



A Guide to Rivers State Government on the Establishment of College of Education, Taking Cognizance of Policy Formulation Planning and Implication

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ABSTRACT

This is a Guide to Rivers State Government on the establishment of College of Education, taking cognizance of Policy Formulation Planning and Implication. In establishing New Rivers College of Education in Rivers State, there is need to lay down policies to guide the operations of the institution. These policies are expected to satisfy the individual needs, community pressures and the degree of complexity and sophistication to which socialized personnel must be educated. Educational policies should be formulated and adopted through a political process which acknowledges the reality and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among its participants, it should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals. And for effective implementation of the anticipated College of Education policies, the following strategies must be put in place: The institution should be financed by not less than 25% of the State's annual revenue as fund is a major contributor to the success of capital intensive programmes, the State government through its agencies in charge of education must develop and disseminate curricula and educational materials to ensure that both the lecturers and students are not handicapped. The study suggested that the Rivers State government should carry out need assessment on its environs as to locate the appropriate site for the establishment of the College of Education. This is because there is no College of Education in the region and there should be proper regulation on those implementing the policy. The idea of giving contract as a way of settling political supporters should be checkmated. This is because such contractors end up diverting the fund for the project at the expense of the goals.

Keywords: Guide, Desire, Establish, College of Education, Cognizance, Policy Formulation Planning, Implication and Rivers State Government

INTRODUCTION

The development of a nation depends to a great extent on the level of education of the individuals that make up the nation. Such education must ensure that it brings about the physical, spiritual, social, psychological and economic development in an individual and thus, the society (Amakiri, 2015). This could be the reason why the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in a swift reaction to world conference of "Education For ALL (EFA)" held in Jomitten, Thailand from 5th to 9th March 1990, proposed that, by 2015, children of educable age should have free, affordable and accessible education (Edho, 2009; Abutu, 2015; FGN/IJNICEF 2003). In order to drive the purpose home, Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act was signed into law by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the then President of Nigeria on May, 2004. That act gave birth to Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria under the management of the Universal Basic Education Commission. The Act provides for the right of a child of school age to compulsory free Universal Basic Education. Among the objectives of the programme is to

ensure unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child, reducing the incidence of “drop out” from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency, acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (Yushau, 2014). Over a decade when the implementation of Universal Basic Education policies began, there are still records of unachievable objectives. The records of rate of illiteracy and school dropout continue to increase awfully. According to Muhtar (2015), the illiterates’ rate in Nigeria stands at just 50 percent. This situation demands national urgency, which every agency must work to redress the literacy crisis. Studies carried out by some academic researchers on the extent of the implementation of the Universal basic education programme in Nigeria and other institutions of learning revealed that major constraints towards the actualization of the goal of education in Nigeria are not far from inadequate, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of some teachers (Okoroma, 2003).

The study by Adamu and Adole (2015) recorded a very poor performance in the area of pupils’ teachers’ ratio, where the benchmark (minimum ratio) of 1:40 is abuse. The study found that teacher- pupils’ ratio stood at 1:53 average in the entire primary schools while the class size remain at 52 pupils average across the study area while in the junior secondary schools the teacher- pupils’ ratio stood at 1:52 on the average while the class size also stood at 55, This Was equally supported Jekayinfa (2010), in his study on Provision of Teachers for the implementation of UBE in Nigeria. The study found that all the six states sampled have insufficient number of teachers but except Kwara State whose teachers-pupils ratio is 1:36. Teachers-pupils ratios for other states covered for the study include Bayelsa State with teacher-pupil ratio of 1:97, Katsina State with teacher pupil ratio of 1:66, Yobe State with teacher-pupil ratio of 1:62 Plateau State with teacher pupil ratio of 1:53 and Ondo State 1:53 (Adamu, 2015). There is need to give priority to qualitative and quantitative teachers if the laudable goals of every educational system in the country is going to be successful. To achieve this, colleges of education is proposed to be established in most of the states in the country. This gives credence to the proposal of Ejeh (2006) that a recent innovation in primary teacher education in the country is the establishment, by a state government in Nigeria, of a college of Primary education NCE awarding institution with all its departments and programmes devoted to producing teachers for primary schools only.

Paradoxically, universities continue to turn out number of graduates annually most of these graduates are desperately looking for jobs without success. One would wonder why the complaints those schools are operating without adequate teaching staff. The truth may not be far from the fact that the presence of manufacturing industries and oil and gas industries in the country has tailored the wind of education sector towards providing human capitals that would fit into these sectors at the expense of education sector. The saturation of the need and the dumping of those unable to be absorbed by these sectors into education sector as teachers may not be of best interest for the nation. This is because most of them are not trained to teach and so cannot be effective. More so,

some may not be dedicated to their jobs because it was not the job of their dreams. Consequently, there is need to establish more colleges of education that would train effective and efficient teachers that will deliver the goals of education system in the country. This study therefore examine the current state of education in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular, identify the instant solution, establish the mission, vision and objective, formulate policies and the possible implementation strategies to achieve the set objectives of the institution.

Evaluation of Current Education Policy in Nigeria

Before now, Nigeria operates the American system of education, which is christened 6-3-3-4 system of education. The programme lasted for more than two decades. According to Amakiri (2005), the programme was faulty from the angle of its implementation on the transition from Junior Secondary to Senior Secondary. This leads to the current system of education, Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, christened 9-3-4 system of education. Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was signed into law by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo the then President of Nigeria on May, 2004 demands 9 years

of Basic Education, 3 years of Senior Secondary Education and 4 years of Tertiary Education. Although some disciplines take over four years to graduate.

As stipulated by the National Policy on Education (1977 revised 1981, 1985, 1998 and 2004) and in line with Education for All (EFA), education policies introduced in Nigeria lays emphasis on universal, functional and qualitative education. The guiding principles of EFA in Nigeria is the equipping of every citizen with knowledge, skills, attitude and values as well as enable him/her derive maximum benefit from his membership of society as thus, lead a fulfilling life (Edho,2009). Unfortunately, this goal is yet to be achieved as there continue to exist a general outcry in the falling standard of education and a sharp depreciation in the morals of school children.

Adamu and Adole (2015), in their study, found that Nigerian governments have been confronted with a lot of difficulties in the educational sector, especially in the aspect of funding, infrastructure, getting qualified teachers, school supervision, and staff motivation among others. According to Denga (2000), the problems facing education in Nigeria include dearth of facilities, inadequate supervision, shortage of personnel, lack of funds, high prices of textbooks, incoherent implementation of the curriculum and high dropout rates.

Whatever input is made into an educational system in respect of management, resources, facilities and array of instructional materials, will be of little avail if the teacher is unskilled, poorly trained, or even ignorant (Stinnett, 1962; Nelson, Polansky & Carison, 2000)

As a result of the importance of teacher education in all parts of human development, there is need for government at both federal and state level to make a concerted effort in making policies and programmes for educational development (Adamu and Adole, 201 5).Being that Rivers State Government as one of the Niger Delta States blessed with abundant natural and mineral resources and being buoyant, this study therefore recommends the need to set up New Rivers College .of Education which will specially train teachers and personnel that will contribute immensely in ensuring that educational goals in as expected by the Millennium Development Goals are achieved in Nigeria.

Mission of the New Rivers College of Education

The College of Education is to serve as a prime energizer of a rational movement for the actualization of the national college of education commission goals in Rivers State. Working in contact with all stakeholders in mobilizing the nation's creative energies to ensure that, education regains its values in the society.

Vision of the New Rivers College of Education

To provide fulltime courses of teaching, instruction and training in technology, applied science, commerce, arts, social sciences, humanities and management and to carry out research in the development and adaptation of techniques in Rivers State.

Objectives of the New Rivers College of Education

- i. Ensure that well trained, efficient and effective, and committed teachers are adequately provided to carry out the business of education in the nation.
- ii. Reduce drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.
- iii. Ensure the society is provided with appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulation, communication and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needful for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning (UBE 2000)

Policy Formulation

The quality of a nation's education is a process and product of its educational policies as education is an instrument of change and a major instrument for socio-economic as well as political development (Utibe, 2001 Edho, 2009,). To establish New Rivers College of Education in the Rivers State, there is need to lay down policies to guide the operations of the institution. These policies are expected to satisfy the individual needs, community pressures and the degree of complexity and sophistication to which socialized personnel must be educated and trained to meet these demands (Osokoya, 1987)

As stated by Awokoya (1981), the following are prerequisite in formulating an adequate educational policy in the society:

- a. It should be formulated and adopted through a political process which acknowledges the reality and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among its participants.
- b. It should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals.
- c. It should contain information on the broad objectives that should be reached.
- d. It should be a binding guide on the actions of those implementing it.
- e. It should be enforceable and enforced by the society which formulates it.

Hence, in line with the Federal Government of Nigeria's guidelines for the establishment of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, relevant excerpts contained in the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) (Amendment Decree No. 9 of 1993 section 1 9B, subsection C requires the State Government make application for the establishment of an institution of a College of Education, through the National Colleges of Education Commission. Having made the relevant applications for the establishment of the institution on the need for national policy necessary for the full development of teacher education and the training of teachers, the following policies should be put in place:

- i. The programme must take into consideration the needs of the society the political, sociocultural, economic, military, scientific, and technological realities of the environment.
- ii. The minimum standards for all programmes of the college of education, certificates and other academic awards must conform with the approve guidelines setting out criteria for accreditation of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria. To this effect, the institution must be headed by a PROVOST appointed by the Governor who shall hold office for a period of 4 years while the registrar who shall keep records and conducts of the institution.
- iii. In line with the provisions of National College of Education Commission, the minimum requirement for employment of lecturers into the college of Education must be a holder of Ph.D.
- iv. The lecturers must be full time employee of the institution and must not engage in any other employment, so as to give the programme adequate time to attain the objective of its establishment.
- v. The institution must concentrate on only Courses and Disciplines that border on Teachers Education. The curriculum for the teacher education should include General Studies, Professional studies, mainly elements of philosophy, sociology, as applied to education, comparative education, school administration and methods of teaching various subjects or educational technology, Studies related to the students intended field of teaching and teaching practice.
- vi. The programme must be a 3-year programme for the Award of Nigeria Certificate of Education only.
- vii. Entry admission into the college must be through a specialized examination as determined by the NCCE. And the student must have scored average of 45% of the total mark before being qualified for admission.
- viii. However, consideration will be given to the exceptional cases like handicap. All exceptional cases in admission must have scored average of 35% of the total mark before being qualified for admission.
- xi. To be admitted into the school, the candidate must possess a minimum of five credit passes in relevant subjects (including English Language and Mathematics) in Senior School Certificate Examination or its equivalent in not more than two sittings.
- x. There must be an intensive review of the curriculum to meet the global expectation of all college of education in the country.
- xi. The institution must be financed by the State government's fund. Other donors and educational committee are equally obliged to support the funding of the education in Rivers State.

- xii. The institution can also share from that part of the block grants from the Federal Government meant for Colleges of Education.
- xiii. Communicate quotas in terms of employment must be restricted to junior staff All other staff must pass through the official process of employment as laid down by the National College of Education Commission.

Policy Implementation

For effective implementation of the anticipated college of education policies, the following strategies must be put in place:

- a. The institution should be financed by not less than 25% of the State annual revenue as fund is a major contributor to the success of capital intensive programmes such as this.
- b. Non-governmental groups like business enterprises, the parents-teachers association, alumni and community development committees, and local/international donor grants must participate in the funding of the institution.
- c. The institution should also receive support from Federal funds/contributions in the form of Federal Government Guaranteed credits.
- d. There must be complete review of the school curriculum at the end of every three years to ensure that it conform to the reform agenda.
- e. The state government through its agencies in charge of education must develop and disseminate curricula and educational materials to ensure that both the lecturers and students are not handicapped.
- f. The government must liaise with other donor agencies and other development partners in matters relating to the institution.
- g. The management of the institution must establish education data bank and conduct research on educational issues confronting the nation.
- h. The management of the institution must carry out mass mobilization and sensitization of the general public and enter into partnership with host communities and all stakeholders in achieving the overall objectives of the institution.
- i. There must be regular supervision and monitoring of the Institution. As perceived by Onoyase (1991), supervision is an action directed towards the improvement of teaching- learning process. It is concerned with those particular activities and aspects which maintains and promote the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools (Ohinaju, 2001).
- j. The institution should be provided with adequate manpower to handle effectively accredited courses and a conducive learning environment.
- k. Regular payment of teachers' salaries and proper motivation of teachers through loans (car, motorcycle grants) to increase inputs to the success of the programme the state (Edho, 2009, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The current situation in Nigerian educational system and the conducts of its products has raised a serious concern on the possibility of setting up another institution of learning for teachers training. Hence, there is need to set up New Rivers College of Education in Rivers State. This study identified the mission and objectives of the anticipated institution, formed polices that would guide policy makers to achieve the goal of restructuring the output of the institution and worked out modalities on how best to implement the policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions reached, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Rivers State government should carry out need assessment on its environs as to locate the appropriate site for the establishment of the college of education. Preferably Riverine part of the State may be more appropriate. This is because there is no college of education in that region.
2. The motion should be taken to legislative house for deliberation and passage into law for effective implementation.
3. There should be proper regulation on those implementing the policy. The idea of giving contract as a way of settling political supporters should be checkmated. This is because such contractors end up diverting the fund for the project at the expense of the goals.

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