

“No Child Left Behind”: Implementation Challenges of Related Educational Policies in Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>The paper examined the concept of “No Child Left Behind” vis-à-vis somehow related educational policies in Nigeria, especially the Universal Primary Education of 1976, and the current Universal Basic Education. The authors specifically showed that there is no strict relationship between the concept and the policies, except that they are all “mass education” initiatives which tacitly imply inclusive education. The main principles that undergird the policies: utilitarianism, inclusivity, and affirmative action were explicitly highlighted. The paper further delved into the historical origins of “No Child Left Behind” arising from the global consciousness of the need to make education accessible to the excluded and marginalised groups of individuals in society. The authors observed that the well-intentioned and well-designed policies were marred by some implementation measures such as short-sightedness in planning, gross financial deficit and corruption, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and dearth of qualified man-power, among others. The paper further observed that the poor implementation strategies of the policies have both positive and negative implications; and that the negative consequences have adversely affected sustainable national development. The paper therefore recommended that government should ensure that it has dependable statistical data that would enable it make realistic policy projections, and also put stringent stop gap measures to forestall high drop-out rates. It was also suggested that government should demonstrate strong political will, especially in the release of allocated funds, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes with a view to bolster the morale of both teachers and students to achieve policy objectives.</i></p> <p>Keyword: <i>Affirmative Action, Education for All, Inclusivity, Mass Education, Sustainable Development Goals, Universal Basic Education, Universal Primary Education, Utilitarianism.</i></p>
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Introduction

All over the world, the engine room that energises the various facets of development in different spheres of human endeavours is attributed to education; a purposeful and insightful education, in which all stakeholders show sufficient involvement and commitment. In other words, for an education system to be relevant to sustainable development and aspirations of a given society, there must necessarily be carefully thought out ideas, policies and programmes that would drive its goals and objectives to desirable and achievable ends.

Consequently, these ideas, policies and programmes unarguably must be derived from the felt-needs of the

society, the emerging socio-economic and political development, as well as the prevailing scientific and technological innovations. To a very large extent, an effective and impactful educational system depends on the ability, competence and efficiency of the human resource to translate ideas into practical realities, and to religiously implement formulated policies and programmes. It is however evident that there have been many comprehensive, well-articulated and sound policy proposals that were never implemented with the desired gravity.

The history of Western education in Nigeria is riddled with various policies (ordinances) with specific goals, which

were to all intent and purpose, somehow myopic and skewed. As a result, the educational provisions were accessible to a few privileged members of the Nigerian society, coupled with the fact that many remote areas were not captured in the colonial scheme of things. As a result, many potential beneficiaries were excluded by design and commission. This situation gave rise to agitations by nationalists for educational reform that would be inclusive and accessible to a great number of children of school age. This resulted in the radical introduction of the utilitarian principle into the Nigerian education system in the mid-1950s the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the Western and Eastern regions. Later, the post-civil war UPE and its corollary, 6-3-3-4 System, and the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) were introduced as further liberalisation policies aimed at bringing education nearer to the doorstep of every Nigerian child. These intervention measures could be seen as precursors of “No Child Left Behind” in the annals of Nigeria’s education system. At the moment, it seems that only Lagos State has embraced, conceptualized, and contextualized “No Child Left Behind” as its educational mantra under the banner *Leave No Child Behind*: we shall not give more attention to it here.

Conceptual Clarification

There are three key principles that underlie the concept of “No child left behind”, and they are: utilitarianism, inclusivity, and affirmative action. For the purpose of clarity, these concepts need to be briefly examined in the context of this paper.

Concept of Utilitarianism

The term utilitarianism ordinarily cannot be divorced from the word utility, which simply means usefulness; something useful or designed for a purpose in the interest of everyone. Utilitarianism is an ethical doctrine as well as one of the teleological theories, also known as consequentialist theory, which maintains that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the consequences or results it produce (Bowie, 2004). Simply put, there should necessarily be a nexus between an act and the consequence in any important moral decision-making. This implies that an action could be adjudged as wrong or bad if it causes pain or suffering, but it could be considered right and good if it engenders pleasure or happiness. In essence, the action may not be intrinsically good in itself, but may be good by virtue of the outcome.

For Moore (1993), the moral sense of good refers to actions, consequences, situations, people, characters, choices, and lifestyles. By implication, a person or an action may be considered as good because of his or its generous nature, but good in this case is not coterminous with generosity which may be a description of the qualities or aspects of the

individual or action. In other words, this could be different from goodness itself. It can be argued that a good action taken to save a people from imminent danger, but which robbed them their fundamental human rights, could be seen as morally bad, even though their lives are more valuable than human rights. It stands to reason that people must be alive to enjoy or exercise their human rights, hence the action on the contrary, could be regarded as good in the interest of majority of the people. This alternative action precludes the interest of some people who may bear the brunt of the good action.

Utilitarianism, as an ethical theory famously propounded by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) argues that actions should be judged as right or wrong to the extent that they increase or decrease human well-being or utility (D’Olimpio, 2019). In effect, this moral theory states that actions should be geared towards the greatest pleasure/happiness of the greatest number. This view, however to some extent, does not align with John S. Mill’s, who contends that the quantity of pleasure is not enough, rather its quality (degree of pleasure) be included, i.e., higher and lower pleasure, especially in intellectual, and not sensuous pleasure. In essence, actions should be such that can bring about the greatest good possible for the greatest majority (Okoro, 2002). In practice a government can adopt a utilitarian principle if it adopts a policy when implemented would benefit a greater member of its citizens. In reality, Nigeria has adopted educational policies premised on utilitarianism, e.g., Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE), Quota system of admission, and others – all aimed to make education more accessible to every child, with minimal discrimination or marginalisation.

Concept of Inclusivity

The idea of inclusivity or inclusive education has taken a new dimension since the turn of this century, and it seems to have become an inevitable concept in the action plans of most nations. Just as the word implies, inclusivity or inclusiveness does not limit or discriminate within individuals, rather it embraces virtually everyone-race, religion, gender, ability or disability notwithstanding. Inclusiveness as a principle of school practice, obviously involves unfairness or an offence against the principle of impartiality (Barrow, 2008). In the views of Ornstein and Levine (2008), it means educating students with disabilities in regular classroom in their neighbourhood schools with collaborative support services needed. Although, this conception may seem to be an ideal, but it may not have a universal appeal on the grounds of socio-cultural and religious barriers.

However, if a class is designed for students with stipulated or defined knowledge, skill and understanding such that these factors become the necessary criteria for admission

into the class, any attempt to admit those who could not meet these guidelines tantamount to unfairness. In this regard, it means treating persons differently for no good reasons. And when this is done, Barrow (2008) pungently states that: “The principle (of inclusivity) is generally couched in terms of treating people the same except where good reasons can be given for differential treatment, but should be more properly stated as the principle that treatment of people should be based upon relevant reasons” (p.187, words in brackets ours).

Nonetheless, no matter the weight of arguments put forward in favour of inclusive education, it can be stated that the cardinal principle that undergirds arguments in favour of inclusiveness is fundamentally ethical, which strictly speaking is against the principle of fairness, but based on affirmative action may give good reasons for bending the rule.

Concept of Affirmative Action

We can state that the concepts of utilitarianism and inclusivity in education are woven around the concept of affirmative action, which involves giving some people advantage or benefit on the strength of generic characteristics such as gender, disability, race, colour, among others. On the other hand, affirmative action, in a bid to cater for the underprivileged (in the same token) poses disadvantage to other people irrespective of the legitimate claims because of their physical fitness, gender, and so on. This manifests itself in practice or policy which favours groups of individuals considered as being disadvantaged, the aim of which is to ameliorate discrimination, or prevent its recurrence, with the view to creating new opportunities denied minorities and women (<https://www.aaed.org>).

In addition, affirmative action can be described as positive discrimination in favour of people, who historically, have been denied opportunities on the socio-economic and political landscape of the society. In other words, it implies a structured practice that requires the inclusion of people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds into the mainstream of society, organizations, and institutions, among others. This practice has some limitations, for example, we may ask: Can an affirmative action be morally justified? This question evokes the consideration of the principle of impartiality which states that it is morally wrong to treat individuals differently without providing substantially relevant reasons for doing so. However, affirmative action, though widely and wrongly presumed as a moral principle, can be justified on certain occasion irrespective of the fact that it is an immoral principle. This can be seen in such policies that encourage compensatory education. A typical example in Nigeria is the introduction of the “Quota System of Admission” into universities, and

unity schools, which sacrificed meritocracy on the altar of mediocrity. Again, the Almajiri schools in the North are another form of compensatory or discriminatory education – these are based on affirmative action apparently geared somehow towards no child left behind.

No Child Left Behind: Its Historical Origins

Having examined the main concepts that cast overarching shadow on the concept “*No Child Left Behind*”, it is apposite to also consider what No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is all about, and how it came into being. The idea under consideration may denote the total involvement or inclusion of all (or almost all) children of school-going age in the educational process of any nation, not minding whether or not they possess the innate competencies, skills, aptitude and willingness to subject themselves to the rigors involved in education. The notion, NCLB, may have been applied without adhering to the fundamental basis that underlies the practice in countries where the idea was nursed and nurtured. Typical examples are some educational policies mentioned above in Nigeria, especially with reference to primary and secondary education.

The policy of *No Child Left Behind* was a major United States’ educational reform which expanded the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA) of 1956 (Ornestein & Levine, 2008). The newest version of that Law is *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2002. This educational reform affected almost all public schools nation-wide, which required students to take standardize tests in reading and mathematics every year from grade three through eight. The cardinal objectives of NCLB include, among others, to improve academic achievement of all students; to bridge the gaps between students of different racial, economic, and social background, and to engage, train and retain high quality teachers.

In effect, its aim is to improve the education of the economically disadvantaged children from families below government’s official poverty time. Wong, et al., (N.d.) posits that this system has led some to describe NCLB as the most revolutionary education since EASA, and a reform that will put American Schools on a path of new reform and results. Although, NCLB may have some advantages such as creating awareness of achievement gaps, and so on, it also has been criticised for undue reliance on standardized testing, among others. (Mphwina, 2022).

The policy of “No Child Left Behind” undoubtedly was United States’ quick response to the Dakar World Education Forum resolution in 2000. At this forum, the international community collectively endorsed the Dakar Framework of Action, which aims to achieve six education goals, including elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and the

achievement of Universal Primary Education by 2015 (Daniel, 2003). The international community therefore pledged to be seriously committed to the goals of Education for All (EFA). The global greater interest in educational development in the late 20th century draws inspiration from the “Copenhagen Revolution,” which sees development no longer at odds with economic growth, but as an investment firmly based on right and reason in the framework of a long-term vision of the fight against poverty and inequality (UNESCO, 2005). This was encapsulated in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The above global initiatives were borne out of the World Conference on Education on “Education for All” in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

The policy of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was as a result of some dissatisfaction that arose mostly with various “non-teaching considerations, and with the demands imposed by the contemporary movement to raise standards of performance (Ornstein & Levine, 2002). For this reason, nationwide efforts were made to address some of the conditions teachers found very difficult, and to reform the system by improving teachers’ qualifications, among other things. This resulted in the constitution of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, which gave birth to series of national reports on the state of education in the United States, the most prominent of the reports encapsulated in: *A Nation at Risk* (1988) lamented that U.S is “at risk” by neglecting some key areas of her development. Hence, the Commission concluded that one major aspect of decline has been a rising tide of mediocrity in the schools (Houston, 1999).

In 2001, teacher-quality improvement activities assumed more prominent dimensions, and eventually became an integral part of national school reform movement (Gerstner, et al., 2006). These activities culminated in United States’ Education reform law in 2001, and signed into law in 2002, i.e., the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLBA). This newest version of the 1956 Education Act was couched in the principles discussed earlier which aimed at providing equal educational opportunity to all children of school age in almost all public schools in the United States. Thompson and Hickey (1999) view this type of education as “mass education” predicated on the utilitarian principle aimed at combating poverty and social inequality. However, educational policies in different countries which aim to ensure that every child has a reasonable dose of education (up to secondary education) may have different nomenclatures, but the purpose and focus remain the same. In effect, the cardinal objective of such policies is to engender equal educational opportunity in the interest of every child irrespective of gender, religion, physical ability

and disability, as well as culture. In principle, such policies are intended to achieve elimination of all forms of discrimination that would hinder access to equal educational opportunity by any child of school age.

The criticisms against NCLB such as excessive reliance on standardized testing, and unrealistic expectation of 100% student proficiency, among others, led to the replacement (to some extent) of NCLB policy in 2015 with *Every Child Succeeds Act 2023* (pa.gov/agencie). The *No Child Left Behind* policy has been implemented in many countries, e.g., the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Levesque, 2017). But in Nigeria, from available literature, only Lagos State has formulated a similar policy, tagged *Leave No Child Behind* (LNCB). Aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, it emphasises inclusive and equitable education for all. The policy focuses on ensuring equal access to qualitative education for all children, and on improvement of enrolment and retention rates in public pre-primary and primary schools (Olaofe, et al. 2024). Nigeria as a nation is yet to come out with a policy fashioned in the similitude of the US or the Lagos State Government. After a critical examination of some educational policies in Nigeria, we can say that Nigeria may not have had NCLB in mind as the basis of most of her education policies.

No Child Left Behind and Related Educational Policies in Nigeria

In the recent past, the number of out of school children Nigeria is quite alarming, and her primary education outlook is grim, thereby casting a dim shadow on the country’s future. Nigeria has the second-highest number of out-of-school children in the world (The Punch, Editorial, 2024). Baiyewu (2022) reports that 15 million Nigerian children are out-of-school, but the number sky-rocketed to 20.1 million (The Punch, 2025). With these recent figures, one could then imagine what the scenario looked like many years ago. The Nigerian educational scene is riddled with a detestful phenomenon which comprises the drop-ins and the drop-outs. These situations call for necessary policy formulation and/or reform. The drop-ins are mainly those who were admitted into the school system, they stayed all through the stipulated period but gained little and failed out as adjudged by the examination system. On the other hand, the drop-outs are those who showed all the symptoms of the drop-ins, but finally drop out of school. The introduction of some educational policies by government must have been predicated on the realization of the consequence of the above situations on national development. Hence, the formulation of various policies to stem the ugly trends at different times. This paper limits itself to the post-civil war education policies, which will be discussed in a nutshell.

The two main policies in Nigerian education system which are somehow related to the US’ “*No Child Left Behind*”

policy are the 1976 Universal Primary Education, and the 1999 Universal Basic Education. The relationship between the Nigerian “mass education” policies and that of the US is basically hinged on their underlying principles: utilitarianism, affirmative action, and inclusivity. In practice, the Nigerian policies are older, but fundamentally they all aim to achieve a central goal of equal access to education irrespective of socio-economic and cultural limitations, despite some differences and similarities in their implementation challenges. In addition, these good and lofty policies are also related in that they were not free from structural constraints of diverse forms depending on their objectives, scope and geographical location and demography.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme introduced by the military government in 1976 under the Olusegun Obasanjo regime, the sole aim of which was to equalise educational opportunities in Nigeria. As the then Head of State, he said henceforth, primary education will be free and universal throughout the federation, and that from 1979 it will be compulsory (Nwafor, 2016). This scheme, according to Akinyemi (1983) was regarded as the greatest social scheme ever embarked upon by any African Government. To Fafunwa (1983), 8 million children were enrolled in primary one in 1976, but he expressed fear of how many would finish primary six in 1982. This raises the issue of attrition or drop-out rate as a result of lack of motivation, distance from the nearest school, mental and physical disability, inadequate facilities, etc. Fafunwa’s analysis shows that of the 8 million UPE children that enrolled in 1976, less than 4 million completed their secondary school in 1988. It could be adduced that the poor implementation of the UPE must have heightened the attrition rate, thereby rendering the policy which aimed at mass education at the lowest level a nullity, because schooling was no longer free, even the compulsory aspect of the scheme was never enforced. The same problems UPE scheme had have also surfaced again in the current UBE.

Implementation Challenges of NCLB Related Education Policies in Nigeria

The two mass education policies in Nigeria were riddled with implementation challenges right from the onset. The problems seem to be hydra-headed recurring decimals that apparently defiled solutions. Implementation challenges of “mass education” is not peculiar to Nigeria, the NCLB also had its own weaknesses, some of which had been mentioned earlier. Our concentration here would be on the deficiencies in the two Nigerian education policies under consideration. Some of the implementation challenges include the following:

Lack of foresight and reliable statistics: The Nigerian educational planners seem to exhibit short-

sightedness in planning and formulating policies of high magnitude by not taking present statistical data into consideration as well as the dynamic nature of our society. As a result, policies to a large extent fail because of the absence of reliable statistics on which to anchor any realistic projections of which the policies intend to achieve within a foreseeable time frame. This has been a major factor that marred both the UPE and the UBE schemes.

High and low school enrolment: As a result of the absence of or inaccurate statistical data on which to base policy formulation, the Universal Primary Education Scheme at its inception witnessed an unanticipated pupil’s enrolment which overwhelmed the available resources and facilities. This led to poor learning environment, and other attendant problems. The contrary, however, was the situation in the UBE scheme, which experienced low pupils enrolment (<https://uaps2007.popconf.org/>). Even with the low enrolment, government still faced daunting problems in the UBE.

Inadequate funding: The lack of political will on the part of government is responsible for the financial challenges of both UPE and UBE. Governments at all levels failed to implement the budgetary allocations to the schemes meant for the procurement of materials and putting in place necessary infrastructural facilities that would ensure effective teaching and learning, and elicit motivation, interest and participation. But governments’ lackadaisical funding attitude towards the schemes doused the interest and motivation of both pupils and teachers, hence, high rates of school drop-outs. The lack of teaching materials (Secer, 2010) is also largely associated with inadequate funding. In fact, financial constraints to a very large extent weaken policy implementation strategies (Friend & Bursuck, 2012). It is evident the state governors further compounded the problem by their deliberate actions symbolising their unwillingness to access available funds as reported by Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) that states abandoned N1.4 billion in 2020; N2.8 billion in 2021; and N36.1 billion UBEC funding in 2023 by refusing to release counterpart funds (Abioye, 2026). We can simply say that this is the height of irresponsibility on the part of government. The question is: What did Federal Government do after all with this huge amounts of money meant for educational provisions that were not accessed by state government?.

Insufficient qualified teachers: It is apparent that government, in initiating the UPE and UBE schemes, did not realise that it was biting more than it can chew. A critical problem of the two schemes, according to Malmquist (2015) is the absence of adequate, competent and knowledgeable teachers on ground. By the time the schemes kicked off, the number of teachers had already been outstripped by the number of pupils. Population explosion therefore resulted in over-crowded classrooms, the implications of which are better imagined than expressed; a situation whereby students either sit on bare floor or stand by the window during teaching and learning periods.

Infrastructural deficit: The gross deficiency in the infrastructural provisions for our schools in the two schemes is quite alarming. In most schools, especially public schools, science laboratories are ill-equipped, libraries are absent, while other essential instructional materials are in short supply. The classrooms and staff rooms lack necessary facilities such as chalkboards, tables and chairs that would make teaching and learning effective and motivating. These and many more could be described as gross absence of support structures, which engender poor learning environments. The school buildings are almost dilapidated and on the verge of collapse because most of them were built with inferior materials by political patronage contractors. As a result these buildings cannot withstand the vagaries of the weather.

Chronic absenteeism and truancy: The UPE and UBE schemes also share in this ineradicable problem among pupils, whose attendance to school is epileptic, while the other is persistent absenteeism. Pupils whose attendance is intermittent engage in some other activities at home or elsewhere, while some who have other interests play truancy. The problems of absenteeism and truancy are as a result of the inability of government to implement or enforce fully its policy statement says that: "Government has made Primary Education and universal by implementing the UPE scheme in September 1976, and proposes to make it compulsory as soon as possible (FRN, 1981:12). If government had gone beyond proposal to enactment and formalization of the compulsory component of UPE as in other countries like Japan, US, UK, etc., absenteeism and truancy would not have been an impediment to the realization of UPE and UBE goals and objectives.

Insecurity in some regions: Implementation of educational programmes at virtually all levels has

nose-dived as a result of insecurity: According to Ukozor, Akuh and Ahon (2024), over 1,400 schools have either been closed or destroyed because of insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping, especially in the Northern Region. In a similar vein, the South-East, Nigeria is not exempted. The activities of unknown gunmen, Eastern Security Network (ESN), and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have frustrated educational programmes through the "sit at home" imposition on the geo-political zone. As a result, thousands of pupils and students drop out of schools and engage in unlawful activities. This has led to reduction in students' enrolment, retention and completion, as well as disruption of the academic calendar, internal and external examinations.

Implications of NCLB Related Educational Policies in Nigeria

The two educational policies nation-wide aimed at providing Nigerian children of school age – Universal Primary Education and Universal Basic Education – which should ensure equal access to education have some implications for sustainable national development as a result of ineffective and inefficient execution. Poor implementation of educational policies is mostly viewed from negative spectrum, but it should be noted that it also has some latent positive implications which do not vitiate or outweigh the negative outcomes. The unintended results of weak policy implementation manifest themselves in community mobilization and self-help projects, anchored by stakeholders which serve as stop-gap measures for continuity of educational process. Again, government's failure in policy implementation gives room for voluntary agencies, private individuals and non-governmental organizations to participate in the provision of the needed educational services. In addition, fragile policy implementation, in most cases, lead to bristling and hair-splitting debates on education, which consequently lead to research and finally reform. Importantly, faulty policy implementation spurs enthusiastic and knowledge – hungry students to embark on or engage in independent self-study habits by using available modern resources to pursue their goals and aspirations.

However, the negative implications of poor policy implementation seem to be overwhelming. First, the gulf between carefully and well-designed policy and its actual implementation has multiplier effects on society, because faulty execution of the policies leads to socio-economic stagnation, loss of public confidence, and entronement of systemic corruption, as well as bad governance. It is evident that demotivation of both teachers and students of UPE and UBE and unsatisfactory conditions of service gender public

expression of nonchalant attitude to work and study, the results of which are general decline in effective teaching and learning, and production of half-baked graduates of the foundational level of the education system. This gives a clear picture of what the products of the higher education would look like.

In addition, faulty execution of the policies under consideration also implies that there would be many uncompleted projects across the country stemming from inadequate release of funds meant for the projects, which amount to colossal wastage of resources. Most of such projects usually in billions and millions of Naira, are awarded to contractors on the basis of political patronage, tribalism and nepotism. This again enthrone or encourages entrenched systemic corruption. Poor policy implementation unarguably has a double-barrelled implication for sustainable national development. First, deficiency in the execution of the two schemes has given rise to growing rates of drop-out of schools, most of whom are easy prey to criminal activities, who pose a serious threat to national security. Again, ineffective implementation of the UPE and UBE schemes can lead to a long-term decline in national literacy and numeracy.

In summary, poor implementation of the nation-wide “mass education” schemes have adverse implications for the Nigerian citizen as it lowers his/her lifetime earnings, health outcomes, and social marginalization. Economically, it stagnates and dwarfs Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and reduces innovation, creativity and critical thinking. At the society level, faulty policy execution has heightened social vices, increased crime rates, social and gender inequality. Finally, government’s attitude and approach to policy implementation has evidently encouraged unmitigated corruption in the education sector, lack of probity and accountability, and drastic fall in the standard of education.

Conclusion

The discourse on “No Child Left Behind” is a leverage around which two Nigerian educational policies designed to make educational opportunities accessible to every school-going age child. In effect, the paper intends to re-awaken our consciousness to the lofty ideal of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – which stresses inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. The crux of this paper therefore is the appraisal of current educational policies, especially the UBE scheme, and the fundamental principles on which they were predicted. The educational policies highlighted were couched in the ethical theory of utilitarianism, inclusivity, and affirmative action, the focus of which is squarely on the lifelong general good of the greatest number of the citizenry. The actualization of this

objective has not been hitch-free as a result of ineffective implementation strategies, which in turn have some adverse implications for sustainable national development. It is our contention that if the loopholes in the policy implementation strategies are nipped in the bud, government’s intention to make education accessible and inclusive for every child will be realistic and achievable.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, some recommendations are necessary:

1. For an effective policy formulation, government should meticulously keep reliable statistical data (the basis of policy projection), have clearly defined goals and objectives; specific timeframe, and involve relevant stakeholders in the planning process to ensure their buy-in and commitment in implementation.
2. Government should demonstrate sufficient political will to ensure that its policy statement on enrolment and retention of students are enforced to the letter through law enforcement agencies and stringent legislations. Parents should also be held accountable for their out-of-school children through some punitive measures.
3. Government should ensure that funds allocated for policy execution are fully released and properly utilised. When this is done, government should through its agencies monitor and evaluate implementation of various aspects of policies to ensure that funds are judiciously utilised.
4. Government and relevant agencies should periodically ensure that adequate and qualified teachers are available in the system; they should also check the attrition rates so that there would not be any serious shortage of trained and retrained teachers as a result of poor conditions of service.
5. Adequate provisions should be made to ensure that infrastructural deficit does not exist in any school. Since this level of education is the bedrock of education, all facilities should be provided to solidly equip the students for lifelong learning. Also, construction of infrastructural facilities should be awarded to competent, certified and qualified hands to ensure effective and efficient policy implementation that would engender conducive learning environment.
6. Government should pay greater attention to security of lives and properties in schools by ensuring constant presence of armed security agents, and by fencing and protecting school compounds in order to

banish fear among students in their bid to access equitable education.

7. Government and all stakeholders in the education industry should work in synergy to employ all legitimate means to forestall and or expose corrupt tendencies that undermine hitch-free policy implementation in Nigeria so that the goals and objectives of policies can be achieved in line with sustainable development goal 4.

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