

EFFECTIVE POLICY CONTROL ON NURSERY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Education is the true manifestation of human development in any society. Therefore, Nursery Education at the lower level has positive impact on the child in later life which should not be neglected in the hands of few individuals who are not professionally skilled in the field. The National Policy on Education has spelt out some of the objectives and government commitment to encourage private individuals has yielded little or no concern in the implementation of the National Policy of Education. Nursery schools now have been proliferated for commercial ventures. The policy control and how nursery schools can be rescored were extensively discussed.

Keywords: Nursery Education, Human Development, and Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education has positive influence on educational development of children in later life. It is important that they should be given sound educational foundation; the only legacy which prepares the child for future development. Early childhood is the pre-primary which is more formalized and organized setting where children aged three to five years receive education preparatory to enrolling in primary schools. The culmination of this recent system of education was a result of the increasing number of working mothers who engaged both private and public ventures and others furthering their education, thereby leading to a vacuum in parenting and childcare.

Education is an indisputable requisite for improving the social and economic conditions in a country and early childhood education plays a crucial role in this context. It is highly desirable and appreciable that young aged children are given much time to spend in the school given the necessary facilities that will enrich and stimulate them socially and intellectually.

NATIONAL POLICY ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The National Policy on Education [2004] specifically on pre-primary indicated that early childhood education is defined as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to their entering the primary school.

The policy document purposely includes, among others.

- Effect a smooth transition from the home to the school.
- Prepare the child from the primary level of education.
- Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work [on the farms, in the markets, offices etc].
- Inculcate social norms.
- Inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys etc.].
- Develop a sense of co-operation and team-spirit.
- Learn good habits, especially good health habits; and
- Teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc, through play.

The policy further enumerated that government shall

- Encourage private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education.
- Make provision in teacher education programmes for specialization in early childhood education.
- Ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community; and to this end will.
- Develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages, and
- Produce textbooks in Nigerian languages:
- Ensure that the main method of teaching at this level shall be through play and that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented to achieve this; and
- Regulate and control the operating of pre-primary education.

The government document on National Policy on Education in ensuring effective control in our schools have been seen, read and documented. But has the government really worked towards ensuring the effective implementation of these policies?

The early years are very precious and very sensitive in an individual's life. It is the foundation for adult development. UNICEF [2001] emphasized the crucial period where a child should have physical and health care, development of cognitive skills and emotional security. The State of Nursery Education in the country calls for an appraisal of the foundational level of education. A close look at the nursery education reveals some feature among others, inadequate facilities, negligent by government; teachers at this level of beginning have been accused of lack of commitment to their teaching job. According to Brainoilette (2004)

the nursery education has been proliferated both in terms of pupils enrolment and number of nursery schools not recommended by the government, location/site etc.

The danger of this proliferation of these sub-nursery schools came as a result of inability of the ministry of education to check how these schools standard established and at times lack of proper supervision. This sub-were nursery schools, culminated fear from parents that their children may contact diseases because of the nature of population of children inside the classroom and the size matters, inaccurate enrolment pattern from the proprietors.

Nowadays, nursery schools are located in various places without do consideration of the enrolment, the site whether is it a flood area, rocky not habitable or marshy place. The qualities of teachers in these institutions are generally low in professionalizing themselves in teaching. The National Policy on Education [2004] prescribes that the child should be actively involved in active learning and the appropriate use of the curriculum. But there were no compliance and proper guidelines as to the curriculum. In most cases, the proprietors and teachers resort to curricular of their choice.

DISCUSSION

We are aware that for a nation to progress technologically, education is the pivot of development. The year 2012 was a disastrous to education industry. Many institutions of learning were closed down because of global warming all over the country. Nursery schools that were wrongly established along the river rinse areas, water-ways etc. were forced to close down; that was a serious setback to our educational development.

According to Engleking (1992), most of these private schools seem to be set up for huge profit making enterprises. Most of them lack adequate facilities in number and quality. The poor salary structure in most of the private schools, many of them may not be able to afford the payment of experience graduates or other categories of staff. These centres operate without government approval and less conducive environment using purpose built homes, flats, single room apartment, churches, mosques, garages an open spaces. These are serious threats to our education and future generation.

POLICY CONTROL ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

When action plans are taken appropriately and systematically the measure of getting things done as the way it should be, gives a greater chance of development. The Federal Government should therefore draw up a policy framework for promoting collaboration between Ministries, NGOs, Communities and others to enhance pre-primary school education. Such policy framework should be to assign responsibilities that would be mutually complementary, include:-

- Federal Ministry of education and State Ministry of education through their agencies should take charge of:-
 1. Policy coordination.
 2. Prescription of minimum standard.
 3. Data collection and material development.
 4. Human capacity building [training of teachers] UNESCO [2005].

Among other factors for effective control, the Ministry of Health should intervene in the area of child health care involving immunization, nutrition and general health habits. Communities and formal organized institutions like universities, colleges of educations, companies and wealthy individuals with good reputation are given the license to operate. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development should intervene through advocacy programmes to sensitize and mobilize mothers to participate in early childhood care and education.

Any organized group is encouraged to establish low-cost early childhood education centres to increase. Communities can freely donate land for building such centres. Institutions of higher learning like universities, colleges of educations who are offering courses in pre-primary education are to be encouraged to make the course attractive and job security incentives.

Ensuring from these policy control action statements are further efforts by the appropriate level of government in enforcing the educational laws which relate to the establishment of pre-primary school be mandatory.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the policy control stated earlier the Federal and State government with private individuals should see that the measures are strictly complied with if really we want this country to move forward in ensuring quality education for our children.

CONCLUSION

Education is the bedrock of any progressive society. This, therefore the proliferation of our Nursery schools, the government should not fold hands, effort should be made towards ensuring that our children get the best foundation of education so that the country can grow and develop. Jiboywa [2001] opined that the greatest goods should be given to the greatest numbers. The [goods] refers to the education we need our children to consume while the [numbers] are our children to participate in learning.

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