

The Immediate and Long Term Effects of the UPN Free Secondary Education Policy in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the immediate and long term effects of the UPN Free secondary Education Policy in Oyo State, Nigeria. A good number of researchers and educators have written on the Free Secondary Education specifically in Oyo State and generally in Nigeria. Historical research method was adopted by the writer. Also, oral interviews were held with people who were connected with secondary education in Oyo State between 1979 and 1983. Findings from the study showed that there was increase in the number of institutions of learning, there was increase in the students' enrolments, there was increase in the number of teachers and cost of education. It was also found that automatic promotion and admission contributed to the poor performance of the students in their external examinations between 1984 and 1987. Continuous increase in the students' enrolments in the state secondary schools led to the establishment of the state University in 1990. Continuous production of Grade II teachers also led to the phasing out of the Grade II Teachers Colleges in 1993/94 academic year.

Keywords: Long term, UPN Free Secondary education, Oyo state, Educational policy

Introduction

The defunct Action Group under the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo introduced free tuition to all primary schools in the region including Lagos which emulated the Western Region in 1957.

However, Universal Primary Education was adopted by the military government in 1976 as a result of which all primary schools in the country became tuition free. The coming of the second Republic gave the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo the opportunity to include free education at all levels in his party manifestoes which was implemented by the five governors of the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria on October 1st 1979.

On assumption of office, Chief Bola Ige, the then civilian governor of the state embarked on the free education programme in line with his party's manifestoes. To be able to fully implement the free education policy, the Alayande Committee was set up in 1980, the recommendations of which assisted the state government in the smooth implementation of the free secondary education policy in the state.

The implementation of the Alayande Committee's report led to the establishment of four hundred new secondary schools between 1980 and 1981. To provide adequate number of teachers for secondary schools, school certificate holders teaching in the state primary schools were redeployed to the secondary schools. In addition, more Technical Colleges and Teacher Training Colleges were established. A faculty of Education (Technical) was also created in the Polytechnic of Ibadan while six additional colleges of Education were also established in the state, the cost of education continued to be on the increase. One may then ask: what were the consequences of implementing the Free Secondary Education Policy in Oyo state?

Review of Literature

While contributing to the Free Education programme in Oyo state, Longe (1981), Oni (1985) and Lawal (1994) noted that the Free secondary Education policy of the prescribed Unity Party of Nigeria resulted in the astronomical enrolments in all the schools and colleges between 1979 and 1983. Commenting on the problems of implementing the new system of secondary education in Nigeria, Osokoya (1987) observed that while the Federal Government (the National Party of Nigeria controlled government), was mainly concerned about qualitative education, the Unity Party of Nigeria which controlled only five states was very concerned about Free Education at all levels which of course affected the full implementation of new system of secondary education particularly in Oyo State. On the importance of the Free Secondary Education, Ogunmodede (1987) described the curriculum of the Free Education at all levels as education for self reliance, liberal, technologically oriented and pragmatic in nature, on the cost of Free Secondary Education, Longe (1981), Adesina (1988) and Lawal (1994) noted that the Free Secondary Education programme is very expensive in nature and that the recurrent cost of education was constantly increasing in the face of inflation, high cost of living and lack of social services. While criticizing the Free Secondary Education Policy, Okunola (1985) observed that classroom blocks, pupils chairs and desks as well as other educational resources were hurriedly and inadequately provided by the government to cater for the increase in the schools' enrolments. Adesina et al (1984) noted that the Yorubas who were mainly UPN in the Western Region accepted the UPN policy as a sign of appreciation to Chief Obafemi Awolowo for his earlier introduction of the Free Primary Education in the region. It was the introduction of the free secondary education in Oyo state which led to the operation of Day Secondary School System as from 1979.

On politics of Second Republic, Orubite (2008) observed that in terms of Universal Primary Education, only the Unity Party of Nigeria which controlled the four states of the former Western Region and Lagos was the only party that was committed to implementation and the party was majorly concerned about quantitative education.

On free education policy of the Unity Party of Nigeria in the South Western States of Nigeria, Adejumobi (2010) observed that on October 1, 1979 when Chief Bola Ige was sworn in as the first civilian executive governor of Oyo State, he re-enacted the policy of free education of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. According to him, he established hundreds of secondary schools and many teachers were also employed. Many students were admitted and school materials were also provided. Adejumobi noted that since the Polytechnic Ibadan is an institution that belonged to Oyo State government, it was significantly affected by the educational policy of the new state government. It was as a result of free education policy of the state administration that eventually led to the establishment of four satellite campuses at Saki, Eruwa, Ire and Esaoke.

In his own contribution to education policy during the Second Republic in Nigeria (October 1st 1979 to December 31st, 1983), Osokoya (2010) observed that in the Second Republic, there were five different political parties governing different states of Nigeria. According to him, each political party had its own views on education and had embodied these in their manifestos. It was as a result of this that each state government viewed and saw the National Policy on Education in relation to their political party manifestos.

Methodology

Historical research method was adopted by the investigator. However, for the primary sources, the writer consulted records of students, records in respect of institutions in Oyo State, records in respect of teachers serving in various levels of education in the state and reports of education commission on the Free Education programme in Oyo State. In addition, direct interviews were held with important personalities who were connected with secondary education in Oyo state between 1979 and 1983 such people include former civilian governor of Oyo State, 1979 -1983, Education Adviser to the civilian governors 1979 -1983, the Director, Research, Planning and Statistics in the State Ministry of Education, Director-General, Teaching Service Commission and Assistant Director in the state Ministry of Finance among others. For secondary sources, relevant unpublished higher degree dissertations and theses, various relevant textbooks, relevant educational journals, 'magazines and articles were consulted by the writer among others. The writer applied the Historical method in establishing the validity and reliability of the primary and secondary sources. The data collected were analysed by adducing facts and interpreting evidence available to the writer.

Results

On October 1, 1979, when the governor of the proscribed Unity Party of Nigeria was sworn in, free education at all levels became a birth right of all eligible children in Oyo State. Admissions of students into the state secondary schools became automatic while students' promotion into the next class also became automatic. The cost of education, the number of institutions of learning, students' enrolment astronomically increased as shown below.

Table 1: Students and Teachers Enrolment in the Primary and Secondary Schools in Oyo State, 1979/80 - 1988

Year	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools		
	No. of School	No. of Pupils	No. of Teachers	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No. of Teachers
1979/80	2,455	1,281,744	30,087	281	146,743	5,900
1980/81	2,529	1,463,516	31,890	628	240,016	9,400
1981/82	2,701	1,877,880	31,139	722	305,006	12,300
1982/83	2,836	1,971,774	28,850	752	557,295	14,200
1983/84	2,907	2,070,362	32,765	752	571,227	16,963
1984/85	3,004	1,982,525	30,029	691	411,856	16,202
1985/86	3,007	1,935,898	29,293	691	432,449	13,617
1987	2,534	1,012,409	36,378	613	324,874	14,757
1988	2,540	1,066,620	28,800	613	319,532	14,605

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, Ibadan.

The table above shows that between 1979/80 and 1983/84 academic years, there was an increase of four hundred and fifty-two primary schools, an increase of seven hundred and eighty-eight thousand, six hundred and eighteen pupils, an increase of two thousand six hundred and seventy eight teachers in the state primary schools. There was also an increase of four hundred and seventy-one secondary schools, an increase of four hundred and twenty four thousand, four hundred and eight-four students, an increase of eleven thousand and sixty-three teachers in the state secondary schools.

Table 2: Students and teachers' enrolment in the Teachers Colleges and Technical Colleges in Oyo State 1979/80 – 1988

Year	Teachers' Colleges			Technical Colleges		
	No. of School	No. of Pupils	No. of Teachers	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No of Teachers
1979/80	20	10,117	420	6	2,164	103
1980/81	16	10,482	517	6	2,404	105
1981/82	16	11,427	549	6	3,018	130
1982/83	18	14,018	610	6	4,000	144
1983/84	18	14,719	604	6	4,240	149
1984/85	18	12,136	579	6	4,450	160
1985/86	15	12,743	447	6	4,672	153
1987	15	4,247	341	6	4,036	154
1988	18	1,718	173	6	4,084	141

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, Ibadan.

The table above shows that between 1979/80 and 1983/84 academic years, there was an increase in the teachers Colleges, an increase of four thousand six hundred and two students, an increase of one hundred and eighty-four teachers in the state Teachers Colleges. Within the same period, there was an increase of three Technical Colleges, established by the civilian government in 1979/80 in addition to the existing three colleges. There was also an increase of two thousand and seventy-six students, an increase of forty-six in the number of teachers in the state Technical Colleges.

Table 3: Students and Teachers' Enrolment in the Colleges of Education and Ibadan Polytechnic, 1979/80 -1988.

Year	College of Education			Ibadan Polytechnic		
	No. of School	No. of Pupils	No. of Teachers	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No of Teachers
1979/80	1	1,210	132	L	2,223	196
1980/81	2	2,592	182	1	2,947	212
1981/82	7	3,627	325	5	3,313	311
1982/83	7	9,165	456	5	4,313	329
1983/84	7	9,698	531	5	4,528	346
1984/85	7	9,729	540	5	4,728	365
1985/86	3	11,167	570	5	7,212	371
1987	3	8,695	497	5	7,141	390
1988	3	6,859	450	5	7,110	380

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, Ibadan.

The table above shows that between 1979/80 and 1983/84 academic years, there was an increase in six Colleges of Education, an increase of eight thousand, four hundred and eighty-eight students and an increase of four hundred and eight teachers in the state Colleges of Education. Within the same period, there was also an increase of four campuses of Ibadan polytechnic, an increase of two thousand, three hundred and five students and an increase of one hundred and fifty teachers in the polytechnic and its campuses.

Table 4: Government Expenditure on Secondary Education in Oyo State, 1979/80 – 1988

Year	Capital Expenditure	Recurrent Expenditure	Total Expenditure
1979/80	N1, 054, 000.00	N116, 978, 337.50	N 118,032,337.50
1980/81	N32, 05 1,000.00	N76, 013,257.25	N108, 064, 257.25
1981/82	N37, 003,000.00	N78, 375,730.04	N 115,378,730.40
1982/83	N34, 026,000.00	N 84,208,533. 09	N 118,234,533.09
1983/84	N8, 386,256.22	N81, 039,764.44	N 89,426,020.66
1984/85	N306, 832,396.70	N75, 243,992.81	N382, 076,389.51
1985/86	N5, 110,060.00	N79, 962,978.17	N85, 073,038.17
1987	N12, 310,320.48	N97, 923,543.37	NI 10, 233.863.83
1988	N13, 179,238.59	N120, 333.229.50	N133.512, 518.09

Source: Extract from Oyo State of Nigeria; Approved Estimates, 1979/80-1988.

The table above shows that between 1979/80 and 1981/82 academic years, barely two years of civilian administration in the state, there was an increase of thirty-five million, nine hundred and forty-nine thousand naira (N35, 949,000.00) in the capital expenditure of the state government on secondary schools. This was as a result of the construction of about four hundred secondary schools within the period.

The Long Term Effects

The number of students and teachers in the state institutions of learning has been on the increase since 1979/80 academic year. This was due to the increase in the number of various institutions in the state

Despite the fact that some institutions were merged together by the state government, the institutions of learning except the Grade II Teachers Colleges continued to be on the increase when compared with the number of such institutions before the second Republic Administration in the State.

The implementation of the Free Secondary Education particularly in October, 1979 and the implementation of the New National Policy on Education in October 1985 by the state government increased the cost of education in the state. With the increase in the number of institutions, teachers and students, cost of education since 1979/80 academic year has been on the increase.

The Teachers' colleges in the state which got to its peak in 1980/84 academic year as shown in table 2 above were reduced to only three in 1992/93 academic year. As if that was not enough, the three Teachers' Colleges, LATC, Iseyin, DTC, Saki and UMC, Ibadan with a total number of three hundred and fifty-nine (359) students were phased out in 1993/94 academic year. Since then, there has not been a Grade II Teachers' College in the State.

The automatic promotion and admission of students into the secondary schools between 1979 and 1984 contributed in no small way to the poor performance of the students in their external examinations especially between 1984 and 1987 (Lawal, 1994). This is not unconnected with the Free secondary Education Policy implemented on October 1, 1979 in Oyo State.

Apart from the high enrolment figures in the state secondary schools, Oyo state is also classified as being educationally advantaged. This made it difficult for thousands of secondary school leavers from Oyo State who were academically qualified for admission but could not be admitted into the Federal Universities. This resulted in the establishment of Oyo State University of Technology, Ogbomosho in 1990 (now Ladoke Akintola University of Technology). The University registered a total of four hundred and thirty-six (436) students into its then existing faculties in October, 1990. Since then, the University has been expanding in order to accommodate more students especially the indigenes of both Oyo and Osun States, the owner states. Convincingly, the establishment of the state University is as a result of the astronomical increase in the number of secondary school students due to the

implementation of the Free secondary Education Policy by the civilian administration in the state on October 1st, 1979.

Conclusion

The study identified and discussed the immediate and the long term effects of the free Secondary Education policy of the UPN government in Oyo State. In doing this, the automatic promotion and admission of students into the state secondary schools, increase in the number of institutions of learning, increase in the students' enrolments and the number of teachers as well as increase in the cost of education were identified as the major immediate effects of the Free Secondary Education Policy in the State.

On the other hand, continuous increase in the cost of education, continuous increase in the students' enrolments in various institutions of learning, the establishment of the state University of Technology, the poor performance of secondary school students as a result of automatic promotion and admission of students into the state secondary schools as well as the phasing out of the Grade II Teachers Colleges in 1993/94 academic year had been identified as the major long term effects of the UNP free secondary Education Policy in Oyo State.

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