



EDUCATION POLICIES OF EARLY CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND THE WAYS FORWARD

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: January 26th 2021 Accepted: February 17th 2021 Published: March 6th 2021</p>	<p>This article discussed the challenges facing the implementation of the early child education policies in Nigeria. The article used secondary data. The article identified: inadequate funding, poor formulation of policies, lack of political will, and inadequate professional teachers. Others are inadequate infrastructural facilities, political instability, unstable educational policies, institutional corruption and poor supervision as the challenges preventing the implementation of the early child educational policies in Nigeria. To address these challenges, this study put the following suggestions forward to help improve the implementation of early child education policies in Nigeria; adequate funding of early child education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of professional teachers, ensure stable educational policies, ensure political stability, fight institutional corruption in the ministries and political officeholders should develop positive attitudes towards implementation of educational policies in Nigeria and finally, the government should advance the supervision of the early child education programme.</p>

Keywords: Planning, Educational Planning, Early Child Education, Challenges

1.0 CONCEPT OF EARLY CHILD EDUCATION

The early child education is among the educational system of Nigeria. Government incorporated the early child education when it launched the universal basic education in 1999. According to the National policy on education (2004) early childhood care education (pre-primary education) is an education given in an educational institution to children aged 3-5 plus prior to their enrollment in the primary school. Maduewesi (1999) sees the early childhood care education as the education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. He further maintained that it is a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside home whereby young children from about the age of 3 years are exposed through play like activities in a group setting through mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stages, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling.

The ECCE project is positioned to address the following objectives (Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) : to effect a smooth transition from home to the school; to preparing the child for the primary level of education; to provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parent are at work (on the farm, in the market, office e.t.c); to inculcating social norms and values, to inculcating in the child the spirit of inquiring and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toy. e.t.c. to develop in the children a sense of cooperation and team-spirit; and to aid learning of good habits and the rudiments of letters, numbers, colours, shapes and forms e.t.c

The achievement of the stated objectives of early childhood education and care in Nigeria is brought about via the following means: establishing pre-primary sections in existing public schools and encouraging both community and private efforts in the provision of early childhood education; making provision in teacher education programmes for specialization in early childhood education; ensuring that the medium of instruction will principally be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community. Hence, the (i) developing the orthography for many more Nigerian languages; (ii) producing textbooks in Nigerian languages; and ensuring that the principal method of teaching in the childhood education centres will be through play, and that the curriculum of teacher education is appropriately oriented to achieve this; regulating and controlling the operation of early childhood education – to this end, the teacher-pupil ratio is set at 1:25; setting and monitoring a minimum standard for early childcare centres in the country; and ensuring full participation of government, communities and teachers' associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities (NPE,2014).

To achieve the early child education programme in Nigeria, the Nigerian government formulated and designed many policies to aid the implementation of the early child education programme with the help of international organization. Some major policies of the early child education as drafted in the working document. Since implementing these early child education programme there have been challenges facing the implementation. The aim of this paper is to discuss the challenges facing the implementation of early child education policies in Nigeria.

2.0 CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Educational Policies is an instrument used by the government to achieve the objectives of education. Educational policy is a tools to implementing educational programme. According to Noun (2011), policies are written or unwritten statements that guide present and future thinking, initiatives, actions and decisions of managers. They are refer to as written policies when there are documents somewhere for referencing and are unwritten when in form of pronouncements, i.e. policy statements by people in power or position of authority. Policies are guides that usually provide the latitude of operations of managers. It makes managers understand the extent to which they can go in the process of decision making. Terry (1977) looked at a policy as an overall guide that gives the general limits and direction in which administrative action will take place". According to him, "a policy defines the area in which decisions are to be made but it does not give the decision". According to Osokoya (1987) education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. So every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation. Noun (2011) defined The Educational Policy of Nigeria is a general statement containing principles, regulations and rules, that govern many of the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, where to get them employed, who to teach them, how to finance their education, what to teach, how to impart skills, goals, objectives and even the philosophy. (Okoroma 2000) submitted that educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system.

There are many reasons for designing educational policies. Awokoya (1981) observes that educational policy is directed towards increasing the quality of life of a people. He believes that the aim of any policy is to satisfy individual needs, community pressures, complexity and sophistication to which socialized personnel must be educated or trained to meet these demands.

Educational policy is systematic and takes many processes before we can conclude it as educational policy. Awokoya (1981) listed the step to guide formulation of educational policies include:

- a) It should be planned 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 loaded
- 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.

Meanwhile, Ishola (2016) and Obioma, (2007) observed that the National Policy on Education (NPE) contains the philosophy, aims, objectives and national policies on all levels of education in Nigeria (FRN, 2013). Section 2 of the policy document presents all the policy statements on basic education in Nigeria; Section 2A covers early childhood care, development and education; Section 2B covers the one-year pre-primary education tagged Kindergarten Education; Section 2C covers the primary education. These three levels of education in Nigeria cover ECE as used in this document since it is taken to mean education given to children from birth through eight years (that is, from birth to Primary III Class).

According to Ishola (2016) the major pronouncements of ECE Policies that Focus on Sustainability include:

1. NPE (FRN, 2013) identifies three levels of education that make up ECE in Nigeria with their respective goals. Two of these levels are preschool education, while the last one is part of primary education. These levels include:
 - a. Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), which is meant for children between ages 0 to 4 years plus;
 - b. Kindergarten Education, a one-year education given to children between ages 4 to 5 years plus, prior to their entry into primary school and
 - c. Primary class (I to III), which is the lower level of primary education meant for children ages 6 to 8 years plus.

2. The teacher-pupils ratios, for effective teaching/learning exercise were also stipulated in the NPE as follows:
 - a. At ECCDE level, crèche (ages 1-2years plus) shall be of ratio 1:10, while nursery (ages 2-4years plus) shall be of ratio 1:25;
 - b. Kindergarten class shall be of ratio 1:25;
 - c. Lower primary classes shall be of ratio 1:35.
3. Since there cannot be a good educational system without curriculum, the policy emphasises the development, production and dissemination of curricula and necessary curriculum materials for these levels of education.
4. In order to protect all Nigerian languages and also to ensure that a child's development is appropriate for his or her environment, NPE provides a policy on the language of instruction. To this end, it is stated that the language of an immediate community (or mother tongue) shall be the language of instruction up to Primary III class, during which the school subject shall be taught in English language.
5. The National Minimum Standards for ECE Centers (NERDC, 2007) states that the three types of ECE that can be established are day care/crèche (for 0-2years plus), pre-nursery/play group (for 2-4 years plus) and nursery/kindergarten (4-5 years plus).
6. Besides the ECE centers, the minimum standards also declare that there must be enough space for children to play and that they should cover the playground with either grass or sand; the dimension of the classroom should be 16m² for 20-25 children and must be well ventilated with two doors the classroom floor must be protected and save to play on; there must be science, health and nutrition, drama and shopping corners; 15 statutory record books, ranging from admission and withdrawal register up to school diary must be acquired by the centers. The furniture suggested include child-size chair (one per child and a round table per four children). It was also part of the standards that the ECE centers must be fenced for security and safety purposes. Other concerns of the minimum standard are necessary human resources. One caregiver and a help should be in custody of 20-25 children. Health facilities such as weighing scales, growth charts, and other first aid materials were suggested. Assessment method that a give proper record of growth and development was suggested, using of growth monitoring equipment and child assessment records (which should cover all round development) was suggested. Others include government, community and parental involvement, quality of nutrition and nutrition facilities, safety measures, stakeholders' roles and supervision organogram.
7. Another policy document that was studied was being refer to as Early Childhood Development Standards for Nigeria. This policy document presents the developmental domains that ECE centers must covered for a holistic development. The social, emotional, physical and intellectual development should be equally and adequately emphasized by the centers among other developmental factors such as nutrition, health, safety, protection and security, water and environmental sanitation. The responsibilities of the government in order to ensure that it meets the standards set. Some of these are that adequate budgetary provision for regular training of ECCDE administrators and caregivers should be made by the government; and institutionalize regular evaluation of ECCDE facilities to ensure quality among others (Ishola, 2016).

2.1 Concept of Implementation

Surely, implementation is the systematic way of carrying out planned document or projects. The implementation is the act of executing policies, programme and projects. It is the process of coordinating activities of carrying out drafted planned, policies and projects. In educational institutions, implementation is a necessity. Planned educational policies and programme must be implemented to realize the objectives of education. Implementation in education must follow defined processes and pattern to be successful. Philip, Okoroafor, & Iro (2015) viewed implementation as an activity constitutes a central phase in the policy process. Once a policy is formulated, the next logical sequence is to implement it using an appropriate implementation strategy for purposes of achieving effectiveness. Ripley (1985) sees *Policy* implementation activities are those tasks and functions undertaken after a law is passed. They translate the broad, vague and multiple statements about goals, programme outlines and policies in the statute into concrete activities. In other words, implementation activities imply the process of activating approved policy document. Obadan (2002) defined Policy implementation as the process of assembling resources (including people), allocating resources and utilizing resources in order to achieve policy objective.

2.2 Early Child Educational Policies and Level of Implementation

This paper will consider some policies on the early child educational programme in Nigeria and the level of their implementation.

The teacher-pupils ratios, for effective teaching/learning exercise are also stipulated in the National Policy on Education for early child education programme which include: crèche (ages 1-2years plus) shall be of ratio 1:10, while nursery (Ages 2-4years plus) shall be of ratio 1:25. Kindergarten class shall be of ratio 1:25. Implementing this policy is ineffective and poorly implemented. Many early child education schools in Nigeria have teacher-pupils ratio more than the stated policy. Adenike & Peter (2016) observed that the lower staff-child ratio is the scenario in Nigerian ECE at pre-primary school level. This has been reported in several papers and researches on ECE (e.g., Sooter, 2013; Osho, et al., 2014). In fact, in a report series to the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, it was specifically reported that classrooms in early childhood development (ECD) centers in Nigeria are crowded, with an average of over 130 children per classroom in the North (Adenike & Peter 2016, The Good Planet Foundation, 2013).

The policy on production and availability of National curriculum stated that since there cannot be a good educational system without curriculum, the policy emphasizes the development, production and dissemination of

curricula and necessary curriculum materials for these levels of education. The policy was not fully implemented because many early child education centers do not have the National curriculum in their respective centers across the country. Adenike & Peter (2016) pointed out that the non-availability of the National Early Childhood Curriculum for Ages 0-5 years in pre-primary schools has been confirmed in findings of researches conducted in different states in Nigeria (Ogunode, 2020, Amali, et al., 2012; Ishola, 2016, Viatonu, et al., 2011; Okewole, et al., 2013).

The National policy on Education (2014) Stated that adequate budgetary provision for regular training of ECCDE administrators and caregivers should be made by the government; and institutionalize regular evaluation of ECCDE facilities to ensure quality among others (Ishola, 2016). The funding of the early child educational programme in Nigeria is inadequate. The policy on funding is poorly implemented. Inadequate funding is a major problem facing the administration of early child education, (Adenike & Peter 2016). Result from different studies on funding level of the early child education showed that the early child education programme is not well funded by (Ogunode, 2020, Alabi & Ijaiya, 2014, Osakwe, 2011; Amali, et al., 2012; The Good Planet Foundation, 2013).

In the words of Adenike & Peter (2016), the unprofessional teachers teach in the early education centers across the country. Revelation from different studies agreed that the early child education programme in Nigeria faces the problem of lack of professional teachers (Ogunode, 2020; Amadi, 2010, Amadi, 2013; Olaleye & Omotayo, 2009; Eresimadu 1998, Okewole, Iluezi-Ogbedu, & Osinowo, 2013; Okolie & Onifade; 2014 ; Osho, Aliyu,).

Similarly, Adenike & Peter (2016) noted that, although the resources are critical to successful implementation of ECE programme, they are not found in many Nigerian pre-primary schools, especially in the pre-primary section of public primary schools that belong to the government. Studies on resources availability on the early child education by different researchers disclosed that the early child education centers in Nigeria lack adequate instructional materials (Ogunode 2020, Amali, Bello, & Okafor, 2012; Viatonu, Usman-Abdulqadri, & Dagunduro, 2011; Okewole, et al., 2013; Osho, et al., 2014).

3.0 CHALLENGES FACING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY CHILD EDUCATION POLICIES IN NIGERIA

This article discussed the challenges facing the implementation of the early child education policies in Nigeria. Some challenges such as: inadequate funding, poor formulation of policies, and lack of political will, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, political instability, unstable educational policies, institutional corruption and poor supervision.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one major challenge facing the implementation of the early child education policies in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation for education in Nigeria is inadequate to implement the entire educational policies successfully, including the early child education. Ogunode & Adah (2020) submitted that inadequate funding is a major problems facing the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation for education is very poor that it cannot be used to implement the various educational policies in the country. Inadequate funding is one of the greatest challenges facing the ministry of education in Nigeria. A breakdown of budgetary allocation for the ministry of education for one decade shows that the budgetary allocation for the entire ministry of education has been below the recommended UNESCO 26% of the total annual budget for a year. Nigerian government needs billions of naira to successfully implement the early child educational policies in the country and the annual budgetary allocation for the educational sector is inadequate. Ibrahim (2018) observed that from 1999 up till 2014, the budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is less than 12% for every fiscal year. This is against the 26% of budgetary allocation recommended by UNESCO. Again, to further support the point of inadequate funding in the Nigerian education system, it is on record that out of the twenty world sampled countries on education funding in the year 2012, Nigeria was the least with 8.4% of budgetary allocation to education as indicated in table 1. Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Uganda top the list with budgetary allocation of 31%, 30%, 27% and a rank of 1st, 2nd and 3rd position respectively (World Bank, 2012). However, it is a well-known fact that no any system of education can perform well without adequate financial support. Poor funding of the educational sector in the country is responsible for poor implementation of educational policies. Many researchers have identified problems facing the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. These observable constraints, according to the Ogunode & Adah (2020) inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate professional teachers, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, lack of continuity in commitment to policy implementation, political instability, poor policy formulation, poor relationship between policy designer and policy implementer are the challenges preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

3.2 Poor Formulation of Policies

Poor policies' formulation at the early stage of planning is another problem affecting the implementation of the early child education programme. Okoroma (2006) cited Aghenta (1984) submitted for education to achieve all ends, it has to be carefully planned. The plan must take into consideration ... the needs of the society; the political, socio-cultural, economic, military, scientific, and technological realities of the environment are very important to its survival. However, the methods and approaches adopted for the planning of the early child education were faulty. Christine & Hayatu (2014) observed that from the approach, the success of implementation may be a mirage. The approach contradicted or violated the known rule of systematic forward planning. The impression this has created is that the nation has learnt no lesson from the failure of the Free, Compulsory Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of 1976. The major cause of the failure of the UPE scheme was improper planning. If analysis or diagnosis of

the requirements for implementation were done, the failure of UPE would have been averted. A repeat of the UPE approach with the UBE programme has made the researchers mull over. Could effective implementation be achieved without a thorough diagnosis of the state of our schools? Ogunode & Adah (2020) pointed out that poor policy articulation or formulation is another problem responsible for the poor implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Similarly, Ogunode (2020) observed that Federal Government is poor in articulating its educational policies. If the educational policies are not properly formulated or articulated, it will be difficult to implement the policies. Okoroma (2006) opined that the gap that often exists between policy formulation and implementation provokes inquiry to identify factors that constrain the effective implementation of educational policies. The problem of policy implementation is traceable to the planning stage, which comes immediately after policy formulation. Okeke *et al.* (1985), Ukeje (1986) and Okoroma (2006) have stated clearly that good planning will ensure effective implementation. Good planning that can facilitate effective implementation ought to consider such factors as the planning environment, social environment, political environment, and financial and statistical problems (Okoroma 2006).

3.3 Lack of Political Will

The lack of political will to implement the various educational policies especially that of the early education problem is another challenge facing the implementation of early child educational policies in Nigeria. Independent newspapers (2019) revealed that twelve states in the northern part of Nigeria are yet to pass the Child Rights Law, despite its obvious benefits for children. UNICEF Child Protection Specialist stated this during a two-day media dialogue on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). She identified the states as Bauchi, Yobe, Kano, Sokoto, Adamawa, Borno, Zamfara, Gombe, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa and Kaduna. Many state governors failed to sign the Child act right bill that covers every aspect of the lives of children and adolescents. They are broken down into survival rights, development rights, participation rights, and protection rights. The lack of political will to implement or sign the bills into law is affecting the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. The inability of the political leaders to sign this bill into law will definitely affect the implementation of the early child education programme in the various states. UNICEF (2017) observed that Nigeria is a policy-rich environment but poor in implementation. Inadequate resources and political will have limited the capacity and commitment of government to implement educational policies and processes. This affects the sustainability of inputs. If Nigeria wants to achieve SDG4, we need a sustained to address these issues at policy and implementation levels, which focus on state political and financial commitment to break down the barriers to delivery of education.

3.5 Inadequate Professional Teachers

Inadequate professional teacher is a big problem preventing the implementation of early child education policy in Nigeria. There are limited professional teachers available in the country that specialized in early child educational program. Professional teachers are needed in large number to successfully implement the educational programme relating to teaching and learning. NEEDS (2014) report that the primary education subsector requires 59,944 teachers, which is more than the capacities of all the teacher training institutions in the country. It is obvious that all educational levels are confronted with acute shortage of teaching staff. A report by independent Newspapers (2019) reports that there was a deficit of 135,319 teachers at the Early Childhood Care Development Education, 139,772 deficit in primary schools, and 2,446 shortage in Junior Secondary School across the nation. Several challenges have been identified as clogs in the realization of good access, equity and quality of education in Nigeria. One of these is the critical issue of teacher shortage at all levels of education. There is a shortage of early child education teachers needed to attain the proposed 1:20 teacher-to-pupil ratio. This ratio is far from being met as the current ratio is 1:47. Never can quality education be achieved in educational institution where the number of students is larger than the capacity of the teachers. Therefore, the nation needed to produce 330,033 teachers annually in order to achieve the EFA goal by 2015 (Junaid, 2013). Manafa, (2011) cited Emenanjo (1998) who reported the dearth of trained teachers affects the implementation of language programmes in school, federal government colleges inclusive. The small developing languages have no trained teachers. In the major languages, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, English and French, the practicing teachers are poorly motivated, ill-trained, overworked, unevenly distributed, and abysmally insufficient in numbers. The shortage of professional teachers is among the key challenge facing the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria, especially the early child education. Okoroma (2003) did a study that assesses the effective implementation of the U.B.E. program revealed significant inadequacy in the implementation efforts. Among the constraints that impede effective implementation are inadequate qualified teachers, insufficiency of funds, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, poor motivation of teachers, and lack of guidance and counseling services. This lack of professional training for the teachers is liable to worsen the problems of implementing ECE in Nigeria. Research has showed that majorities of teacher teaching in the Nigeria early child education programme are not professional teachers (Adenike & Peter 2016, Olaleye & Omotayo, 2009; Viatonu, et al., 2011).

3.6 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities like classrooms, chairs, tables and laboratories is another problem preventing effective implementation of the early child educational policies in Nigeria. Ogunode & Adah (2020) observed that it requires infrastructural facilities for implementing the educational policies to implement teaching, learning, and research programme. Infrastructural facilities include classrooms, laboratories, workshops, staff offices and libraries. Others include hostels (in residential institutions), staff quarters, students and staff recreational facilities,

sports and games facilities. They also include roads, electricity, and water supplies. According to the early child educational policies as stated in the working document, the policies read that the government shall provide adequate infrastructural facilities to the children to learn in an environment that is comfortable. Inadequate infrastructural facility is one major problem preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. No meaningful teaching and learning can take place without adequate infrastructural facilities available. Many researchers have observed it that inadequate infrastructural facility is a common problem affecting the entire educational system in Nigeria. Manafa, (2011) observed that inadequate personnel leads to inadequate science practical lessons, inadequate personnel in some areas brings about dearth of teaching staff, lack of effective teaching and learning, poor maintenance of physical structures, quota system leads to denial of admissions to the merited candidates, insufficient office accommodation for teachers and inadequate personnel leads to lack of supportive staff in ITC training unit. Facilities such as classrooms, libraries, staff, laboratories, and furniture are grossly inadequate in a greater number of the ECCE schools. (Eresimadu & Eze, 1998).

3.7 Political Instability

Political instability affects the implementation of educational policies, especially the early child education policies. Many political leaders that have the political will to implement early child education policies because of political system practicing in the country are not permitted because of limited time they have to stay in office. The time to implement some of those policies is not given to them. Ogunode & Adah (2020) observed that political instability is another major problem preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Political instability is one feature of third world countries like Nigeria. Many educational policies have been put to hold as a result of changes in government or administration from one political party to another political. Manafa, (2011) argued that the constant change in power or system of government in the past has contributed to the problem of ineffective implementation of the policy statement of Education For All (EFA). Variation in non-uniformity in the system of primary education, instability which characterized the Nigerian Political Scene has always led to changes in educational policies, most especially the primary school level. Each government rationalized the policy on education on its own accord. Odukoya (2011) observed that politics and frequent changes in government tend to affect the implementation of the National Policy on Education. He noted that the instability in the system of governance, coupled with constant changes in ministers and commissioners led to the level of the crises the national education system has witnessed over the years and the inconsistency and often contradictory nature of the educational policies and practices.

3.8 Unstable Educational Policies

The Nigerian government is known for changing of educational policies because of changes in the political atmosphere or administration. Many educational policies in the country have been put to hold due to change in political party that comes to power. Unstable educational policy is another problem facing the implementation of the various early child educational policies in Nigeria. The of the administration former governor of Osun state in Nigeria introduce ICT aided learning policies for all basic and secondary school students during his administration but the present administration have changed the policies due to the cost implication. Odukoya, Bowale, and Okunlola, (2018) observed that the policies were abandoned by another governor that took over from him due to lack of funding to continue the policies. Politics and frequent changes in government negatively affect the implementation of the National Policy on Education. Professor Ajayi, one time Provost of Federal College of Education (FCE) Osiele, Ogun State in Nigeria made this observation: "Within the eight years (1991-1999) that I served as Provost, the nation passed through five different regimes (Babangida till 1993, Shonekan for less than four months in 1993, Abacha 1993-1998, Abubakar 1998-1999, Obasanjo 1999-2007). Within this period I had to operate under eight Ministers of Education. The same thing happened at the state level. Each of the Presidents, Ministers, Governors and Commissioners had their own different conceptions and policies on education that they tried to implement during their tenure. With such instability in the system of governance, coupled with constant changes in "Ministers of" "Ministers for" and "commissioners for," one should not be surprised at the level of the crises the nation's education system has witnessed over the years and the inconsistency and often contradictory nature of the educational policies and practices, it's one step forward and two steps backward, (Odukoya, Bowale, and Okunlola, 2018). Manafa, (2011) identified government making over-ambitious policy goals, inadequate personnel in some areas, lack of physical plant, problem of record keeping, inadequate fund by the government, lack of continuity of policy, lack of amenities (electricity), poor monitoring and supervision of schools, bribery and corruption in the system, incessant political changes, pressure on politicians to satisfy their constituencies in return for continued political support, quota system makes qualified students not to get admission, educationally advantaged and disadvantaged states denies students admission into schools, complete neglect of teaching profession, over population of students in Federal Government College, lack of commitment to duty among teachers, inadequate provision of instructional materials, mismanagement of funds, inadequate provision of science laboratories equipment and facilities and lack of adequate motivation of teachers.

3.9 Institutional Corruption

Institutional corruption in the ministries and agencies of education is one of the problems preventing the full implementation of educational policies, especially that of the early child educational policies in Nigeria. Institutional corruption refers to corruption that takes place in public and private institutions. Corruption is common to Nigerian public institutions. Corruption has penetrated into most educational institutions. Funds budgeted for a different

programme in the ministries are being diverted into private banks. Many public funds meant for the development of education in Nigeria are being mismanaged. The limited funds provided for the administration of early child education in the various ministries, department and agencies of education equally diverted and this is affecting the early child educational programme. Osunyanmi, (2018) opines that Nigeria has been experiencing underwhelming development amidst overwhelming corruption, which does not insulate education from this malaise. Corruption allows a high percentage of the funds allocated to the sector to get diverted into the private accounts of public officials. Hence, the amount being spent on education is much lower than the figure in the budget. Corruption Perception Index 2016 revealed that Nigeria had a score of 28. The score ranges from 0 for the highly corrupt to 100 for the least corrupt. Therefore, country occupied the 136th position among the 176 countries ranked. It requires concerted efforts to tackle corruption so that development will not elude Nigeria. According to Ogbonnaya (2010), some heads of educational institutions receive 10% gratification for the execution of any project in their institution. Some parents even give bribes to secondary school principal to have their children admitted in the school. Teachers also give bribes to officials in the school board, so that they will not transfer them. School proprietors give bribes also to officials of education board for them to approve their private schools. There is even sexual harassment among students and teachers in schools. With this, the implementing of educational policies is jeopardized. Thisday Newspaper (2019) quoted Atiku said: "When we were in office, we passed the compulsory education from Primary to Secondary school law. We also imposed taxation on education. "I would appeal to you, members of the National Assembly, to look at that law again because there is a disconnect in the sense that monies or funds being given to states to develop education are being diverted.

3.10 Poor Supervision

Another factor responsible for poor implementation of the early child educational policies in Nigeria is the poor supervision. The supervision of the programme since inception has been poorly done as a result of poor funding of supervision and shortage of supervisors for the programme. Ibhaze, (2016) observed that no educational plan however excellent it may be can be effectively implemented if the school supervision is ineffective. Supervision is vital in implementing early childhood care and education in Nigeria if success is to be attained. Ogunaju (2006) observed that supervision is an indispensable management key to any organization or organizational programme. This then implies that supervision should of necessity be an integral part of early childhood education programmes so that the goal(s) may be achieved (Ibhaze, 2016). Adenike & Peter (2016) observed that despite the immense benefits that supervision offers the ECE, the Nigerian ECE at pre-primary school level is not provided with these benefits as it is usually left unsupervised. This cannot allow effective implementation of ECE programmes at pre-primary school level in Nigeria. Some studies carried out to investigate the level of supervision of early child education center showed that supervision of the programme is ineffective (Osakwe, 2011; Nakpodia, 2011; Sooter, 2013).

Okoroma (2006) cited Van Horn and Van Meter (1977) have also advanced three general explanations for unsuccessful implementation of programs, namely:

- a) The communication process: effective implementation requires that implementers know what they expect them to do; as messages pass through any communication network, distortions are likely to occur which can produce contrary directives, ambiguities, inconsistencies and incompatible requirements;
- b) The capability problem: ability to implement policies may be hindered by such factors as incompetent staff, insufficient information, political support, inadequate financial resources and impossible time constraints, and
- c) Dispositional conflicts: implementation of a policy may fail because those charged with the responsibility of implementation refuse to carry out their own assignments.

Okoroma (2006) cited Adesina (1977) notes that planned implementation is constrained by the following factors:

- a) Over-estimation of resources: this is a situation where estimated resources are greater than actual available resources to implement a program
- b) Under-estimation of the costs of implementing a plan: this happens when cost-estimates do not make adequate provisions for inflation and actual implementation costs become unmanageable
- c) Over-reliance upon external assistance: plans that substantially rely upon assistance from foreign sources for their implementation run into hitches when such aid fails to come, and
- d) Inaccurate statistical data: planning education requires accurate and up-to-date data. Plans that do not adequately provide for this usually have implementation problems.

4.0 WAYS FORWARD

To address these challenges, this researchers put forward the following suggestions to help improve the implementation of early child education policies in Nigeria; adequate funding of early child education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of professional teachers, ensure stable educational policies, ensure political stability, fight institutional corruption in the ministries and political officeholders should develop positive attitudes towards implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

4.1 Adequate Funding

Policy implementation requires adequate and regular funding to boost the usefulness of the emerging policies. Funds are required to accomplish and accommodate the directives and guidelines that emanate from the authority.

So, the government should increase the funding of education and especially the child education programme. This is the only way the objective of early child educational can be realized in the country.

4.2 Provision of Adequate Infrastructural Facilities

Infrastructural facilities are necessity in the implementing of educational policies. So, the government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities in all the early child education centers across the country.

4.3 Employment of Professional Policy/ Planners

Planning of education is a technical area that requires specialized skills and expertise. Planning involves quantification, programming, simulation, and analysis. Relevant personnel in several inter-related fields are required in the planning process. The competent and skillful persons to use relevant data and information efficiently for educational management are the educational planners. So, the government should employ more professional educational planners and deploy them to various ministries, department and units that handle planning of education to boost their capacity and team to plan well.

4.4 Employment of Professional Teachers

The government should employ more professional teachers and deploy them to all the early child education centers. This will make it easy to implement the teacher–student policy per classroom.

4.5 Fight Institutional Corruption

Institutional corruption can destroy the entire educational sector if not fought because funds lost to mismanagement and diversions are much. The government should use its anti-corruption agencies to monitor funds allocated to the various ministries, department and agencies of public institutions in charge of programme implementation in the education sector.

4.6 Ensure Political Stability/ policy continuity

Political stability is very important for educational development and for implementing of educational policies in the country. So, the country should create a stable and peaceful environment that will allow political stability and planning stability in the country.

4.7 Policy Continuity

Policy continuity is vital to the realization of educational objectives. So, the government at every level should create an atmosphere where policies are formulated by all stakeholders in respective of political party or interest so that the change of government will not stop policies since it was jointly formulated.

4.8 Positive Attitude towards Policy Implementation

The government and its principals should develop a positive attitude towards implementation of the early child education programme. All policies pending for implementation should be a matter of urgency and should be implemented.

4. Improve the Supervision Policy

The government should improve the supervision of the early child education programme. This will help to ensure that policies regarding the early child education are fully implemented in the country.

5.CONCLUSION

The early child education is aimed to provide foundation education classes for the Nigerian children. To achieve the various objectives of the programme, the federal government formulated and designed policies for the programme implementation. The policy implementation has been facing many challenges. This paper aimed to discuss the challenges facing the implementation of the early child education policies in Nigeria. The article identified among other that inadequate funding, poor formulation of policies, lack of political will and inadequate professional teachers are the challenges preventing the implementation of the early child educational policies in Nigeria. Other factors this article discovered are inadequate infrastructural facilities, political instability, unstable educational policies, institutional corruption and poor supervision. To address these challenges, this paper put the following suggestions forward to help improve the implementation of early child education policies in Nigeria; adequate funding of early child education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of professional teachers, ensure stable educational policies, ensure political stability, fight institutional corruption in the ministries and political officeholders should develop positive attitudes towards implementation of educational policies in Nigeria and the supervision of the early child education programme should be improved upon by the government.

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