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**THE CHANGING FACES OF
NIGERIAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF
MANAGEMENT**

76TH INAUGURAL LECTURE

Delivered by

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Contents

	Page
Preamble	1
Peculiarities of Primary and Secondary Education	4
The Meaning of Educational Management	5
Historical Background of Managing Primary and Secondary Education	6
Divergencies of the Past	8
Growth of Primary Education	8
Landmark Events	10
Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme	10
New Secondary Education	11
Innovation of the Secondary Education Programme	12
Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme	13
Noticeable Changes	13
Problems Confronting Primary and Secondary Education	18
Poor Pupil Enrolment Projection	18
Pupil Population Explosion	19
Malpractices	21
Overriding Political Interest	22
Political Constraint	23
Poor Teacher Quality	24
Management Recipe for Ensuring a Better Future for Primary and Secondary Education	26
Proposal of Another Change	31
Conclusion	33
Acknowledgements	33
References	37

List of Tables

Table	Page
1 Number of Primary Schools and Pupil Enrolment	9
2 Number of Secondary Schools and Pupil Enrolment	12
3 Performance in May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 – 2016)	15
4 Performance of the Ogun State Secondary Schools in the May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 – 2016)	16
5 Payment by the Ogun State Government in Respect of the May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 – 2016)	17

THE CHANGING FACES OF NIGERIAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGEMENT

The Vice-Chancellor,
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Other Principal Officers of the University,
Provosts of Colleges and the Postgraduate School,
Dean of Education,
Deans of other Faculties and Director of Institute,
Distinguished Professors,
Head of Department of Educational Management and Business
Studies,
Heads of other Departments,
Colleagues and Friends,
My Dear Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

At Inaugural Lecture, it is not uncommon for the lecturer to explain how he comes to be standing before his audience. Perhaps I may be allowed to make brief comments in this regard.

I never imagined that I would study Educational Management let alone have the privilege to deliver an Inaugural Lecture from the Chair of Educational Management of this University.

I had the opportunity of being amongst the first set of students to be trained by the Faculty. The four-year programme ended in 1986. During the national youth service year, the University invited me for an interview for teaching appointment scheduled for May 1987. I did not honour the invitation as I had a completely different plan.

On 7th September, 1987, I appeared in the Faculty to collect my academic prizes. The Dean, Prof. Kayode Ajayi, informed me that three of us—George (now Prof. George Eweniyi) and Joke (now Prof. (Mrs.) Joke Jibowo) and myself—were invited and

that my two other colleagues had taken up the offer. He advised that I should join them. He persuaded me and gave me paper and pen to write an application right in his office. I submitted the application same day and, a week later, I was invited for an interview. The interview was conducted on 21st September. The three of us resumed work as Graduate Assistants on 2nd October, 1987.

As a result of the fact that I never planned to come back and work in the University, I did not obtain admission form for postgraduate programme. George and Joke, already admitted into Guidance and Counselling and Language Education programmes respectively, at the University of Ibadan, resumed lectures immediately.

In the second week in October, my Head of Department, Prof. Titi Hassan, invited me to his office. He asked about my plan in respect of the pursuit of Master's programme. I told him I needed some time to settle down. He said: "Settle down as Graduate Assistant?" I answered: "Yes." In the following week, i.e. the third week in October, he asked me to come over to his office again. He discussed with me that my other mates were already on their Master's programmes and that he would love it if I would join them and move at the same pace. I said I was not in any race with them and that I would like to go at my own pace. Prof. Hassan talked to me like a father to a son. After a long discussion, I told him that even if I wished to go for postgraduate programme, I did not obtain admission form, the sale of which had closed since April. He responded by saying that he only needed me to indicate interest. At that point I said: "Yes! I am interested."

There and then, Prof. Hassan wrote a letter addressed to Prof. C. G. M. Bakare, the Head, Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan. I travelled to Ibadan immediately and delivered the letter. Prof. Bakare communicated with the Postgraduate School and an admission form was sold to me. In the last week of October, I was offered admission into the Department of Guidance and Counselling. I

was deeply happy and grateful to both Prof. Hassan and Prof. Bakare.

I spent two weeks as a Guidance and Counselling student. I wrote the University, my employer, to seek approval and sponsorship. When my memo got to the table of Prof. Ajayi, the Dean, he invited me to his office. He told me that George and I could not possibly be pursuing the same course. Sadly, I had to abandon the Guidance and Counselling class, which I was already enjoying.

In the last two weeks in November, I was the only one staying in the office allocated to the three of us. Unknown to me, George and Joke were not happy about my predicament. They went to Prof. Ajayi and pleaded with him to assist me. Prof. Ajayi met with Prof. Taju Balogun, a visiting professor to the Faculty, from the University of Ibadan, and sought his assistance to enable me change to Educational Management. Prof. Balogun intervened. He gave me two letters: one to Prof. Bakare, and the other to Prof. (Mrs.) Remi Longe, the Head, Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan. Within one week, I was released from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and admitted into the Department of Educational Management. I joined the class by the first week in December.

Thanks to Jehovah God, I was able to complete the Master's programme in record time and made Ph.D grade. With deep gratitude, I showed my 'Notification of Result' to Prof. Hassan, my Head of Department. He was very happy and congratulated me.

While still in his office, he wrote Prof. (Mrs.) Longe. He implored that it would be highly appreciated if the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, could assist a sister University in the training of its high-level manpower by offering me admission into the doctoral class. The letter worked. I was admitted, resumed lectures in October 1988, and defended my thesis on Friday, 9th October, 1992.

Today's Lecture is, indeed, Inaugural. My senior professors, Prof. Kayode Ajayi, Prof. Taiwo Ajayi, Prof. (Mrs.) Emilola S.

Ajibade and Prof. Lasun' Gbadamosi, the first four personalities to occupy the Chairs of Educational Management, delivered their Inaugural Lectures while in the Department of Educational Foundations and Management (EFM). The fifth person to be promoted Professor of Educational Management was Prof. Isaiah A. Adeniji.

The Department of EFM, the department into which I was recruited, was, on 1st March, 2005, split into two—Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling (EFC) and the Department of Educational Management and Business Education (EMBE). I had the honour to be the foundation Head of the Department of EMBE. Department of EMBE survived for just four years. In 2009, EFC and EMBE were merged and renamed EFM. In just a quinquennium, Department of EFM was demerged again to form Department of EFC and Department of Educational Management and Business Studies (EMBS). Educational Management is domiciled in the Department of EMBS.

This Lecture—**The Changing Faces of Nigerian Primary and Secondary Education and the Challenge of Management**—is the very first coming from the Department of Educational Management and Business Studies.

Peculiarities of Primary and Secondary Education

Primary education is very important and unique in the Nigerian education system. It is the oldest. Its history dates back to 1843. During the year, the first known school, 'Nursery of the Infant Church,' was founded in Badagry (Fafunwa, 1991). It had been in existence, and survived all alone, for 16 years when there was no other system of formal education.

Age apart, primary education is also the biggest. It is the only one that enjoys the largest clientele. Most importantly, primary education is the foundation for the whole educational edifice. Other levels of education—secondary education, post-secondary education, and higher education—constitute the superstructure.

It is the system that supplies entrants into secondary education system. The success, or otherwise, of secondary education and, indeed, all other levels of education, to a very large extent, depends very much on the primary education system (Oni, 2006^c).

Secondary education is equally of considerable importance in the Nigerian education system. It is the level where significant options have to be carefully made essentially for the accomplishment of long-range ambition. In addition, it is the only link between primary education and post-secondary and higher education. It absorbs the products of the primary education system. The likely number of graduates of the primary education system, who would benefit from secondary education, is dictated by the absorptive capacity of the secondary education system itself. At the same time, it supplies entrants into the post-secondary and higher education. In other words, those to be admitted into different institutions of higher learning must have successfully completed secondary education (Oni, 2006^c).

Secondary education is very important in another respect. For more than a century—between 1859, when the first secondary school, 'C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos,' was founded, and late 1970's—good secondary education, leading to the award of Secondary School Certificate, had been an acceptable qualification for white-collar jobs. Even in the present-day Nigeria, there are myriads of workers in offices, industries and factories whose highest academic qualification is the West African Senior School Certificate.

The Meaning of Educational Management

The concept, 'educational management,' according to Oni (1997), is the organization and mobilization of human and material resources for the achievement of the goal of education. Generally, the goal of education is developing in the child knowledge, skills, habits, abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he

lives. 'Management' also refers to the personnel who administer the educational system (Ajayi & Oni, 1992^b).

Human resources, in the primary and secondary education systems, comprise men and women, right from the principal, head teacher down to the gardener. The material resources include classrooms, equipment, and all sorts of assets. In order to accomplish the goal of education, the educational resources should be available in adequate quantity and quality (Oni, 1995), members of the academic community engage in meaningful teaching and learning, and the personnel, whose responsibility is to oversee the affairs of the system and ensure enforcement of standard, play their role effectively well (Oni, 2009).

Historical Background of Managing Primary and Secondary Education

Management of primary and secondary education started right from the establishment of the first set of schools. The Christian Missions, who laid the formal educational foundation in the country, were, indeed, the first set of managers of the education system. All alone, they administered the system for the first four decades (1843 – 1882).

The primary goal of the Church Missions was evangelism. They only used education to accomplish their goal. The Missions did not pay attention to the quality of the personnel to impart knowledge. Qualified teaching workforce was grossly inadequate. In most cases, the priest, his wife, and their attendants served as teachers. Material resources too were insufficient. The same building, used as church, also served as classroom, the most important material resource. Funds were scarcely available resulting in poor provision of reading and writing materials. The curriculum of primary education was heavily religion-biased. Worse still, it was not deep in content.

There were no regular school hours, no common syllabus, no standard reading materials for teachers and pupils, no central

examination system, and the supervision of schools was inadequate. There were no official rules and regulations to control the actions of the Missions. Each Mission was just doing what it liked the way it felt it should be done (Fafunwa, 1991; Oni, 1995).

Incontrovertibly, the obvious inadequacies showed poor management style of the Church Missions. Understandably, there were criticisms from the nationalists who called for a change.

Government reacted to the public call for improved administration by the enactment of the first Education Ordinance in 1882. One of its provisions is as hereby indicated:

Grouping of primary schools into two. Those in the first category were government schools run entirely through public money. The second group would be referred to as assisted schools, i.e. the ones founded by missions or private individuals and supported from public purse (*The Education Ordinance for the Gold Coast Colony*, 1882).

The colonial government established its first primary school 17 years later. This clearly was poor management as the Ordinance became obsolete, just five years after it was put into operation, and had to be replaced with the Education Ordinance of 1887.

For seven decades—1882 – 1952, the colonial government played prominent role in the management and quality control of the nation's primary and secondary education through the enactment of a number of Education Ordinances, Education Proclamations and Education Codes.

The foundation for the nation's basic organizational structure was laid in the Lyttleton Constitution, enacted in 1954. Each of the governments of the Federal Territory of Lagos, Eastern Region, Northern Region and Western Region enjoyed a measure of autonomy. Each government engaged in the management of the primary and secondary education systems in its jurisdiction (Oni, 2009).

Divergencies of the Past

There was no uniformity among the different geographical areas as regards the duration and structure of primary education. As at 1952, primary education, in both the Eastern and Western Regions, was an eight-year programme given in two stages. The Northern Region too operated a two-level primary education system of seven-year duration. In 1955, primary education was reduced to six-year programme in the Western Region. However, the Eastern Region and the Northern Region continued with the eight-year and seven-year primary education respectively, throughout the 1950's. Writing a unified examination, conducted by the Ministry of Education of each region, marked the end of learning in the primary school (Oni, 2006^c; Oni, 2014^a).

As regards secondary education, there were different types. These were: 'grammar,' 'commercial,' 'modern,' 'modern (commercial)' and 'technical/vocational.' The beneficiaries were exposed to the examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council, the Royal Society of Arts of London, and the Regional (later State) Ministry of Education (Oni, 2006^c).

Growth of Primary Education

As at independence, the nation had 15,703 primary schools with 2,912,618 pupils and 96,807 teachers i.e. average of 30 pupils to a teacher and 185 pupils per school. By 1961, the number of schools grew to 15,743. However, the numbers of pupils and teachers went down to 2,803,836 and 95,696, respectively, i.e. average of 29 pupils to a teacher and 178 pupils per school (Federal Office of Statistics, 1963). By 1964, the number of primary schools and the pupils in attendance had gone down much further to 14,976 and 2,849,500 respectively.

Table 1 below shows the enrolment pattern in primary schools over the years.

Table 1
Number of Primary Schools and Pupil Enrolment

Year	No. of Schools	No. of pupils
1960	15,703	2,912,618
1961	15,743	2,803,836
1964	14,976	2,849,500
1970	14,901	3,515,827
1973	13,300	4,283,349
1987	34,266	11,540,178
1988	33,796	12,690,796
1996	48,242	16,761,591
1997	41,342	17,397,553
2006	70,822	21,717,789
2007	65,731	20,469,395
2009	68,715	18,818,544

Sources: Federal Office of Statistics (1963; 1975; 1990).
National Bureau of Statistics (2006; 2007; 2009; 2010).

Since independence, the number of primary schools and pupil enrolment have been fluctuating as indicated in the Table above.

A few years after independence, the country's educational system was criticized. According to Fafunwa (1984), there was the call for outright rejection of the educational legacy of the former British overlords. The agitation resulted in the conduct of the national conference on curriculum development at the close of the decade, precisely 1969. The conference recommended a six-year primary school course, followed by three-year junior secondary and a three-year senior secondary course. The report of the conference, and the development afterwards, resulted in the National Policy on Education (NPE) published in 1977.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme

A major landmark in the development of primary education in Nigeria took place on 6th September, 1976. On this day, the Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, launched the free, universal primary education (UPE) scheme at Oke Suna Municipal Primary School, Lagos. He referred to the start of the UPE as "the dawn of a new era in the history of educational development in the country." He pointed out that "the scheme also demonstrates the determination of the Federal Government to provide equal educational opportunities for all children of school age irrespective of circumstances of their birth. . . . Every Nigerian child should regard basic education as his natural heritage, a right and not a privilege. UPE is, therefore, the cornerstone in our determination to produce a literate and educated society which will accelerate the tempo of our socio-political, cultural and economic development" (*Daily Times*, 7th September, 1976).

This development was historic. It marked the end of the divergences of the past. In all the states of the federation, primary education would be free, it would be a six-year scheme, admission would be offered to six-year-olds and those who would clock six years in the calendar year, and a uniform curriculum put in operation.

The UPE programme resulted in some changes in the financing of primary education. The federal government assumed the financial responsibility—capital and recurrent. As conceived in the Third National Development Plan (1975 - 1980), the federal government made provision for a sum of ₦300 million, that is 99.64 per cent of total capital expenditure, for the provision of 150,995 classrooms. The states acted as agents for the federal government and saw to the managing of the programme. The UPE was planned to become compulsory from 1979.

The pioneers of the UPE completed the programme in 1982. They were supposed to form the nucleus of three-year junior secondary school and three-year senior secondary school. As at the formal commencement of the junior secondary school programme in 1982, however, only forty-one (41) Federal Government Colleges and ten states, out of the then nineteen states, were fully ready and participated. It was not until 1985 that other states complied with the government directive and embarked on the new structure (Oni, 1992).

As it was the case with primary education, the nation has succeeded in ensuring a uniform secondary education system throughout the country. In effect, 1985 thus marked the end of the discrepancies of the past. Ever since, there has been a harmonized structure of primary and secondary education.

The Table below shows the number of secondary schools and pupil enrolment in selected years between 1960 and 2005.

Table 2
Number of Secondary Schools and Pupil Enrolment

Year	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils
1960	883	135,364
1961	997	168,238
1970	1,155	414,149
1971	1,234	458,713
1972	1,219	535,965
1981/82	5,067	2,503,952
1982/83	5,317	2,899,215
1990	6,002	2,901,993
1991	5,860	3,123,277
1997	6,141	3,921,664
2004	10,913	6,279,562
2005	10,830	6,255,522

Sources: Federal Office of Statistics (1963; 1975; 1990).
National Bureau of Statistics (2006).

Right from 1960, the number of schools has been fluctuating whereas the number of pupils has been on steady increase.

Innovation of the Secondary Education Programme

One glaring difference between the former and present systems of secondary education, according to Oni (1992, 1996), is the vocational programme in the new system. Its basic aim is to develop in the young ones practical and applied skills.

In a study conducted in Ogun State in 1992, the lecturer found a significant relationship between each of material equipment, recommended textbooks and resource utilization and schools' academic performance in each of the pre-vocational subjects, in the Junior School Certificate Examinations, and that student-

class ratio was not related to schools' academic performance in the pre-vocational subjects. The study also revealed that there was a significant difference between the urban and rural schools with respect to the following: availability of material equipment; teacher quality; and academic performance in each of the pre-vocational subjects. The mean scores of the urban schools, in each of the variables, were higher than those of their rural counterparts (Oni, 1992).

Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme

Another important milestone in the history of the nation's primary and secondary education was the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme held at the Sheu Kangiwa Square, Sokoto, on 30th September, 1999. It was a remarkable coincidence that the same personality, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who started the Universal Primary Education scheme, also launched the Universal Basic Education, during his second term in office as Head of State, twenty-three years later.

Basic education is supposed to be provided by the government, free, universal, compulsory, and qualitative. It is to be enjoyed on full-time basis (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004; Lagos State of Nigeria, 2006).

Noticeable Changes

UBE has changed the face of primary and secondary education in Nigeria. For a number of years, UBE was a nine-year programme. It comprised six-year primary education and three-year junior secondary education.

Primary education had been a separate entity since 1843. With effect from 30th September, 1999, however, it has become an integral part of basic education. With respect to secondary education, it had been all alone for 140 years. Right from 1999, however, the system has been split into two—junior secondary, being an integral part of basic education, and senior secondary

education.

The face of primary and secondary education in Nigeria has slightly changed again. As of now, UBE is a ten-year programme. The distribution, according to the National Policy on Education, is as follows: one-year kindergarten education, six-year primary education, and three-year junior secondary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Senior secondary education, a post-basic education, is still of three-year duration.

The curriculum of primary education, between independence and 1991, comprised English, Arithmetic, and five other subjects. At the completion of the education cycle, the beneficiaries were subjected to a standard examination and successful ones awarded the Primary School Leaving Certificate.

In the present dispensation, the curriculum is very comprehensive. At classes 4–6, more or less senior primary, the curriculum comprises eighteen different subjects compressed into nine. As an example, religion and national values is a subject. It covers Christian religious studies, Islamic studies, civic education, security education and social studies. A child is required to learn English, French, Nigerian language, sign language, and if Moslem, or out of sheer interest, Arabic—five languages altogether. In addition, he has to cope with not less than ten other subjects, many of which are practical subjects. The programme appears rather demanding and an above-average intelligence is required for a child to be able to cope.

Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination was in place until 1991. With effect from 1992, however, continuous assessment, which used to be 40 per cent, has replaced examination. Pupils in the final year are now issued Primary School Leaving Certificate based on continuous assessment.

Secondary education too is taking another look. The curricula at the junior secondary school and senior secondary school are very comprehensive and highly diversified.

My research works, over the years, have found that there is a

change in academic performance as well (Oni, 2007, Ijaduola, Oni, & Muraina, 2011, Oni, 2012^b, Oni, 2014^b). Student academic performance was quite good in the first two decades after independence. In recent years, the performance has been undulating.

Table 3 below shows the performance in the May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations in the last ten years.

Table 3

Performance in May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 - 2016)

Year	Number of Candidates	Number of Candidates with 5 Credit Passes including English and Mathematics (i.e. Higher Education Potentials)	Percentage
2007	1,275,330	325,754	25.54
2008	1,369,142	188,442	13.76
2009	1,373,009	356,981	25.99
2010	1,351,557	337,071	24.94
2011	1,540,250	471,474	30.91
2012	1,672,224	649,156	38.81
2013	1,543,683	1,074,065	69.58
2014	1,692,435	529,425	31.28
2015	1,593,442	616,370	38.68
2016	1,544,234	878,040	52.97

Source: The West African Examinations Council, Lagos (2016).

As can be seen from the Table, the performance was good in 2013, fairly good in 2016, and very poor in the remaining eight years. The performance is hardly different with respect to the examination administered by the National Examinations Council (NECO).

The picture is same at the state level. The Table below shows the performance of the Ogun State secondary schools between 2007 and 2016.

Table 4

Performance of the Ogun State Secondary Schools in the May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 – 2016)

Year	Number of Candidates	Percentage of Number of Candidates with 5 Credit Passes including English and Mathematics
2007	34,522	4.09
2008	34,169	4.83
2009	35,196	9.21
2010	36,399	10.57
2011	39,422	18.22
2012	39,724	19
2013	44,928	26.54
2014	42,943	3.6
2015	40,157	9.97
2016	40,800	19.54

Sources: West African Examinations Council, Lagos (2016).
Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta (2016).

As can be seen from the Table, the academic performance has been very poor through and through.

The situation is very disturbing due to the fact that the government has footed the bills on the examinations. The Table below shows the amount paid to WAEC during the ten-year period.

Table 5

Payment By the Ogun State Government in Respect of the May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations Conducted by the West African Examinations Council (2007 – 2016)

Year	Number of Candidates	Number of Registered Schools	Total Amount Paid to WAEC
2007	36,195	265	₦145,045,000
2008	35,490	270	₦151,157,300
2009	35,939	270	₦197,934,500
2010	N/A	N/A	₦222,622,400
2011	39,522	278	₦253,218,800
2012	39,724	283	₦262,461,400
2013	44,937	305	₦349,876,200
2014	42,943	305	₦461,096,350
2015	40,175	307	₦496,612,500
2016	41,421	N/A	₦518,787,395

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Budget and Planning (2016).

There was a fluctuation in yearly number of candidates. On the other hand, the amount of money paid on each student had been on steady increase— ₦4,007, ₦4,259, ₦5,507, ₦6,407, ₦6,607, ₦7,785, ₦10,737, ₦12,361, and ₦12,524, in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016, respectively.

Problems Confronting Primary and Secondary Education

My research outcomes and experience have showed that a number of problems have prevented the nation's primary and secondary education from growing properly. These are: poor pupil enrolment projection, pupil population explosion, malpractices, overriding political interest, political constraint and poor teacher quality (Oni, 1992, 2006^a, 2006^b, 2006^c, 2012^a). It is instructive to note that all these problems are attributable, in whole or in part, to poor management skills on the part of the administrators.

Poor Pupil Enrolment Projection

The UPE of 1976 could hardly be regarded as successful. A factor responsible for its failure was poor pupil enrolment projection. Two million, three hundred thousand (2,300,000) children were projected to be enrolled in primary class I at the commencement of the programme. However, three million (3,000,000) showed up for registration. The projection was underestimated to the tune of 30 per cent. As indicated on page 10, the federal government budgeted ₦300 million for making available school buildings and equipment and ₦200 million for the training of teachers. Projection of additional teaching staff and classrooms was put at 60,000 and 36,000, respectively. The underestimation had a telling effect on the provision of the much-needed educational resources—human and material (Oni, 1995). Previous attempts at making primary education available to all in the Western Region and Eastern Region in the 1950's were marred by poor projections.

The cause of poor projection was poor educational management/planning resulting from, of course, faulty census exercise. Each of the censuses conducted since 1952-1953, except, perhaps, that of 1991, has been marred by massive irregularities. As an example, in the 2006 census, an Assistant Controller of the National Population Commission, posted to

Benue State, “was arrested for allegedly selling five cartoons of National Population Commission Form 01 for one million Naira (₦1,000,000)” (*The Guardian*, 27th March, 2006). Equally, enumerators were found filling and thumbprinting “the National Population Commission's enumeration forms themselves—meant to be filled by residents—when it dawned on them that they might not be able to cover their enumeration areas before the end of the exercise” (*Nigerian Tribune*, 28th March, 2006).

Usually, a projection exercise relies heavily on figures from censuses. Planning becomes very difficult when the planner does not know the exact number of children at a particular time or during a plan period.

Pupil Population Explosion

Sudden and rapid rise in the size of pupil population is closely linked to poor projection and, by extension, poor planning. A comparison of 1970 and 1973, for instance, as indicated in Table 1, shows a decrease in number of schools and increase in number of pupils. In 1970, there were 14,901 schools with 3,515,827 pupils. In 1973, the number of schools dropped to 13,300 but pupil enrolment increased to 4,283,349. The picture shows the problem of over-population of the available public schools.

As at the start of the UPE programme in 1976, 3,000,000 children, as indicated on page 18, were registered. Five million, seven hundred thousand (5,700,000) others joined the new intakes. The introduction of UPE resulted in astronomical increase in enrolment. The figures went up from 6 million in the 1975/76 academic session to 8.7 million in 1976/77 and to 12.5 million in the 1979/80 session. Six years after the launching of the programme, i.e. 1982, pupil population hit 15 million (Fafunwa, 1991).

The problem of over-population of the available public primary schools made private primary schools to become very popular. In Ogun State, the number of private primary schools, as at year

2000, was 409. In just five years, i.e. 2000 - 2005, the number had grown to 1,873. In the whole country, there were 60,189 private primary schools in 2005. In the following year, i.e. 2006, the number had risen to 70,822 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

The high increase of private primary schools, in the face of high tuition fees and other charges, made the lecturer to conduct a study to determine the perception of civil servants—teachers (primary and secondary school teachers), medical practitioners (doctors, nurses and pharmacists), and local government employees—who were parents, on the service delivery of both private and public schools. These people were set aside for investigation on this matter because they were among the active players and major stakeholders in the educational system and could make an informed decision on issues of interest, especially one relating to education.

The findings revealed, among other things, that gender, age and social-economic status had no significant influence on the perception of civil servants on the service delivery of public and private elementary schools. Level of education, however, significantly influenced civil servants' perception on the service delivery of private elementary schools, whereas it did not affect their perception on service delivery of public elementary schools. Private schools were perceived to be better in the measured indices of service delivery (Oni, 2011).

In another study conducted by Oguntimehin & Oni, it was found that private primary schools were contributing significantly to educational development in the local government area. The performance could, however, be further enhanced if they are adequately monitored and supervised by the government (Oguntimehin & Oni, 2016).

Pupil population explosion results in inadequacy of educational resources. Ten years after the federal government started the free UPE scheme and the full involvement of the local government in its administration, a one-time Minister of Education and Youth Development, Prof. Jubril Aminu, presented this deeply shocking

picture:

In one state capital, I witnessed an appalling situation where three classes, made up of a total of 200 children, were sitting in the sun facing one blackboard. No learning or teaching could possibly take place under such a situation. It will be absurd to believe that pupils 'educated' in such an environment can compete on equal terms with those taught in what we regard as an acceptable environment (Aminu, 1986).

The nationwide UPE programme of 1976 could not continue in the 1980's resulting from inadequate educational resources (Oni 1995).

Malpractices

Examination malpractices are very rampant. Students engage in creative cheating. Some of them go as far as writing on laps and other body parts, hiding phones in shoes and receiving answers in text messages. They also contract mercenaries to write examination for them (Ajayi & Oni, 1992^a, Oni, *et al.*, 2016).

Apart from students, some principals, class teachers, supervisors and even officials in the Ministry engage in malpractices. A few months ago, a principal of a private secondary school in Lagos collected ₦500,000 from 14 of his students as registration fees for their 2015/2016 Junior WAEC but failed to remit it to the appropriate quarters and denied them registration for the examination. When much pressure was mounted on him by the students and their parents, he issued fake print-out results to the students (*Vanguard*, 4th March, 2017). In another instance, five principals in Ebonyi State were demoted to classroom teachers by the government for their involvement in examination malpractice in the 2016 Senior School Certificate Examinations. Twenty-five other teachers and supervisors involved were placed on half salaries for three months (*Premium Times*, 13th April, 2017).

Another look at Tables 4 and 5 will show a difference in the

number of candidates, whom government paid their WAEC fees, and those who actually wrote the examination. In 2007, government paid for 36,195 but 34,522 actually wrote the examination. The difference was 1,673 i.e. ₦6,704,249. In 2008, government paid for 35,490 whereas 34,169 sat for the examination. The difference was 1,321 i.e. ₦5,626,340. It was very unlikely that such large number of students would drop out in the final year after the government had paid for their examination. If the problem could be traced to what is generally referred to as 'budget padding,' then financial wrongdoing is committed under the guise and in the name of examination.

Overriding Political Interest

This is another serious issue that has affected primary and secondary education in Nigeria. In January 1974, General Yakubu Gowon announced at Sokoto that the nation would soon start primary education programme on a national scale. The government was in too much haste that it launched the primary education scheme, the first part of the nation's new 6-3-3-4 system of education, in 1976 and published the National Policy on Education, the policy document to administer it, a year later, i.e. 1977. The procedure was far from the ideal. According to Ajayi, "the scheme was hurriedly launched because the then military government wanted to get credit for it, instead of the civilians coming in and "reaping where they did not sow," since the government regarded the scheme as one of its greatest achievements" (Ajayi, 1989).

The UPE programme was adjudged a failure even by the very personality who launched it. According to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, by the middle of 1980's, a number of unexpected and preventable problems made the UPE a programme that could not continue or last for a long time (*The Guardian*, 1st October, 1999).

The launching of the UBE in 1999 was an attempt by the government to correct the failure of the UPE. However, the law

to regulate it—Compulsory, Free, Universal Basic Education Act—was passed by the National Assembly on 18th March, 2004, and signed into Law on 26th May, 2004, almost five years after the implementation of the programme. Again, the arrangement was rather awkward.

Political Constraint

This is perhaps the greatest problem that primary and secondary education systems have faced. In just a little while after independence, there were political troubles. Another look at Table 1 shows a decrease in number of schools between 1961 and 1973: it was 15,743 in 1961, but went down to 14,901 in 1970. 1960's witnessed serious and unhealthy inter-regional rivalries, large-scale irregularities in the country's head count, series of unrests, riots, and strikes, expiration of the First Republic, take-over of government by the military, and thirty-month civil war.

It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why 15,703 primary schools with 2,912,618 pupils in 1960 dropped to 14,976 and 2,849,500, respectively, in 1964. In 1969, 3,443,000 pupils were in the primary school system whereas there were also 11,185,000 children of primary school age. The meaning is that the primary education enrolment fraction for the country, in that year, was 30.8 per cent. Almost 8 million Nigerian boys and girls of primary school age, who ought to be in school, were not in school (Adesina & Ogunsaju, 1982). After the war, which ended on 12th January, 1970, the government took over schools owned by the religious organizations and private individuals. That likely accounted for further decrease in the number of primary schools to 13,300 in 1973.

The nationwide UPE scheme of 1976 did not last long. In just three years after its launching, it was only in the South-West geopolitical zone, controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), that primary education was actually free and universal. Unfortunately, the military struck on 1st January, 1984 and brought an end to the Second Republic. Between the time and

1999 when UBE was launched, four different military regimes ruled the country. In a study entitled: 'Universality of Primary Education in Nigeria: Trends and Issues,' Oni (2008) asserted that unstable polity usually affects systematic growth of primary education as government shifts attention to the issues of security and stability and allocates huge funds to them.

Poor Teacher Quality

Teachers have been recognized as indispensable human resource, and in fact, the single most important element in the school system, more important than the quality of equipment and materials or the level of financing (U.S. Dept. of Health Education and Welfare, 1970; Bajah, 1979).

In 2014, the lecturer conducted a study entitled: 'Teacher Quality and Student Academic Achievement in Basic Technology in Junior Secondary Schools in South-West, Nigeria.' Technology-related courses—foundation for technological growth and the springboard for social and economic development—are always central among compulsory subjects that students at the lower level of secondary education are required to pass for upward movement. The study found a significant relationship between teacher quality (in terms of qualification, exposure and on-the-job training) and professional experience (i.e. years of experience in service) and student academic achievement. The findings had implications for the government, policy makers and school principals (Oni, 2014^b).

As at independence, Teachers' Grade One Certificate, Teachers' Grade Two Certificate, Teachers' Grade Three Certificate, Teachers' Grade Four Certificate and Honourary Certificate, were considered acceptable for teaching. During the decade, i.e. 1960's, Teachers' Grade Three Certificate was made the minimum teaching qualification. The trend changed in the early 1970's when Teachers' Grade Two Certificate became the least qualification for teaching.

Prior to the introduction of the UPE in 1976, more than 50 per

cent of the teachers in the primary schools nationwide were unqualified. The highest academic qualification of about 33 per cent of them was the Primary School Leaving Certificate, while the qualifications of 18 per cent others were below the Teachers' Grade Two Certificate (Adesina, 1981).

In order to have teaching personnel for the UPE, the government had to embark on massive teacher education programme. Those teachers who were untrained and uncertified were assisted to achieve Grade II through in-service courses.

Of the projected 60,000 additional teachers for the UPE scheme of 1976, only 48,780 had been trained. The shortfall, occasioned by the 30 per cent under-estimation of pupil enrolment projection, was made up by emergency measures. The government bent over backward and went as far as "the withdrawal of teacher trainees in the third year of a five-year programme to teach for the year before resuming the course, the employment on temporary basis of untrained teachers whose appointment had been terminated previously, and the employment of auxiliary teachers" (Taiwo, 1980). As at 1982-83, of the 376,545 teachers in the Nigerian primary schools, 229,104 (or 60.84%) were unqualified (Adesina, 1990).

Teachers' Grade Two Certificate was still acceptable in the 1980's. It was phased out from 1998. Thenceforth, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) became the minimum acceptable teaching qualification.

The situation is equally bad in secondary schools. As at 1971, 15,278 teachers were teaching in the nation's secondary schools. Of the number, 2,859 were graduates with teaching qualifications, 2,444 were graduates without teaching qualification, 2,791 were holders of NCE, and 2,290 others were classified as Grade 1 teachers and equivalent (Adesina, 1981). An addition of 2,859, 2,444, 2,791, and 2,290 gives 10,384. If the number is taken from 15,278, the answer is 4,894. If these 4,894 teachers—who majorly were holders of the West African School Certificate and/or Teachers' Grade Two Certificate—are added to

the 2,444 graduates without teaching qualification and 2,290 classified as Grade 1 teachers and equivalent, who had not been prepared for teaching in the secondary school system, the meaning is that 9,628 (i.e. 63%) of the teachers had no business of imparting knowledge in the secondary education system.

In the 1970's, those who completed a secondary school course but failed West African School Certificate Examinations, and benefitted from the two-year Teachers' Grade Two Certificate course, were recruited to teach in the secondary schools and prepare students for the West African School Certificate Examinations which they themselves were not able to pass (Oni 2006^c). Up till 1985, three quarters of holders of university degrees were not professionally trained for teaching in secondary schools (Adesina, 1990).

It is easy to note from the preceding facts that the nation's primary and secondary education systems have been plagued with the problem of unqualified teachers.

Management Recipe for Ensuring a Better Future for Primary and Secondary Education

The management of primary and secondary education is the responsibility of the federal and state governments. They play their roles through the Federal Ministry of Education and the State Ministry of Education. Among other things, the Ministries formulate and harmonize policies and coordinate practices in education (Ajayi & Oni, 1992^b; Oni, 2006^c; 2009; 2010^b).

Each Ministry has Department of Primary and Secondary Education and Department of Inspectorate Services. The departments are in place to ensure general management of primary and secondary education with a view to ensuring quality and standard.

The staff of the Inspectorate Services are known as inspectors. Their appointment is supposed to be based on experience and

subject expertise. They are in charge of the supervision of all schools. They are representatives of the Ministry and serve as the eyes through which the Ministry is able to see what is going on in the classrooms (Oni, 2006^c).

The principal and the head teacher form another important organ of management. These personalities are, indeed, the closest to the children on whose education enormous resources are committed. It must also be added that they are very close to the community from where the children have come.

Teachers also contribute to the management of primary and secondary education. In a paper entitled: "The Concept of *In Loco Parentis*: Its Implications for the Nigerian Elementary School Teacher," the lecturer discussed the role of a teacher. As parent substitute, he exercises authority over the children and at the same time owes a duty of reasonable care to them. Teachers are adults. The children look up to them for protection, support, and guidance. They serve as the arbitrators in the interaction of the children among themselves (Oni, 2010^a).

The success of the execution of educational programmes depends, to a very large extent, on the availability of a strong teaching workforce. Those who impart knowledge in primary and secondary schools, without the basic minimum academic qualification, are unqualified. They only engage in poor quality teaching. The attendant result is student poor academic performance.

It is a perplexing paradox that the country continues to have unqualified teachers and at the same time produces hundreds of thousands of trained teachers on yearly basis. The teacher training institutions include: National Teachers Institute, 85 colleges of education, 105 Faculties of Education and Institutes of Education in conventional universities, and more than one university of education. Spirited efforts should be made by the government at ensuring that only qualified teachers are recruited. It is only then that professionalization of teaching in Nigeria will materialize.

In order to stem the tide of having poor quality teachers in the primary and secondary education systems, I like to recommend that the government should take measures to resuscitate the teacher training colleges once again. This is because those who have attended teacher training colleges love teaching. The teacher training colleges should be made to serve as nurseries that will supply students into the colleges of education, faculties of education and universities of education. Beneficiaries of teacher training college will prefer faculty of education as first and second choice a million times over.

The quality of teacher training in the university will be better when Education is made a five-year programme. In the first, second and third years, students should be well groomed in the knowledge of their teaching subjects and methodology courses. The whole of the fourth year should be set aside for uninterrupted teaching practice exercise. According to Edun & Oni, (2010), doing so will enable the trainees to make progressive psychosocial adjustment to the school system and be better equipped and gain relevant skills and experience in teaching. The teacher trainers, the principals and teachers of the cooperating schools, and the external examiners should work cooperatively in making thorough and objective assessment of the students. Teaching practice is an examination. If it discriminates properly, we should be able to determine those trainees who are registrable by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), the agency that has the statutory responsibility of enrolling teachers, and will be allowed to register for the theoretical coursework in the fifth year and complete the teacher education programme.

All the personalities, right from the professionals in the Ministries down to the classroom and subject teachers, are required to play meaningful role in the management of the education system. They will be able to perform effectively well if they have sound education and are well trained in management. Their selection, therefore, should be done with much care and caution in order to ensure that those who have the ability, fitness

and character, and truly have the interest of the education system at heart, are recruited.

As of now, becoming the head teacher and principal is a matter of seniority. A reasonable number of students, who are later recruited as teachers, just studied whatever course in the institutions of higher learning. After an acceptable period, say 20 years, and subject to vacancy, they are appointed as head teachers or principals. This practice is not the best.

Leaders of these vital strata of the nation's education should be those who must have studied Educational Management. In addition, after they have assumed the position of responsibility, they, as well as classroom teachers, should be encouraged to undergo short courses at regular intervals.

Beyond acquisition of knowledge and skills, all the personnel who engage in managing primary and secondary education should develop understanding, co-operation and harmony. In my different studies, I have found that the bureaucrats in the Ministry and the teachers in the field have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in ensuring the smooth functioning of the education systems (Ajayi & Oni, 1992^b; Oni, 2006^c; 2009; 2010^b).

It is required of the inspectors to: carry out inspection visits at regular intervals; work cooperatively with the teachers in the field; bring innovative ideas from the Ministries to the teachers; and have the ability to guide, motivate and maintain good relations with the teachers. On the other hand, the teachers should be free to discuss their problems with the inspectors to take back to the Ministries. In order to be able to make significant contribution, the bureaucrats in the Ministries should always be aware of whatever is going on in the classrooms and be quick in providing workable solutions to the problems identified by the teachers.

The inspectors, head teachers, and principals should undergo training from time to time. The training can be received at the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration

(NIEPA). NIEPA is a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education. It is a capacity-building organization for educational planners and managers. It is in place to empower the beneficiaries of its programmes with the appropriate skills and techniques for effective and efficient operation of the education system. Benefiting from the programmes of the Institute will make it possible to have reformed inspectorate and leadership.

A lot will be achieved if the government has genuine interest in primary and secondary education. Ability to display the necessary political will would make it possible to solve all the problems affecting the education systems.

It is not beyond the power of the federal government to conduct credible and correct census exercise on which to base projection of likely number of beneficiaries of primary and secondary education. Government should educate all people, including enumerators, on the importance of supplying correct information as unreliable figures, resulting from falsification, affect projection and planning exercises adversely.

Once the likely number of beneficiaries of an educational programme is known, the different tiers of government should demonstrate the needed political will by making available adequate educational resources (Oni, 1994). Clearly, a lot of financial resources are needed to educate all children in the country. According to Obanya, the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme would require, over a period of ten years, about three trillion, five hundred and four billion, seven hundred and forty-nine million, five hundred and thirty - two thousand, four hundred and twenty Naira (₦3,504,749,532,420) (Obanya, 2002). The projection was made when UBE was a nine-year programme and the dollar was exchanged for less than ₦150. Now that the face of the UBE has changed to a ten-year scheme and in the face of biting inflation, the money would be much higher. It must be added that consideration should equally be given to senior secondary education.

Granted, no amount would be too much to provide adequate quantity and quality of teachers, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, etc.; the present ailing economy will make it impracticable for the government to bear the financial weight all alone. The government should, therefore, give the necessary incentives and assurances to voluntary and philanthropic organizations, institutions, as well as spirited individuals, at home and abroad, so that they will be willing to lend a hand in the financing of primary and secondary education (Oni, 2006^b).

It is also important that government should evolve a culture of putting educational policies in place before the implementation of the policies' educational programmes. It would have been good if the policy to administer the six-year universal primary education had been published and thoroughly studied by all the stakeholders before the launching of the highly significant educational scheme. The mistake of implementing the UPE programme before launching the National Policy on Education; and starting the UBE before enacting the law to regulate it, should not be allowed to rear its ugly head in the future.

Issue of stability is always of interest to well-meaning people. The nation has had a chequered history spanning decades. Granted, no government, administered by human beings, can claim to be ideal; all the same, Nigeria can learn from the developed countries that have enjoyed some stability in governance for a relatively long period. Provision of right education and good governance will make it possible to have enlightened citizenry and a considerable reduction of the nation's myriads of crises and, by extension, guarantee a measure of stability in the polity.

Proposal of Another Change

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recently indicated that about 10 million Nigerian children, who should be in school, are out of school (www.unicef.org/.../children-1937.html). This number of stay-outs, i.e. those children who

have never seen the inside of a classroom, is very high. Clearly, there is apathy on the part of the parents and guardians of such children.

The government should provide appropriate enlightenment for all especially the parents and guardians. In addition and equally important, government should enforce strict compliance of the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act. The law mandates every parent to release his child and/or ward to attend and complete basic education. Violation of the law by any parent is an offence and makes him liable to any or all of caution, fine and imprisonment (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004; Lagos State of Nigeria, 2006). To date, we are not aware of any parent who has been found guilty, tried in a court of competent jurisdiction and administered appropriate penalties for the violation of the law. Needless to say, a law remains mere expression in written words except it is enforced and/or complied with.

Pupil enrolment, as showed in Table 1, decreased between 2006 and 2009. There were 21,717,789 pupils in 2006. By 2009, the figure had dropped to 18,818,544. The meaning is that 2,899,245 (i.e. 13.35%) had dropped out of the system.

Another group of dropouts comprises very many others who stop schooling upon the completion of primary education. According to UNICEF, "only 54% transit to junior secondary schools" (https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/children_1937.html). These millions of drop-out children turn child labourers.

There is a way of ensuring that all children of school age are admitted and benefit from basic education. The lecturer likes to recommend megaschools. Each megaschool should have basic 1 – 10. It should be in an enclosure for a set of beneficiaries of the ten-year education. This would mean that the nomenclatures: kindergarten education, primary education, and junior secondary education, would naturally be dropped. It is only then that basic education will be truly basic education and not primary education and junior secondary education.

Provision of ten-year education for each cohort of children in just one compound has advantages. First, it gives room for ensuring that no child strays unto the 'out of school group' after the completion of either kindergarten or primary education. Second, it makes administration very cost-effective. Just one chief executive, the head teacher, will be needed to provide oversight.

Conclusion

A number of modifications have been introduced into the nation's primary and secondary education systems since independence. Government has been making the changes essentially to give the children good education. However, the success, in terms of good academic performance, hardly matches the efforts.

The face of primary and secondary education will change again, and for the better, when the nation operates ten-year basic school and three-year secondary school, administered by trained, knowledgeable and dedicated head teacher and principal, respectively.

The display of unquestionable commitment, by all those whose responsibility is the management of the nation's basic education and secondary education, will make it possible to have virile basic education and secondary education systems that will be strong enough to support the higher education system. It is only then that the Nigerian education system—elementary to higher—will be able to: meet the present intimidating social and economic challenges; produce responsible youths, who will grow up to become adults who are diligent, well-mannered, and dependable; and endure for as long as there is human civilization.

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