

ESTABLISHMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COMMISSION: A PANACEA TO FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper considered the establishment of early childhood education commission as the panacea for functional education in Nigeria. Its introduction centred on the fact that attainment of the goal of any educational policy is a function of its implementation reality. It noted that for implementation of educational policy to be achieved, there must be a distinguished body and personnel saddled with the responsibility of advising, directing, promoting, and facilitating possible implementation process, hence through it policy goals can be attained. It further focused on the fact that early childhood education programme which is established to preparing children for primary education geared toward functional productive outcome tends to be crawling. This paper identified that legal framework of age coverage 6-15 years of universal basic education commission has tactically kept the policy of early childhood education at an orphanage posture, hence there is inadequate implementation reality of the policy at all nooks and crannies of the nation. The paper thus opined for the establishment of early childhood education commission as, this will guarantee parental coverage for support and implementation reality. Specifically, Nigeria government should as a matter of legal operational framework should establish an educational commission with a structural framework that will oversee implementation reality of early childhood educational programme from birth to five years of ages.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Education Commission, Implementation, Functional Education

Introduction

The hall mark of educational programme is to impart knowledge to the learner. However, the impartation of knowledge to the learner through any educational programme may not be a mere mental wishful exercise rather, a function of formally established education commission with legal framework and operational reality that has the capacity to indicate and monitor implementation reality of such educational programme. The logic of this expression may attract the thought that without the establishment of a formal educational commission that has the capacity to initiate and monitor the implementation of educational programme, the attainment of such educational goal may not be possible. On this lies a functional knowledge impartation reality that can promote human capital development in any society. It further speaks volume of a formal foundational learning

arrangement of a school system in an educational institution that is consciously established to direct the process of achieving growth and development for individual and nation at large.

This line of reasoning is in congruence with the posture of Nwaelele (2022) whose posture on functional education for productivity points to conscious initiative of educational commission that can direct implementation realities for knowledge and skill acquisition through the process of converting ideals and theories into instructional content. The interpretation of this expression may suggest the achievement of a functional educational system for productivities requires an implementation machnizm that will ensure that instructional contents are intetanden with human needs at a giving time.

It therefore become exercise for a shift from the hitherto act of learning to pass exam to acquisition of appropriate competence, confidence and skills of transforming theories, ideas of classroom instruction to practical realities of productive process that can meet the taste of time. Its goal may not be separated from an expected devidence of the logic of education as an instrument per excellence. Such expectation is equally an intended proof of learning outcome among learners who passed through a quality foundational learning activities of early childhood education programme.

Like an expectant mother, whose reproductive obligation attracts public obvious projection of nine months interval for the delivery of a baby based on natural providence, early childhood education policy as a scheme of foundational process that has assumed an intended formal learning arrangement is expected to promote functional education in Nigeria. Its hallmark which anchors on foundational preparation of preschoolers for primary education programme corroborates the affirmation of the fact that it is only preschoolers who passed through quality formal early childhood education process are most likely to successfully complete their primary, post-primary and tertiary education, thus possessing functional attitude to issue of life, relevant knowledge, confidence, competence and skill that can contribute to national development Amadi (2021).

An inference from the above assertion attracts the consideration of reality of operation associated with early childhood education programme with projected expectation of great dividence for functional education that can promote individual and national development. As inferred by Tombowua (2020), the nativity of formal early childhood education programme in Nigeria which stem from the (1977) National Policy on education attracts a chronological posture of about fifty years of formal existence of childhood educationformation and implementation process. Its age therefore is expected to yield fruitful learning outcome in the lives of Nigerian youth that can showcase proven capacity index capable of conquering ignorance and incompetency. Which inturns yield rightful attitude to issues of life, and grantee acquisition of practical skills that can convert classroom instructional contents, theories and ideas into useful and logical productive adventure that can stimulate economic advancement and national development.

Since the facts of this expression tends to hold salient logic, the expectation of the dividence of early childhood education policy that is made manifest in competency, confidence, creative thinking and productive skills among school learners geared towards problem solving abilities among Nigeria may not be out of context. The veracity of the immediate past line of reasoning may have prompted the worry Aluyuet. *al.*, (2019) who questioned the reality of early childhood education programme in the lives of the majority of Nigerian youth whose abysmal performance index in classroom instructional delivery exercise in school, internal and external examination in both primary, secondary and higher institution points to a seemingly evidence of inadequate functional education practice that can promote productive learning outcome. It equally corroborates the reality of obvious deficiencies of inadequate capacity index of being competent confidence, creative in productive skills that can convert classroom instructional content to practical efforts that can solve real life challenges among school leaves (Rayode&Adegba, 2024).

The obvious nature of this assertion can further be substantiated by the posture of Adebisi *et. al.*, (2024) who declared that the inability of school graduates in Nigeria to become employers of labour in the absence of expected government provision of employment opportunities speak volume of a poor foundational human capital development exercise that is at variance with the dividence of functional education practice in both primary, secondary and tertiary institution in Nigeria. This evidence may not be unconnected with the contemporary high level of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria (Rayode&Adegba, 2024).

The potency of these facts gives credence to an unconscious crucifixion of the logic of education as an instrument per-excellence slogan as indicated by Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004); it is equally a practical proof of an educational system that lacks functional practices for productive learning outcome which is

a fertile ground for stunted human capital development, low quality of graduate, social/cultural problem, personnel deficiency, lack of basic skill, bribery and corruption, financial constraints, low level of productivity and high level of poverty (Okeke 2021)

The fact that it is difficult to boldly refute the logic of these facts indicates that the perennial increase among Nigerian for the demand for effectiveness of early childhood education programme may not be out of context. Such evidence which tends to depict lack of goal attainment associated with early childhood education attracts a reflection of the reality of functional education that lubricated the fulfillment of education as an instrument per-excellence among developed nations is imperative. As indicated by Kayode and Adogba (2024), the success story of positive developmental breakthrough among developed nations like Finland, Japan, China, France, Canada, Singapore among other cannot be separated from their unwavering initiative, commitment to functional education through the establishment of distinguished body and commission for practical implementation reality towards functional education process. This is in synergy with the posture of Asamoah and Abarichae (2023) who adduced that educational policy initiative that has no functional operational personal and structural/legal framework for implementation may not yield fruitful evidence.

An inference from these evidence points to the establishment of educational commission that will facilitate practical implementation process geared towards the attainment of educational policy. Attracted to the importance of educational commission that can direct educational policies and its affairs of instructional delivery exercise for functional education, Egbebi (2024) acknowledge the declaration of president Olusegu Obaanjo on September 30, 1999 while lunching universal basic education in Nigeria that the establishment of universal primary education commission in 1976, created a fertile ground and step for functional education from 1976-1980. Irrespective of the fact that inadequate planning hindered its appreciable existence, the establishment of this commission remains a landmark for functional education take off in Nigerian educational landscape. Functional inference from the lesson and benefit of universal primary education attracted its reformation in September 30, 1999 to universal basic education with the focus on covering six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school programme.

Universal basic education commission which is poised towards ensuring the impartation of appropriate level of literacy, enumerative, manipulative, practical life skills, ethical, moral and civil values needed for a solid foundation and lifelong learning among other four objective was approved by the national assembly as universal basic education bill on March 18, 2004 and signed into law by president Olusegun Obasanjor on May 26, 2004 (Egbebi, 2024). This law make it mandatory for government to make adequate provision for free and compulsory basic education programme for children from 6-15 year of age.

Deducible from the attributes of this commission and its associated binding educational law is the fact that it only covers children from 6-15 years without a recourse to the most significant task of laying quality foundation for the most vulnerable category of human existence known as early childhood. The structure, legal and operational framework of this commission of basic education which has not been abolished in Nigerian basic education system exposes the early childhood education to an orphanage position. This assertion can be exemplified in the following: *Poor Funding* as it appears, Nigeria educational system allocates less than 12% of its annual budget to educational sector which is far below 26% as recommended by UNESCO. *Poor Implementation* lack of political will, corruption and inadequate infrastructure makes the existence of Early Childhood Education of no effect especially in rural areas. *Unequal Access* majority of most valuable children in Nigeria do not have access to formal early childhood education due to lack of presences and operational realities of early childhood educational programme at all nooks and crannies of the nation which under minds UNESCO directive of taking the school to the child. The survival of this educational defeat may not be separated from the nonexistence of formally established early childhood education commission that has legal framework and operational capacity of initiating and implementing early childhood education programme that will facilitate the attainment of National Policy on early childhood education in Nigeria.

It is on this backdrop that the need for distinguished educational commission that will facilitate, monitor and direct the affairs of early childhood education programme become imperative. This study will therefore consider different basic educational commission structural framework and function and the implication of its structural framework to the attainment of functional education in Nigeria.

Establishment of Educational Commission

Like a newly born baby that requires quality directives for guidance and purpose of developing primary quality attitude and practical skill for lifelong learning, the establishment of educational commission is an undisputable implementational step geared towards the fruitful class instructional delivery exercise which in turn promotes functional education. The logic of this preface is suggestive of the fact that educational commission is a distinct government affiliated agency that monitors, support and direct the attainment of goal of educational policy of a nation. This view adds functional flesh to the position of Khaleduzzan (2024) whose idea on the concept of educational commission points to specific obligation agency of government educational outfit established to oversee, promote and facilitate implementation task of instructional delivery personnel for the attainment functional education of a state and nation. It equally affirms the thought of Biswajit *et. al.*, (2024) which categorized educational commission as the operational organ of government established educational policy and programme that stimulates functional impartation of knowledge, skill, confident and competence for productivity

Deducible from this description is the fact that educational commission is launching pad of instructional delivery implementation track for functional education. It speaks volume of an operational compass in an educational system that evaluates the content of educational policies geared towards the identification of implementation inadequacies for the purpose of remediation. Substance of this expression is closely related with the posture of Chimea (2024) who identified that educational commission are statutorily saddled with the following.

Policy Development: Practical ideas and steps of creating and implementing educational policies to enhance quality or functional education.

Standard Setting: Facilitating of minimum standard of operation of instructional content, and assessment procedures.

Funding/Utilization of Allocation: Promoting the need for equitable resource allocation promotion of personnel and motivational tasks of employee.

Research and Development: Promoting fact finding that will stabilize police and direct implementation requirement. This attribute constitutes operational structural framework that can make educational policy more realistic and effective for functional education process.

Existing form of Basic Education Commission

Presently, there are two existing basic education commission that are established to direct the activities and operational reality of foundational school system (primary and junior secondary school).

National Primary Education Commission (NPE): This body was established on August 31, 1988 by General Ibrahim Babamasi Babangida. The structural and legal framework of this commission took the basic educational philosophy of ensuring that the primary school education programme receives strength to function as an instructional delivery channel that can lay quality foundation to Nigerian children. As adduced by Ojo and Azeez (2024), it was established for the following:

Mandate: Prescribe minimum standard for primary standard for primary education throughout Nigeria.

Structure: Provide for establishment of primary school management board at all state and local government level.

Functions: To ensure acceptable standard towards the implementation of primary education in Nigeria. Worthy of note is the fact that the structural framework of this educational commission lacks the existence and implementational coverage for early childhood education programme.

Universal Basic Education Commission

Universal basic education commission is yet another government agency established on September 31, 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo, its establishment may not be separated from the acknowledgement of the shortcoming of Universal Primary Education Commission (UPE) of September 1976. The identification of inability of universal primary education board to facilitate practical implementation of functional education due to inadequate planning as inferred by Ojo and Azeez (2024) necessitated the transformation effort of government through a more pragmatic philosophy and ideological framework for functional education. Its focus

was basically to provide basic free and compulsory education for Nigerian children within the primary school educational level and junior secondary school of 6-11 year of age.

Implication of Existence of the Basic Education Commission towards the Implementation Reality of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

One remarkable defeat that can be identified from the existence of national primary education commission and universal basic education commission as an outstanding structural and legal framework that covers educational level of children from 6-15 years of age is the fact that these commissions have a deficiency of implementational reality that had denied the early childhood education programme adequate and functional care for productive implementational reality. As observed by Aliyu, *et. al* (2019) absence of a distinguished structural and legal framework for implementation reality of early childhood education points to a great disadvantage to care and legal implementation strength and directive for operational reality to early childhood goal attainment.

Related to this is the observation of Tombawua (2019) who noted that the philosophical idea towards the establishment of early childhood education which is targeted at preparing children for primary school education is basically a step in the right direction toward early foundation for emancipation of Nigerian children from ignorance and lack of knowledge however, the implementation reality has structural and legal deficiency because of inadequate care and effort for ensuring that the philosophy is practiced at all nook and crannies of the states of Nigerian nation.

The fact associated with these observations attracts the consideration of Heric (2022) whose consideration on the success story of educational practices in Finland indicated the use of functional operational mechanism that has the strength, commitment, resources of putting educational organization ideas into practice. Since such operation may not be separated from a distinguished commission that will be saddled with the responsibility of directing, monitoring and promoting the implementation requirements of each educational policy, the need for the establishment of a distinct commission known as early childhood education commission cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion

Education as an instrument per-excellence slogan which is focused towards functional education that has the capacity to transform classroom instruction content and ideas into practical skills that can equip individual for productive adventure towards national development cannot be achieved without quality implementational practices. Since the potency of quality implementational reality is a function of identification of what to do, personnel to use, agency to adopt and resources for implementation reality, the need for establishment of such a body called early childhood education commission is a step in the right direction to a functional education in Nigeria. Specifically, Nigeria government should as a matter of legal operational framework should establish an educational commission with a structural framework that will oversee implementation reality of early childhood educational programme from birth to five years of ages

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