot be promoted and without a more democratic system of education, the development of society is unlikely to occur.

REFERENCES

Adesina, S, (1978) The Development of Modern Education in Nigeria. Ibadan: Heineman Ed. Publishes.

Almond, G. A. & Coleman (1960) The Politics of the Developing Area. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Anuna, M.C, (2008) Politics of Education; The Nigerian Respective. Dalass: Company Limited Press.

Idiong,S.P,(2023)John Dewey's Pragmatic Education: A Veritable Tool for Nation Building in Nigeria. International Journal of Education and Evaluation.(IJEE). E-ISSN 2489-0073 P-ISSN 2695-1940.Vol.9.no.1 2023. www.iiardjournals.org.DoI:10.56201/IJEE V9 no 1.2023,p.30

Nnoli, O, (1986) Introduction to Politics. Ikeja: Longman Publishers.

O'Connor, I. D. (1985) An Introduction to Philosophy of Education. London: Allen and Urwin Ltd.

Timus, N. Maitasine and Boko Haram. Lesson not Learned. Daily Trust, 8 September, 2009, http:11/www.accessmylibrary.com /article – 191-207516754/maitatsine – and – boko haram. html (retrieved 22nd March, 2021).

Wosu, J. I. (2016) History of Education: The Global Approach. Port-Harcourt: Harey publications coy.