5. Impacts of modern Education on Societies: The case of Nigeria

5.1 Advent and Establishment of modern Education

The beginning of the modern systems of education in Africa has a varied history as a result of the vast nature of Africa and the varied foreign influences in the various parts of the continent. For reasons of concrete analyses, we shall here concentrate on Nigeria. The most prominent external influences on the Nigerian systems of education came from the Arabic and Western worlds. In the real sense, the Nigerian system of education, as we know it today, is grossly overshadowed by the Western influence, as a result of the British colonization. But because the northern part of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, and the Western colonization notwithstanding, they made every effort to retain their Arabic roots. One may therefore not lose sight here of the influence of Arabic education prior to the advent of the West.

5.1.1 Islam and the Arabic Education

Islam reached the Savannah regions of West Africa in the 8th century A.D., and incidentally, this century was the beginning of the written history of West Africa.[1] This means, in other words, the dawn of 'academics' in this region of the continent. As Islam spread in the Savannah region, commercial links were also naturally established with the northern part of Africa. And this trade and commerce paved the way for the introduction of new elements of material culture, and made possible the intellectual development, and the consequent introduction of literacy. The Hausaland in the northern part of Nigeria received Islam in the early 14th C. from the mobile Islamic traders and scholars. About forty Wangarawa traders are thought to be responsible for introducing Islam to Kano during the reign of Ali Yaji which lasted from 1349 – 1385. During this time, a Mosque was built. And later under Yaqub (1452 – 1463) some Fulani scholars migrated to Kano and introduced Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Moslem scholars also came from Sankore University and Timbuktu to teach Islam in Kano and later in Katsina. In the 17th century, Katsina had already produced native scholars like Muhammadu Dan Masina (d.1657), und Muhammadu Dan Marina (d.1655), who took it up to develop a culture of learning among the natives. As Hamidu Alkali reported, "a group of these mallams, most of whom seem to be interre-

1 IFEMESIA, C.C., "The People of West Africa", in: *A Thousand Years in West African History* (ed. AJAYI, J.F.A.) Ibadan, 1967, 44.

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lated, formed an intellectual harmony, and among them the state of learning was much higher. They were organized into a sort of guild, and a master would grant a recognized certificate (Ijazah) to those students who satisfactorily passed the prescribed course of study under him. This system continued until the coming of the British to Nigeria."[2] In fact, the Islamic education gave cultural prestige to Islam; and according to J. S. Trimingham, "through the system of intellectual and material culture, Islam opens new horizons, and from this stems the superiority Muslims display when confronted with pagans (infidels)".[3]

It must not be forgotten that at this level, the education was purely a religious one and for religious purposes. It was all about the spread of Islam. The teaching of Arabic was for the purpose of the ability to read the Quran. Arabic and Islam were taught simultaneously. This was one of the reasons why the elementary Arabic schools in Nigeria were called Quranic schools. Thus two levels of Quranic schools evolved in Hausaland: the Tablet-school – *Makarantar Allo*, and the higher school – *Makarantar Ilmi*. In a typical Quranic school, the mallam (Umma) sits in his parlour or under a tree in front of his house surrounded by volumes of the Quran and other Islamic books. Besides these books on his table lies always his cane, and around him, a semi-circle of pupils. They chant different verses of the Quran. In some cases, the teacher is assisted by one of the pupils who is considered to be the brightest or oldest or both. At a very early age, the Muslim children are expected to start the first stage of the Quranic education. The pupils begin to learn the shorter chapters of the Quran through repetition. In its method, the teacher recites the verse to be learned, and the pupils repeat after him. He does this several times until he is satisfied that they have mastered the pronunciation. They are then obliged to keep repeating the verse on their own until they have memorized it. It goes on this way until the intended chapter of the Quran is mastered. Their only pleasure at this system of learning at this stage could be the choral recitations in patterns of singing songs. Otherwise this learning system was boring for the children, but no child should dare to show his boredom to avoid the cane of the teacher.

The Quran is divided into sixty parts (*esus*) and each contains different numbers of chapters. Pupils at the Tablet-school level are expected to memorize one or two of these sixty parts. The very chapters often selected are those that a Muslim usually requires for his daily prayers. From memorization, he moves on to the next stage of learning the alphabets of the Arabic language. The Arabic alphabets are composed of twenty-six consonants. The teacher practices with the pupils how each consonant is pronounced until they prove the ability of recognizing the alphabets. When the teacher is satisfied that the pupils have attained

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2 ALKALI, H., „A Note on Arabic Teaching in Northern Nigeria", in: *Kano Studies*, 3, 1967, 11.

3 TRIMINGHAM, J. S., *Islam in West Africa*, London, 1959, 30.

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the standard required for reading Arabic letters, he introduces them to the formation of syllables with vowels. There are only four vowels and simply four different notations written above or below a consonant to indicate the sound. When this exercise is successful, the pupil begins to practice over and over again the first two parts of the Quran. The teaching of writing is sometimes taught simultaneously when the alphabets are learnt, and sometimes at a later stage. It depends on the teaching methods of the particular teacher. This could be seen as the end of the primary education in the Tablet-school.

Although the pupil can now boast of reading and writing in Arabic, of memorizing the first two parts of the Quran, he cannot boast of knowing the meaning of the verses of the Quran. To understand this, he must proceed to a higher level of education. What we may regard as the secondary level of this system has a much broader and deeper curriculum. He now begins to learn the meaning of the verses he has memorized. The teacher here tries his best to explain the meaning of the Arabic texts, which often are too complicated for the young minds. At this stage, the pupil is also introduced to other Arabic writings such as the *Hadith* (the traditions of the prophet), and he begins at this stage to learn grammar. In these Quranic schools, the African holistic nature of education is not forgotten. The teacher regards himself as the custodian of his pupils, and sees the training out of good citizens for the society as his primary duty. Whenever he uses the cane, he does so with fatherly levity and caution. However the relationship between the teacher and his pupils vary, and often depends on the personality of the teacher.

Just like in most Islamic traditions, this education unfortunately excluded the women folk. And this is one of the ills of Islam which the Jihad of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio in northern Nigeria in the 19th century came to fight. In 1804, he revolted and declared a Jihad against the ruling regimes because the Fulanis no longer tolerated the laxness and corruption of the Hausa rulers. His Jihad was successful and he founded the Sokoto caliphate, which he ruled from 1804 – 1817. The Shehu and his descendants were scholars of impressive intellect. D. Davidson testifies: "To Uthman, his brother Abdullah and his son Muhammed Bello are attributed some 258 books and essays on a variety of theoretical and practical subjects."[4] He also fought vehemently for the education of women under the confines of his caliphate. The syncretism and the irreconcilability in the beliefs and practice of Muslims as well as the mishandling of women were for him hypocrisy and consequently an abuse of the *Shariah* (code of the Islamic law). Uthman Dan Fodio's ideology of Islam gained such popularity that female education became a matter of pride among the Muslims in northern Nigeria; and his Jihad was followed by a literary resurgence.[5] Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio

4 DAVIDSON, B., "The Writings of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio", in: *Kano Studies*, 1, 2, 1974, 77.

5 HODGKIN, T., „Uthman Dan Fodio", in: *Nigeria Magazine*, Ibadan, 1960, 75-82.

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lived by example. His two daughters were highly educated, and their literary contributions are specimens of learning in Islam among Muslim women in West Africa. His elder daughter gave religious instructions and lessons in Islamic studies, law and jurisprudence; and his younger daughter lived as a renowned poetess. Such achievements were not normal for women in the Muslim world. Openly also, the Shehu (meaning 'teacher') allowed women of all classes of life to attend his lectures and preachings. This courageous program recorded its successes, but was only a drop into the ocean when it comes to Islam and the womenfolk.

This early advent and progress of Islamic education in northern Nigeria was retarded after the British came to Nigeria. We shall next discuss their arrival. But meanwhile, the Christian churches of the West turned their attention to educational work, and opened schools which developed to all levels of education. Their program of teaching was largely based on English models. Those who received their training could easily get jobs under the government; while the graduates of the Islamic- Quranic schools had no future. The Western system and program favoured more the people of the southern province of Nigeria because they demonstrated more readiness towards accepting the new teachings from the West unlike their counterparts in the north. This gives a hint and an insight to the ever recurring question concerning the backwardness of northern Nigeria in education:

'Why are the Nigerian Muslims relatively behind their Christian brothers in education, at both the lower and higher levels of the educational system?' The only base for such a discussion is a definition of 'Education' in this context as the formal, Western-oriented system of schooling. Addressing the issue of the question of who is literate and who is not, or whether Christian education is superior or inferior to Muslim education or indeed the question of what is really a good education for anyone, whether Muslim or Christian, would be a hard not to crack.

When formal Western education was introduced to Nigeria, the first schools were organized by the Christian missionaries and their main objective was to use the school as a means for converting animists and Muslims to Christianity. Education was 'free' – but with strings attached. The British officials who were themselves Christians were representing, as Lord Lugard himself claimed, 'the most Christian nation in the world'. British occupation in Nigeria was therefore synonymous with Christian evangelism, and the concept of a civilizing mission – helping the so called "benighted Africans" to accept Christianity and Western civilization – became the order of the day.[6] The primary and later the secondary schools were Christianity-oriented. The missionaries by and large were able to carry out their mission with the approval of the British officials. Their presence, system and program were totally to the disadvantage of the Quranic schools. And only those who graduated through the Western schools were recognized as

6 AYANDELE, E.A., *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, London, 1966, 145.

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educated and qualified for appointments. Babs Fafunwa described it correctly: "A 'good' citizen in Nigeria and elsewhere between 1850 and 1960 meant one who was African by blood, Christian by religion and British or French in culture and intellect. All others, who were Muslims or animists, were only tolerated or accommodated."[7] We can therefore see the dilemma in which the Muslims found themselves between the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, when powerful forces of Church and State combined in an unholy alliance to convert Emirs, Obas, Chiefs and the local people to Christianity. Christianity-oriented schools, textbooks, sermons and other built-in educational devices were employed as instruments of conversion. The Muslim leaders and many of their followers sensed the motives of the Christian missions and therefore opposed Christianity-oriented education for their children. The Muslims presumed that if their children went to Christian schools, they would return home as Christians.

Consequently, Muslim education in Nigeria was retarded not because the Muslims were unprogressive or because their religion was opposed to formal education but because, just as was the case in Islamic-Quranic education where the Islamic religion and the book of Quran was at the centre, 'education', in the new era of Western Christianity, tended to mean Bible knowledge, Christian ethics, Christian moral instruction, Christian literature, some arithmetic, language and crafts – all geared to produce Christians who could read the Bible and take part in the Christian – oriented government. The system therefore succeeded in training Christian clerks, Christian artisans, Christian carpenters, Christian farmers, Christian husbands and wives. When the Christian missions started converting animists and a few Muslims, the majority of Muslim parents barred their children from attending the 'free Christian schools' for fear of conversion.[8] This fear and suspicion was accountable for the so-called 'educational backwardness' of northern Nigeria. The mistake we must accept is that those Muslims in the rural areas of the North were no longer able to draw the line and wake up even when the colonization was officially over. Luckily, in the present day Nigeria, the government policies on education have done a great job to wake them up.

5.1.2 Christianity and Western Education

As we pointed out earlier, no foreigner came into Africa with the primary motive to educate or help the indigenes. Education was only seen as their last resort – a means for establishing contact in order to achieve their political, religious or commercial goals. The first Europeans to set foot on what is now a part of Nigeria were the Portuguese. The Portuguese, of course, were mainly interested in com-

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7 FAFUNWA, A.B., "Islamic Concept of Education with Particular Reference to Nigeria", in: *Nigerian Journal of Islam*, 1, 1, 1970, 17.

8 FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 68.

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merce, but they nevertheless realized that if the Africans were to be good customers they must have some rudiments of education and accept Christianity. The missionaries normally accompanied the voyage. In effect, the missionaries depended on the European civil authorities for help in keeping the 'rebellious' African chiefs in their place, while the European civil authorities hoped to conquer by religious persuasion through the missionaries what they failed to achieve by force of arms. The traders, on their part, depended both on the force of arms and missionary endeavour to achieve peaceful trade relations with the Africans. They enjoyed among themselves a symbiotic cooperation to achieve their goals. As Fafunwa puts it, "Commerce, Christianity and Colonialism, or Bible, Business and Bullet combined to exploit the African's soul, his goods and his land."[9]

As early as the 16th century, Portuguese merchants established a number of trading posts around Lagos, which itself became an important Portuguese trading station and was extremely useful to the Portuguese in their nefarious slave trade. The word 'Lagos' was derived from the Portuguese word *Lago* (Lagoon) and the island of Lagos was named after a similar port in Portugal, Port Lago. The Catholics, through the influence of the Portuguese traders, were the first missionaries to set foot on Nigerian soil. They established a seminary on the Island of Sao Tome off the coast of Nigeria as early as 1571 to train Africans for church work as priests and teachers. From Sao Tome, they visited Warri where they established schools and preached the gospel. But the Catholic influence was almost wiped out by the slave trade which ravaged West Africa for nearly three hundred years. Therefore this first missionary attempt was shattered because the European flags and slave trade followed the Bible and *vice-versa*. One Nigerian historian has gone so far as to say that the early missionaries subdued people spiritually thus preparing them, not for the Kingdom of Heaven as the Bible commanded, but for the kingdom of Queen Victoria on which the sun never set. Coming with a bag on the shoulder containing the slave-chains, a sword in the right hand, and a bible in the left hand, the mission was doomed to fail.

It is a wrong impression to think that it was the West that brought civilization to Africa. Before ever West Africa for example came into any contact with any foreign body, there was already a great deal of civilization. It is important to note that as early as A.D. 200, the old kingdom of Ghana, inhabited by the Mende-speaking Africans, flourished in trade, culture and commerce. We know also that in 770 A.D, the Soninke dynasty was established and that this Ghanaian empire extended to Timbuktu in the east, the upper Niger in the south-east and the upper Senegal in the south-west. It was also known that Mali was noted for its commerce and scholarship as far back as the twelfth century and that the most renowned of all the monarchs of West Africa, Kankan Musa, ruled from 1307 to 1352. Musa was skilled in politics, diplomacy and military tactics; and above all, he was a learned

9 FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 71.

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and widely read emperor. The glorious pasts of Bornu, Benin, Calabar, Darfur, Dahomey, and Egba Kingdoms were also evident. Basil Davidson observed: "Some of these states were contemporaries of early medieval Europe, and may at times be accounted superior to it in civilization. … Ghana and Bornu were described as Kingdoms of majestic splendour with their glittering brasses, quilted armour, well-bred horses and brilliant cavaliers – a description that reminds one of the typical European feudal army and the battles of Crecy and Agincourt."[10]

Also, Gao and Timbuktu were cities noted for their commerce, learning and religion. The literate culture of the Western Sudan already in existence for several hundreds of years flourished and flowered in Timbuktu during the years that saw, in Europe, the ravages of the Hundred Years of War. Leo Africanus, who wrote two centuries later, described the intellectual life of Timbuktu: "There are numerous judges, doctors, clerks all receiving good salaries from the King. The King paid great respect to men of learning. There was a big demand for books in manuscripts imported from Barbary. More profit was made from the book trade than from any other line of business."[11] Unfortunately these prosperous African Kingdoms could not withstand the intrusion and incursion of the West.

The fall of the African Kingdoms in the seventeenth century, the growth of the ignominious slave traffic, and the Industrial Revolution which started in Europe, all within a period of about three hundred years, placed Africa at a serious disadvantage. These years of slavery left West Africa poor and dependent. It also drained off her tremendous material and human resources. *The education of the young was no longer an issue; buying and selling of the young rather became the topic of the day in the African continent.* The European countries established far-flung commercial empires, and Africa, Asia and America formed the bulk of them, and had to supply the material that should feed the European market. The Industrial Revolution enabled Europe to forge ahead of the rest of the world, while Africa and Asia remained relatively industrially static. They served as major areas from which raw materials were exported to Europe, and where finished European goods were marketed. In addition, Europe had imported millions of Africans through slavery into the Americas to develop plantations, thus creating a serious shortage of able-bodied men and women in the African society, a factor that is of no mean significance in terms of African economic and social development. There was a breach in identity, mentality and the upbringing of the African child. During this period, the African continent remained virtually a dark continent, little more than a coastline to Europeans. The African identity was bartered. And the African child, instead of being educated for his society, was only good enough for the farms in Europe and the Americas.

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10 DAVIDSON, B., *Old Africa Rediscovered*, Gollancz, 1908, 82.

11 AFRICANUS, L., quoted in: FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 73.

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The slave trade, however, was later in 1807 "officially"declared illegal by Britain and other European nations successively followed suit. But this declaration was more of a paper-work. The slave trade mentality and practice lingered on. The damage had been done. Where do you begin once again with an educational program? Where are the young to be educated? And who are to educate them? They are nowhere to be found. They are all in the farms in Europe and the Americas. The African societies were no longer the same. The white man had broken the rope that held them together. Things had fallen apart.[12] Even when the slave trade was thought to have ended, the perpetrators were everywhere to be seen. The colonial masters were still there. The fear and mistrust is still ruling among the people. The effect of colonialism and this 'man's inhumanity to man' on the life of an ordinary person differed throughout the continent; "depending mainly on whether the European power was seeking merely to trade and govern, or whether it was primarily in search of land and minerals."[13] In which ever case, they were nothing more than unwanted visitors and impostors.

The missionaries who lost out in the whole scenario of quagmire and misery must have to begin a new adventure and penetrate the interiors of Africa, however again, along with their colonial colleges. They invented new tricks in the effort to gain acceptance among the indigenes. This time they brought along with them some of their African slaves whom they had trained to be missionaries. These, they supposed, would help them bridge the cultural gap. Unfortunately, the slaves had become semi-Europeans. This second missionary endeavour to Nigeria was marked by the advent of the first English-speaking Christian mission in Badagry near Lagos in September 1842. Their motive and goals for coming again were multiple. The Reverend Thomas Dove of the Methodist mission expressed the wishes of the emigrants (who were sold into slavery and had come back as missionaries) for their homeland in these words: "…that the Gospel of God our Saviour may be preached unto her, that schools may be established, that Bibles may be sent, that the British flag may be hoisted, and she may rank among the civilized nations of the earth."[14] One sees clearly that their mission was not only godly, but also they were agents of the British rulership.

Meanwhile as a result of the experiences of the indigenes from the previous encounters with the West, one should anticipate a certain amount of doubt, suspicion and precautions and an initial luke-warm attitude of the indigenes towards their guests. The reaction of the Africans generally to the second advent of this new religion, as Arinze puts it, was a mixed one: "from suspicion to antagonism, from indifference or rejection to neutrality, and from admiration to col-

12 See ACHEBE, C., *Things Fall Apart*, London, 1958.
13 FAFUNWA, A.B., *New Perspectives in African Education*, London, 1967, 3.
14 AJAYI, J.F.A., *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891*, Longmans, 1965, 30.

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laboration, and then (where possible) to conversion". [15] The reasons for the reservations of the Africans towards Christianity is also understandable if we consider that the African religion had for centuries supplied Africans with directions and answers to many issues in their lives. They were happy with themselves before they encountered foreigners. And people were not willing to abandon easily what had always sustained them when they were not yet sure of what the new entailed and where it led to.

The matter was all the more complicated because at this time, the missionaries came under different fronts of a divided Christianity, and sometimes with conflicting perspectives of the same gospel. It was not easy for the indigenes to differentiate the claims of authenticity among the different forms of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterians, and etc. "The Anglican missionaries were the first to open up a missionary station in Igboland at Onitsha, a river town along the river Niger, in 1857. The Catholics began work in the same area in 1885. Little was achieved until the British colonial occupation of Igboland in 1905. The missionaries soon set up mission stations in the different colonial administrative centres from where they were able to penetrate the interior."[16] They preached to the adults in centres where they could bring them together before the building of churches. They began building schools in order to bring the young ones on board. Unfortunately, in order to get converts to their own denominations, they often preached against one another. In the Nigerian Christian world, the 'big four' missions even till today see themselves as rivals. They are the Methodists, the C.M.S. (otherwise known as the Anglicans), the Baptists and the Roman Catholics. Others include the Church of Scotland Mission, known as the United Presbyterians; the Qua Ibo of Northern Ireland; the primitive Methodist Missionary Society. All these missions built their own different schools and were competing for the same children; and each one emphasized how best and authentic it was, and how the others were nothing more than fake Christians.

The rivalry in evangelization between the Catholic and other Protestant churches only helped in dividing many African communities. Isichei quoted Fr. Arazu's interview with one of the first generations of Igbo Christians: "For all practical purposes the first article of our creed which was our first commandment was: 'Thou shall hate "paganism" and all that is connected with it'. The second was like the first, 'Thou shall regard "Protestants" as thy enemies.'"[17] They transferred this antagonism to their followers and also taught the children the same in their schools. The effect of this rivalry till today is that the mission-run schools,

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15 ARINZE, F.A., *Answering God's Call*, London, 1983, 4.

16 METUH, E.I., *African Religions in Western Conceptual Scheme: The Problem of Interpretation*, Jos, 1991, 177-8.

17 ISICHEI, E., *A History of the Igbo People*, London, 1976, 170.

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instead of producing Christian scholars, have for the past one hundred years and many more produced, in some sense, Baptists, Anglicans, Methodists and Catholic scholars; while the few Muslim schools in competition with the Christians are just producing Muslim scholars (may be they only have luck that today's *Sunni-Shia* rivalry was not then introduced in Nigeria).

It was obvious that the primary objective of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the 'heathen' or the "benighted African" to Christianity via education. Knowledge of the Bible, the ability to sing hymns and recite Catechisms, as well as the ability to communicate both orally and in writing, were considered essential for a good Christian. The missionaries also realized the importance of training – preferably through the media of English and the local language – the local clergy, catechists, lay readers and pious or godly teachers who would minister to the needs of their own people. However, they erroneously assumed that the African culture and religion (animism) had, in the words of Lord Lugard,[18] no system of ethics, and no principle of conduct. It was in this frame of mind that they established their schools. They tried all in their power to disabuse the minds of the pupils and even adults of their culture and values; trying to give them new identities.

The first known school was established in 1843 by Mr. and Mrs. De Graft of the Methodist mission in Badagry and was named 'Nursery of the Infant Church'. Most of the pupils were children of the African emigrants who came in from the mission camp in Sierra Leone, although a few of the local converts also sent their children to the school. While the Methodist mission should be credited with establishing the first known school in Nigeria, the C.M.S. and the Catholic missions made the most and pronounced contributions to education in the country. The educational foundation stones laid by the Anglican bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther mostly in the west of Nigeria, and the Catholic bishop Shanahan in eastern Nigeria were immeasurable. Their missionary visions brought about the rapid spread of schools in the southern part of Nigeria. So it could be said with certainty that the earliest Christian missionary schools in Nigeria were without any doubt adjuncts of the churches.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Reverend Townsend reached Abeokuta from Badagry in August 1846 with their C.M.S team and built mission houses, churches and schools. These moves were not well received by the Methodists who had in fact been the first to start evangelical work in Nigeria, but concentrated in Badagry. The Methodists immediately sent a lay missionary to Abeokuta to start work there and he also built a Methodist school. This was the beginning of the missionary rivalry that was to last for more than a century in the Nigerian educational enterprise. Nonetheless, while the C.M.S. was consolidating its missions in Abeokuta and Badagry, it was also extending its evangelical program to other parts of the country. Samuel Ajayi Crowther opened the first

18 LUGARD, F.D., *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Cass, 1965, 437.

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school in Onitsha in December 1858 for girls between six and ten years old. As reported by Crowther himself in his letter to the mission: The boys like to rove about in the plantations with their bows and bamboo pointed arrows in their hands to hunt for birds, rats and lizards all day long without success; but now and then, half a dozen or more of them would rush into the (school) house and proudly gaze at the alphabet board and with an air of disdain mimic the names of the letters as pronounced by the schoolmaster and repeated by the girls, as if it were a thing only fit for females and too much confining to them as free rovers of the fields. But upon a second thought, a few of them would return to the (school) house and try to learn a letter or two. A few of them did settle down, of course, but farm work, particularly in the dry season, made their attendance very irregular. This was a difficulty the schools had to contend with everywhere.[19]

In Calabar and Bonny of eastern Nigeria, similar developments were taking place in missionary education. As trading was the main interest of the people in these areas, they were more interested in education in trade than in Christian evangelism *per se*. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was again sent to Bonny by the C.M.S., observed: 'They (the Bonny chiefs) did not want religious teaching, for that, the children have enough to do at home; they teach them themselves; they want them to be taught how to gauge palm-oil and the other mercantile business as soon as possible'. As the missionaries were only allowed to operate in this area for the purpose of educating the children of chiefs and people, they had to accept the people's wishes on the subject. The school was Crowther's chief method of evangelization. He introduced the mission into new places by getting rulers and elders interested in the idea of a school of their own, and usually it was to the school that he asked the senior missionary at each station to give his utmost attention.

On the Catholic side, especially in Igboland, one notices that the school was nonetheless an indispensable means of establishing their foothold among the people. In 1885 Father Joseph Lutz and his team arrived Onitsha in the lower Niger as it was called, and wasted no time in building schools. They signed an agreement with the local king – Obi Anazonwu – to guarantee their stay and provide formal education for their children. "The missionaries were given full rights to exercise the catholic religion without any hindrance. The Holy Ghost missionaries on their part, in gratitude for this concession, undertook to provide formal education for the children of the local community. With the consent of parents and guardians, the children were to be taught Catholic Doctrine and secular subjects like English, Writing, Reading and Arithmetic."[20] And before long, as recorded by Ekechi, Father Lutz himself was able to report back to his headquarters in Paris: "The care we gave to the children and to diseases have eas-

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19 CROWTHER, S.A., "Letter to the Missions", cited in: FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 81-82.

20 OBI, C.A., (ed) *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*, Onitsha, 1885, 19.

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ily won for us the sympathies of the natives."[21] Another reason which made them attractive was that they undertook a programme of redeeming slaves from their masters and paid their ransom. The C.M.S. missionaries who were there before the Catholics and could not make the desired breakthrough, were of course no longer comfortable with the situation and felt threatened by the rapid changes and the relatively numerous converts being made by the Catholic mission which had started to establish itself.

Catholic schools began to spread in Igboland like wildfire. It all started with one in Onitsha as Celestine Obi documented: "A primary school was built at the Onitsha wharf in 1893 while Father Bubendorf set up an educational/industrial school in 1897. Both of them were to be discarded since they were built of wood, mud, bamboo and thatch. But literary education in the prefecture took another dimension during the time of Father Lejeune. Apart from teaching the children the 3 Rs and singing, the children were educated to do manual labour in order to acquire self-help. Already in 1902, the school in Onitsha counted 90 boarders and 300 day pupils. Another group of twenty children attended the so-called High School under Father Cronenberger and the catechist/teacher Ephraim. The boys' schools were a great success unlike the girls' schools which had difficulties upon difficulties."[22] The success of the boys' schools in Igboland was exactly the opposite of the experience of the C.M.S. group of Ajayi Crowther in western Nigeria, who reported that the boys were nonchalant in comparism with the girls. One major reason for the success of the boys' schools here was the notion of the local people that the boys must be highly trained to work and be able to take care of his wife and children, since the girls' responsibility is to cater for the home. It was the goal of every family to see her girls marry and be responsible wives in their various homes. And H. Adigwe pointed out that the young men preferred to chose their wives from among the pagan girls because the schoolgirls "knew too much"[23]; and this was in their view dangerous and cannot make for a peaceful home.

Another contributing factor to Lejeune's success in the field of education was his readiness to accept government directives and policies. Whereas the C.M.S. restricted themselves to teaching the natives to read the bible in their native tongues, the Catholic missionaries were readily teaching English. When Sir Ralph Moor, the governor of southern Nigeria, wanted such subjects as English, Mathematics, Bookkeeping, Accountancy, and Carpentry and Secretarial studies to be included in the school curriculum, Father Lejeune promptly implemented the government's proposals. Thus by 1902, in the 13 primary schools belonging to the Catholic missions, and which had about 800 pupils, English was taught, and workshops were in operation.

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21 EKECHI, F.K., *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914*, London1972, 74.
22 OBI, C.A., op cit.,85.
23 ADIGWE, H., *The Beginning of the Catholic Church among the Igbos of South Easthern Nigeria, 1885-1930*, Vienna, 1966, 162.

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When Shanahan succeeded Lejeune, the educational tempo in eastern Nigeria doubled its speed. "Shanahan evolved a policy of conversion through the schools rather than through slaves and charitable institutions. It was the turning point in the history of Catholic education in Eastern Nigeria."[24] Shanahan's target was to "educate not just a few but as far as possible, to educate everywhere and everybody."[25] Following this target, he decided to build as far as possible, a school in every town that requested it. His zeal was admirable; and his whole educational program has remained a wonderful venture, with which Shanahan made an indelible mark in the lives and minds of the people of Igboland and eastern Nigeria. "Success followed in the wake of the implementation of this dynamic policy of educational expansion. Schools were opened in several towns, notably Nri, Nteje, Nsugbe, Isingwu, Iboro, Oba (Awba), Uli, Ihiala and Okija in 1906. A central (boarding) school was opened in Ozubulu in 1907 and at Emekuku in 1912. Down in the Efik towns and villages and Ibibioland, schools were being opened in several towns by fathers based in Calabar."[26] In the whole region, every catholic substation had a school running at least up to standard two, a few to standard four. But the central stations ran up to standard six, and in some cases produced teachers for the schools in the substations.

Generally, the early mission schools were all similar in method (with very minor differences). Their religious orientations and styles of teaching and learning were not too far away from the Quranic schools which preceded them in the northern part of Nigeria. Rote-learning (learning by a habitual or mechanical routine and procedure; learning by repetition; learning by heart) predominated and the teacher taught practically everything from one textbook. The Bible, (like the Qur'an in Islamic schools), was the master textbook and every subject, no matter how remote, had to be connected in some way with the holy writ. The main purpose of education in these early stages was to teach Christianity with a view to converting all those who came within the four walls of the mission house. All Christian denominations, Methodist, C.M.S., Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Qua Ibo and others, taught religion, and then other related subjects. In most areas, they had no smooth beginning. It was not yet clear to the indigenes what this kind of education would bring. In Anna Hinderer's (one of the teachers) diary of October 1853, we read "Our school does not increase at present, people are afraid to send their children; they think "book" will make them cowards, but those we have are going on very nicely."[27] From this diary, we could get information regarding the curriculum of these early schools. The agenda consisted of Bi-

24 INYANG, P., "Some Mission Schools in Eastern Nigeria prior to Independence", in: *Educational Policy and the Mission Schools*, (HOLMES, B. ed.) London, 1967, 303-304.

25 OCHIAGHA, G., "Bishop Shanahan, Apostle of Igboland", in: *Bishop Joseph Shanahan*, (OKOYE, J. ed.) Onitsha 1971, 18.

26 OBI, C., *op cit*, 232.

27 HINDERER, A., *Seventeen Years in the Yoruba Country*, Seeloy, 1872, 86.

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ble reading, catechism, the story of Jesus, hymns (singing) and prayers, sewing for girls and farming for boys.

However, there was no common curriculum among the missions; each mission and indeed each school within certain missions followed its own devices, based solely on the teacher in charge. Nevertheless, the basic curriculum in all of the schools consisted principally of the four Rs: (R)eading, w(R)iting, a(R)rithmetic and (R)eligion. According to Fafunwa's account, in 1848 the Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman, Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in the Gold Coast, sent out a time-table to the head teachers of all the schools under his management, which partially read as follow:

9 *a.m.*: Singing, rehearsals of scripture passages, reading one chapter of scripture, prayers.
9.15-12 *noon*: Grammar, reading, spelling, writing, geography, tables (except Wednesday, when there was catechism in place of grammar).
2 *p.m.*- 4 *p.m.*: Ciphering (i.e., arithmetic), reading, spelling, meaning of words.
4 *p.m.:* Closing Prayers.

This was a daily routine from Monday to Thursday. Friday was generally devoted to rehearsals of scripture passages, revision and examinations.[28]

As we have earlier noted, and irrespective of the denominational label, the early Christian schools in Nigeria were conceived by all the Christian denominations as the most important instrument for conversion. The children were a captive audience and the missions made the most of the situation. As the daily school time-tables showed, Christian religion predominated, even though subjects such as geography and arithmetic were included in the curriculum. All other subjects, for example grammar, reading, spelling, meaning of words, were taught with one overriding aim in mind: to enable the new Christian converts to acquire the mastery of the art of reading and writing with a view to facilitating the study of sacred writings and for the performance of their religious duties.

One common phenomenon was that most of the early schools were located in mission compounds and church premises. As the number of children increased, new houses had to be found or built either within the mission premises or outside it. The classroom setting in the early school consisted of a bespectacled missionary, sometimes white, sometimes black, often a priest, with a cane in hand and a row or two of children and sometimes a mixture of children, young and old adults, all repeating in unism either the catechism or the alphabets. The basic method was learning by rote. At the initial stages tuition was free and any child who cared to come along was more than welcome. Missionaries organized various admission drives to attract children and parents, some priests and missionaries even went from door to door to persuade parents to send their children to

[28] See FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 88f.

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school. Some parents insisted on being paid by the missionaries if they were to 'lose' their children to the mission house. They considered it a big sacrifice on their part, for a child lost to the school was a good "farming-hand" lost. Indeed, as early as the 1850s some of the mission teachers themselves requested their missions to pay stipends to the school children living at home.

However, most missions preferred children to live with them for a number of reasons: It would (hopefully) make indoctrination total and complete. Again, it would guarantee regular attendance and systematic instruction. Discipline was a central theme. The missionaries were generally strong disciplinarians and they had abiding faith in manual labour and the cane as the cure to all ills – idleness, laziness, slow learning, truancy, disobedience, irregularity of attendance and the like. Any act of non-compliance or insubordination was followed up with serious flogging or cutting grass under the sun. Furthermore, boarding would encourage slave-owners who wanted to lighten their responsibility to do so more readily. We have to note here, in any case, that many slave-owners preferred to send their slaves to school instead of their own children, so that if going to school would boomerang, their own children would be safe. As a consequence, many of the early educated Nigerians were ex-home slaves. It was for them a blessing in disguise.

Coincidentally, it was not only the missions that preferred boarding schools. It was for the indigenes a better option. Traditionally, Nigerians liked any form of apprenticeship. As mentioned earlier, parents apprenticed and sometimes pawned their children, wards or slaves for loans. When this happened, the child or ward stayed with the creditor until he had served the term of the pawn period. In cases of apprenticeship training, the ward stayed with the master-craftsman throughout his period of apprenticeship; that is, until he mastered his trade, for example, weaving, carving, etc,. Therefore, as the missionaries came in search of the children, the same mentality was in vogue. The argument was: 'whoever wishes to instruct our children must house, feed and clothe them. After all, it is a favour to give them our children who should have been useful to us at home'. Moreover, since no fees were paid, the missions must support the boarding schools by gifts from their home missions, friends and later from local church contributions. Also some missions established funds to enable them to redeem slaves, and then to feed, clothe and educate them. The gifts from abroad usually consisted of textbooks, copy books, slates, pencils, cloths, classroom equipment and money. This exercise marked the beginning of boarding schools in Nigeria.

Communication between the missionaries and the indigenes was not easy. Since the early missionaries knew no local language, the medium of instruction was English at these initial stages. Even the parents encouraged the use of English and wanted their children to learn the language of commerce, civilization and Christianity; they wanted their children to speak the white man's language. However, as the missionaries' knowledge of the local language developed, they tended to use it, particularly for religious instruction – in order to ensure that the Bible

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was fully comprehended. The missionaries discovered that a child, or an adult for that matter, learns better, absorbs more and appreciates better in his mother tongue. On the other hand, many of the missionaries were too lazy to learn the traditional languages and kept on using interpreters in their teachings, preaching and by any contact with the indigenes. It is not clear where the problem lies; was it in the inability to learn a foreign language, or a superiority complex?

Surprisingly, the children in boarding schools sometimes considered themselves superior to those who still remained in the village or town. With a better mastery of the English language, they distinguish themselves; talked only in the English language as a sign of being the "educated class"; and distanced themselves from others. They tended to shun the culture of their people. They preferred the music, dress, habits, food, and art, of the Western world. Most of the parents were worried by this but no one who understands the process of education will expect anything different. The missionaries themselves, both through their teachings and attitudes, discouraged things African. And the young people followed them as their models. Consciously or otherwise, the missionaries hoped to produce a group of people who were Nigerian only in blood but European in religion, thought and habit. This trait persisted for almost a century and became a constant source of reference whenever Christian education was criticized. However, in spite of the obvious criticisms against the early Christian schools, both parents and pupils saw education as a means to social emancipation and an avenue to economic improvement. Graduates of these schools either stayed on with the mission as catechists or lay workers of the church or became teachers, clerks, priests and etc. Their future was considerably brighter than those who did not experience this form of education.

The educational process and programs began gradually to unfold themselves. Some of the missions set up management boards to help them regulate the curriculum, teachers' salaries and conduct. At this time, the colonial government was still indifferent to educational matters; therefore the missions could establish vocational and industrial education (for adults who could no longer be admitted into the class room system), and regulate their own employments, trainings and payment of salaries. This non-centralized and uncoordinated educational policies of the different missions resulted in the lack of a common educational syllabus, standard textbooks, regular and unified school hours, as well as a central examination system. There was no uniformity in the conditions of service for teachers and other employees, and no adequate financial control. There was also no adequate supervision of schools and their infrastructures, teachers, pupils in order to ensure a central standard.

Meanwhile, the colonial government began to realize the achievements of the missions and the enormous influences they had on the indigenes through education. Then government intervention was deemed necessary. Between 1870 and 1876 the colonial government in Lagos, for example, made spasmodic attempts

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to assist some of the missions in their educational work. It earmarked the sum of 300 Pounds for the support of the missions.[29] The support gradually increased as the years rolled by. The government had then got the impetus to intervene in educational matters, and it began to promulgate ordinances.

It was also time to establish schools directly run by the government, outside the confines of the missions. The ordinance of 1882 (which was based on the British Education Act of 1844) provided for a general board of education (the first ever to be established in West Africa) which was to consist of the governor, the members of the executive council and not more than four other nominated members. It had power to establish local boards which would advise the general board on the opening of new government schools and to report whether the schools receiving government grants-in-aid of buildings and teachers' salaries were fulfilling the conditions attached to such grants. The granting of teachers' certificates was also included under the terms of the ordinance. It also established an Inspectorate which covered all the British West African territories; Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos. The Chief Inspector, who headed the Inspectorate, was referred to as 'Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools for the West African Colonies'. In 1886, Lagos was separated from the Gold Coast and became the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos. This separation necessitated the enactment of the first purely Nigerian education ordinance in 1887. The establishment of two new protectorates (Northern and Southern together with Eastern Nigeria) had a considerable impact on the development of education in Nigeria. With this expansion, the colonial government extended its educational interest to all parts of Nigeria, with the establishment of education departments.

Government primary schools were established and maintained wholly or in part from public funds, and arrangement was usually made whereby the local chiefs or native courts accepted responsibility for erecting and keeping in repair the school buildings and teachers' house and for paying an annual subscription varying in amount from 40 Pounds to 100 Pounds[30] (this amount normally represented about one-third of the cost of running the school). The assisted mission schools, on the other hand, were given government grants and the deficit was met by school fees and church collections. Schools were placed on the 'Assisted List' on application. They were then inspected by the school inspectors. They had to comply with the requirements of the code. In addition to the good number of secondary schools run by the missions, the first government secondary school – King's College – was founded in Lagos in 1909. The maintenance of King's College was purely a government affair; the mission's secondary schools on the hand merely got grants, depending on the school's performances. However the secondary school grants were a little more than the primary school

29 See FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 93ff.
30 PHILLIPSON, S., *Grants in Aid of Education in Nigeria*, Lagos, 1948, 13.

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grants. Education was spreading rapidly, especially in the western and eastern parts of Nigeria.

This spread was noticed to be slow in Northern Nigeria, probably because of the predominantly Islamic influence, and their suspicion about the motive of the missionaries and the fear of letting their children imbibe the Western cultures and Christianity. Efforts were made to see if the trend could be changed. In 1909 Hans Vischer, a former C.M.S., missionary worker in Northern Nigeria turned administrative officer for the colonial government, and was appointed to organize a system of education for the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Before starting, he was given the opportunity of visiting Egypt, the Sudan, Southern Nigeria and the Gold Coast to study their educational systems. He found much to criticize in every place he went and did not come across anything special that would suit Northern Nigeria. However, he did learn a lot from his visits. In spite of his good intentions, Vischer had firm views on what was good for the Negro. As documented by Sonia Graham[31], his seven cardinal principles of education for the north were: 1. to develop the national and racial characteristics of the natives on such lines as will enable them to use their own moral and physical forces to the best advantage; 2. to widen their mental horizon without destroying their respect for race and parentage; 3. to supply men for employment in the government; 4. to produce men who will be able to carry on the native administration in the spirit of the government; 5. to impact sufficient knowledge of Western ideas to enable the native to meet the influx of traders, from the coast with the advent of the railway, on equal terms; 6. to avoid creating a 'Babu'- illiterate class; 7. to avoid encouraging the ideas, readily formed by Africans, that it is more honourable to sit in an office than to earn a living by manual labour, introducing at the earliest opportunity technical instruction side by side with purely clerical teaching.

Babs Fafunwa[32] admitted that Hans Vischer must be given full credit for being the first colonial education officer clearly to enunciate his objectives of education in Nigeria. His first four points are admirable. His fifth, sixth and seventh points leave room for endless debate. No country in the world, except perhaps one with a socialist government (which does not function anywhere), has solved points six and seven. Even Britain, which Vischer represented, has its 'Babu' class (illiterates and people of the lowest cadre in the society) as well as those who still think that it is more honourable to sit behind the desk. However Vischer's attempt was rewarded with some progress. He is credited with opening many schools in various parts of Northern Nigeria, and the populations of the schools were gradually increasing.

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31 GRAHAM, S.F., *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919*, Ibadan, 1966, 75-76.

32 See FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 109-10.

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There was really a considerable disparity between north and south in the area of education. The tempo of the spread and the educational development was higher in the south. The north had no secondary schools in 1914 while the south had eleven. And following Phillipson's statistics, the primary school population in the south in 1913 was 35.716 as compared to 1.131 in the north in the same period. The Northerners were more at home with the Quranic schools than with the government or mission schools. Of course the north had over 140.000 children in its Quranic schools.[33] This gap in "formal education" between Northern and Southern Nigeria due to geographical and religious problems; and other matters like the uneven distribution of schools in Southern and Northern Nigeria, the dual control of education by the missions and the government, and the continued rivalry among the different missions and their schools were all on the table at the time the colonial government decided to merge the south and the north of Nigeria in 1914.

5.2 Education in the amalgamated Northern and Southern Provinces

The political amalgamation of the colony and protectorates of southern and northern Nigeria did not, however, result in the unification of the two separate education departments until 1929. With the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Provinces, Sir Frederick Lugard (the former High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria) became the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria. He took a keen interest in education during his tenure of office in the north. When he became Governor-General of Nigeria, he tried to unify the country politically, administratively and also educationally. As a result of his passionate interest in education, he was anxious to supervise personally the organization and administration of education in Nigeria.

Fafunwa[34] noted that in April 1914, after only four months in office, Lugard prepared a draft of education ordinance and regulations for grants-in-aid to voluntary schools. However, his draft was criticized by both the Colonial Office and the missionary societies – but for different reasons. In his draft memorandum he proposed increases in grants to the missions and a more efficient system of inspection for schools. He proposed non-sectarian teaching in schools, located in non-Muslim areas. He wanted village schools introduced throughout Nigeria where the three Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) would be taught up to class III and where children would be taught simple agriculture cultivation of cash crops, crop rotation, manuring, and marketing of agricultural products. He felt that bright children from rural areas should be given scholarships to pursue higher technical education, while the poor but able children from urban areas

33 PHILLIPSON, S., *Grants in Aid of Education in Nigeria*, Lagos, 1948, 28.
34 FAFUNWA, A.B., op. cit., 114ff.

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should be given financial assistance to enter secondary schools. He wanted the schools in the rural areas to concentrate on agriculture and envisaged literary education for the pupils in the urban areas, from where he urgently expected clarks needed for the administrative offices in his widened colonial territory. Both the Colonial Office and the missions disagreed with Lugard's plans. The missions were mainly interested in getting the government to recognize and finance more of their schools, but they wished to retain full control over their own schools, particularly in the area of religious activities. The Colonial Office, on its part, wanted to keep the northern and southern provinces separate educationally for a better control.

Meanwhile the people of Nigeria (particularly the Southern Nigerians) were beginning to realize fully the importance of Western education. We can recall that in the 1840s and 1850s, people were skeptical about Christian-cum-Western education but by the turn of the century they had come to realize that, with a rudimentary knowledge of the three Rs, one could become a clerk, a teacher, a catechist or a letter writer. With this prospect in view, the attitude of parents and children changed drastically towards education; they turned from being skeptics to over-optimistic enthusiasts. It was however the thought of material benefit rather than moral, spiritual or aesthetic benefit that encouraged a rapid increase in the number of schools in Southern Nigeria between 1910 and 1930.

The rapid growth however suffered a big set-back. The First World War (1914-18) took its toll on education as on everything else. The missions were getting very minimal assistance from their mother countries in Europe. And the British government had more problems to tackle in the war than to finance education in Africa. Educational expansion therefore was partially arrested as men, money and materials became very scarce; and many government officials and a considerable number of European mission teachers and evangelists joined or were conscripted into the British armed forces. This scarcity could not quell the interest and enthusiasm of the indigenes, who were still flooding the schools in their hunger for Western education. The situation therefore "resulted in increased work for the fathers (missionaries) – a situation that was compounded by the lack of personnel to cope with school work. Consequently there was frequent change of duty for the available personnel, which made things more difficult and in fact uncertain."[35]

As a result of the minimal resources, many schools were no longer assisted. This notwithstanding, different missions kept opening more schools. Even private individuals who now saw the running of schools as a lucrative business opened private schools even without hoping for any assistance from the government or the missions. Lord Lugard could not tolerate this proliferation of unassisted schools, but the situation left him with no choice. His greater worry was the con-

35 OBI, C.A., (ed) *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*, Onitsha, 1885, 227.

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sequences of allowing schools uncontrolled. It was Lugard's plan to regulate and control the quality of education received by Nigerians, since he only needed educated African subordinates who would serve the central government, the native councils and the commercial houses. Africans should not be so educated to the extent of being able to overthrow or question the intelligence of their colonial masters. Meanwhile, the emergence on the Nigerian scene of a small but increasing number of educated elite, for examples lawyers, doctors, engineers and other Nigerian graduates, was already a constant source of irritation to most colonial administrators. At one time, Lugard could not hide his contempt for the well-educated African: "I am somewhat baffled as to how to get in touch with the educated native… I am not in sympathy with him. His loud and arrogant conceit is distasteful to me, his lack of natural dignity and courtesy antagonize me. Education seems to have produced discontent, impatience of any control, and an unjustifiable assumption of self-importance in the individual."[36] Lugard was probably not alone in this problem. It seemed to be a common phenomenon in the history of colonialism which reflected in their different policies in different colonies.

Prior to 1925, the British government had no clearly defined policy on education in its African colonies. The management of education was solely an affair for the colonial administrator on the spot. When Clifford took over from Lugard, he inherited the problems of the ever-growing unassisted schools indiscriminately opened by missions, private Nigerians and organizations, which led to an unending rivalry. Such was the educational scene, when in 1920 the Phelps-Stokes Fund of the U.S.A., in co-operation with the International Education Board set up two commissions to examine the conditions of education in the African states. The reports of the commissions were very important documents which constituted significant turning points in African education. The documents criticized the colonial government's educational policies in Africa and made concrete recommendations on how to improve African education. The commission's findings jolted the British colonial government from its serene and lackadaisical positions into positive action. The views expressed by the commission reflected many of the American liberal attitudes to education in general and the latest American thinking on Negro education in the U.S.A. in particular. The Phelps-Stokes Report made a tremendous impact on both sides of the Atlantic – Britain and Africa. The report put the British government under pressure to undertake something outstanding in order to demonstrate its interest in African education. Then in 1925, three years after the Phelps-Stokes commission, Britain issued its first educational policy, that ever was, for Africa. This came out as a memorandum which set out the principles on which the educational systems of the dependencies should be based.

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36 PERHAM, M., *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945,* London, 1960, 586.

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Fafunwa outlines a summary of this memorandum:[37]

1. While the government reserves to itself the right to direct educational policy and to supervise all educational institutions by inspection or other means, voluntary effort should be encouraged and advisory boards of education should be established in each dependency to ensure the active co-operation of all concerned.
2. Education should be adapted to local conditions in such a manner as would enable it to conserve all sound elements in local tradition and social organization, while at the same time functioning as an instrument of progress and evolution.
3. Religious training and moral instruction should be regarded as fundamental to the development of a sound education and should be accorded complete equality with secular subjects.
4. The development of African dependencies on the material and economic side demands a corresponding advance in the expenditure on education, and to be successful in realizing the ideals of education. The status and conditions of service of the Education department should be such as would attract the best available men.
5. Schools run by voluntary agencies which attain a satisfactory standard of efficiency should be regarded as of equal importance in the scheme of education with schools directly organized by the government, and should be given grants-in-aid. The conditions under which grants-in-aid are given should not be dependent on examination results.
6. The study of the educational use of the vernaculars and the provision of textbooks in the vernaculars are of primary importance, and qualified workers should be set aside for this purpose.
7. The establishment of a sound system of education is dependent on a satisfactory cadre of teachers, and the teacher-training institutions should be guided by the principles of education laid down in the memorandum.
8. A system of visiting teachers should be established to ensure inspiration and encouragement for the teachers serving in the village schools.
9. Thorough supervision is indispensable and inspectors should seek to make the educational aims clear and offer friendly advice and supervise their own schools in ways parallel to and co-ordinated with the government system of inspection.
10. Technical and vocational training should be carried out with the help of the government departments concerned and under their supervision. The educa-

[37] "Memorandum on Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa", in: FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 130ff.

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tional system should seek to establish the dignity of manual vocations and to promote their equality with the clerical service.

11. The education of women and girls is an integral element in the whole educational system and presents many difficult problems.
12. Systems should be established which, although varying with local conditions, will provide elementary education for boys and girls, secondary education of several types, technical and vocational education institutions of higher education which might eventually develop into universities, and some form of adult education which will ensure identity of outlook between the newly educated generation and their parents.

Analyzing this first but comprehensive Memorandum on Education in the British Colonial Territories, one sees the impact of the Phelps-Stokes Report of 1922, which highlighted the indifference of the colonial government to education and the inefficiency and short-sightedness of the Christian missions in the field of education. This Memorandum is an attempt to correct foregone mistakes. It guided, more than any other, the Nigerian educational policy and development from 1925 to 1945. The proliferation of the unassisted 'mushroom' schools both by the missions and private individuals or groups, particularly in Southern Nigeria, was not left unattended to. These 'unwanted' schools grew so rapidly that even the missions, which were responsible for most of them, were unable to exercise control over them and the Department of Education itself was too understaffed to inspect them. The Memorandum was then followed up with a code which should act as a guide in this respect. The code required that teachers must be registered as a condition for teaching in any school, and the minimum pay for teachers employed in an assisted school was regulated. It also forbade the opening of a school unless approved by the Director of Education and the Board of Education; and thereby expanding and strengthening the existing Board of Education by including the Director and the Deputy Director of Education, the Assistant Director, ten representatives of the missions and other educational agencies; and re-defined the board's functions to include advice to the government on educational matters. Moreover it authorized the closing of a school if it was being conducted in a manner not in the interest of the people or the community where it was located. In fact, the functions and duties of supervisors or mission inspectors were clearly defined. The demands for better educational facilities rose. And the people's desire for more and higher education kept rising. These were the challenges confronting the colonial government. Then in 1929, the education departments of both the northern and southern provinces were merged under a new director of education – Mr. E. R. J. Hussey – who had plans for a unified education programme for Nigeria.

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Higher Stages of Education became necessary.

When E. Hussey became Director of Education, he reviewed the entire educational system and then made proposals for its reform. He contemplated a gradual expansion of education within fifty to one hundred years which would permit not only a reasonable increase of school facilities for the masses but also of a gradually improving standard of higher education at the top. To ensure this development, according to Hussey, it was first necessary to determine what changes in the existing system would make such expansion possible. He proposed three levels of education for Nigeria. The first level was the six-year primary education course which hitherto had been an eight-year course with the local language as the medium of instruction. Hussey hoped that this reform would provide education for life for the majority of the children who would not go beyond this level and at the same time prepare the rest of the children for further education. The primary course was to emphasize agriculture, handicrafts, hygiene and interest in the environment. The second level was the intermediate stage. This was to be a six-year course at the end of which most pupils would leave to seek employment in various fields. He also proposed special schools with special syllabuses for girls.

His third stage, called vocational higher education, later led to the establishment of the Yaba Higher College where it was hoped that various vocational courses would be provided, the aim being to rise eventually to the standard of a British university. To provide teachers for elementary schools, it was proposed to establish more elementary teacher training centres, while the teachers of middle schools would be trained at the Higher College at Yaba. The idea of the Yaba Higher College was conceived in 1930 but it was not until 1932 that the college was opened. Hussey also proposed the appointment of African school supervisors whose function would be to serve as visiting teachers to schools in the area of their jurisdiction. Refresher or in-service courses were also proposed to enable the teachers already in service to adapt themselves to new syllabus.[38] To tackle the problem of the existing economic depression, the British government decided to reduce administrative costs, and sent home many European officers, and decided to train local personnel in the various government departments. This was a beautiful opportunity for the indigenes who had attained higher education.

We pointed out earlier, that the history of Western education in Africa was inevitably bound up with the history of missionary activities on the continent. As in elementary and secondary education, the Christian missions played an important role in the beginning of higher education. Consequently, one of the early aims of higher education in Nigeria and elsewhere was primarily to train people for the ecclesiastical order. Now however, following the government's administrative needs, Government Departmental Training Courses were offered; and lo-

[38] SOLARU, T.T., *Teacher-Training in Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1964, 51.

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cal people were trained to qualify for the involvement in government administration, among which the school system was an organ.

It has also become obvious that many Nigerian parents, particularly in Southern Nigeria, saw education as the key to human development and were determined to send their children, wards or relatives to school at any cost. People wanted to see members of their families or villages participating in the government. We cannot, therefore, overlook the role of private efforts in the area of education. The contributions of parents and relatives are almost as important as the missionary contribution between 1850 and 1960. Indeed, the government's contribution was minimal and the missions themselves were largely supported both morally and financially by their Nigerian indigenous members. The early history of higher education for Nigerians predominantly enjoyed private sponsorships, scholarships and bursaries. Between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries, private efforts and initiatives by parents, clubs, organizations and ethnic groups were primary sources for financing higher educational opportunities. The colonial government could not solely take the responsibility for sponsoring at this level of higher education, the ever growing enthusiasm for education among the young people of Southern Nigeria.

For the first time in the history of Nigerian education, a group of citizens began to sponsor many young men for higher studies abroad, in such diverse fields as law, education and medicine. The Igbo for example had many groups who sponsored a number of students for overseas studies. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (a renowned 20th century elite of Igboland, who later became the first president of Nigeria after independence) single-handedly encouraged and sponsored another group of students to the United States in 1933. Thus the years 1930-50 witnessed intensive competition for higher education by diverse groups and individuals, particularly in the south. This period will probably go down in Nigeria's history of higher education as the era of the 'Golden Fleece'. Some more individual prominent Igbo sons are worthy to be mentioned here: The 'Greater Tomorrow' schemes of Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe, the 'orizuntal' scheme of Nwafor Orizu are only examples. Drs. Nwafor Orizu and Ozuomba Mbadiwe launched private scholarship programmes to help bright but needy students gain admission to American universities between 1947 and 1952. Without doubt, private sponsorship played a very important role in higher educational development in and out of this country especially between 1850 and 1950. It is also not an overstatement to say that, as regards higher education, private efforts were more significant, quantitatively speaking, than the efforts of the government and the missions. However, the missions still have the enviable credit of opening the doors of higher learning to Nigerians at the very beginning.

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5.3 Regional Reforms and the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.)

Many Nigerians are now very highly educated and thus began the era of self-consciousness and the longing for self-determination of their future. After the Second World War, the then British governor of Nigeria – Sir Arthur Richards – unilaterally imposed a constitution on Nigeria (the Richards constitution of 1946). This constitution divided Nigeria into three regions based on the three largest ethnic groups: the East – Igbo and their neighbours; the West – Yoruba; and the North – Hausa-Fulani. Each region had a regional assembly composed of civil servants and nonofficial members chosen by the regional governor and his officials. This was the beginning of the ethnic and tribal rivalry in the Nigerian polity, which gets more acute over the years till date.

There began the emergence of indigenous political parties: for the East, National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Herbert Macauley; for the West, the Action Group (A.G.) headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo; and for the North, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), steered by the Sarduana of Sokoto. Each of these parties ruled in their regions before and a little after the Nigerian independence, and played considerable roles in shaping education in the country. B. Fafunwa summarized the situation thus: "The period 1950 to 1960 will probably go down as the most tempestuous political era in Nigerian history. The handing over of power by the British colonial administration to the Nigerians proceeded more rapidly during this decade than in all of the ninety years which preceded it. There was a new constitution every three years between 1951 and 1960, whereas only two constitutions were introduced between 1861 and 1946 (that is the 1923 and the 1946 constitutions). The new period started with the introduction of the Macpherson constitution in 1951, barely five years after the introduction of the ineffective Richards constitution. This constitution provided for democratic election to the regional houses of assembly, empowered each region to raise the appropriate funds, and, more importantly, had power to pass laws on education, health, agriculture and local government. With the regionalization of education in 1951 and the rise of the three major political parties to power in each of the three regions in 1952, intensive political rivalry developed and each party tried to outdo the other in providing social amenities for its own area of jurisdiction. The Western and Eastern regional governments headed by the Action Group and the N.C.N.C. respectively placed highest priority on education."[39]

Following the educational policy of the West, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in his budget speech after winning the first election to the Western House of Assembly in 1952, made it clear to the members of the House that his government would give top priority to health and education as far as the budget would allow. In

[39] FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 179.

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July of the same year, the Western Minister of Education, Chief S. O. Awokoya, presented a comprehensive proposal for the introduction of a free, universal and compulsory education, otherwise known as Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.), for the Western Region by January 1955. The proposal included a massive teacher-training programme, the expansion of teacher-training facilities and secondary schools, the introduction of secondary technical education and secondary modern schools. Educational development was seen as something that needed imperative and urgent attention.

Indeed 17 January 1955 marked the beginning of an educational revolution not only in the West but in Nigeria as a whole. Following David Abernethy's statistics,[40] in 1954 some 457.000 pupils were attending fee-paying primary schools in the West, but when the scheme was launched in January 1955, some 811.000 children turned up. These figures represented a jump from 35 per cent to 61 per cent of the 5-14 year olds. By 1958 more than one million children were enrolled. The government officials under-estimated the figures expected at the initial stages: it was originally estimated that some 492.000 would be enrolled in 1955, rising by 100.000 annually, but more than 800.000 were registered. This caused anxiety among the parents whose children had no school to attend. However the error was corrected over a period of time and better projections were made in order to avoid such an occurrence in the future. The number of primary school teachers rose from 17.000 in 1954 to 27.000 in 1955. The western government's budget for education increased from 2.2 million Pounds in 1954 to 5.4 million Pounds in 1955, and nearly 90 per cent of it was spent on primary education alone. The capital expenditure for the construction of primary school buildings was 2.4 million Pounds for 1955, while a total of 5 million Pounds was committed to primary school buildings between 1954 and 1958. By 1960, just five years after the introduction of free primary education, over 1.100.000 children were enrolled – this represented more than 90 per cent of the children of school age in the Western region.

The Banjo Commission was set up by the government six years after the introduction of universal primary education in Western Nigeria, to review the existing structure and the working of the primary and secondary (grammar and modern) school systems in the region; the adequacy or otherwise of the teacher-education programme; and the interrelationship between primary education and the various types of secondary education including pre-university education. The commission noted, *inter alia,* that falling standards in primary school work were due largely to a preponderance of untrained teachers; a lack of continuity in staffing; an emphasis on teachers' private studies at the expense of the children; too large classes; the presence of under-aged children; an unsatisfactory syllabus; cessation or restriction of corporal punishment; lack of co-operation by parents

40 ABERNETHY, D., *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education*, Stanford, 1969, 128.

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and guardians; and inadequate supervision of schools either by the inspectorate or the voluntary agency supervisors.

The Commission thus recommended among other things: 1. gradual elimination of untrained teachers from the schools; 2. improvement of teachers' conditions of service and the promotion of efficient teachers to the highest professional grade; 3. reduction of lower classes to forty pupils per class; 4. compulsory registration of births by local authorities; 5. better means of checking schools' accounts. 6. writing of textbooks by Nigerians based on Nigerian conditions to be encouraged; 7. six-year Universal Free Primary Education Scheme to be retained and nursed by the government of Western Nigeria; 8. all secondary-modern schools to be transformed into junior secondary schools and opened on a fee-paying basis; and grammar schools to be renamed senior secondary schools ; 9. special training college for technical teachers to be established and vocational guidance systems introduced in the junior secondary schools; 10. science facilities to be expanded in junior and senior secondary schools, and technical and commercial courses to be offered in the senior secondary schools; 11. school libraries to be regarded as an integral part of the school's educational programme and every level of education to be provided with library facilities.[41] The influence of this commission also affected all other regions of Nigeria.

The government of the Eastern Region on its part was also very active in promoting education. It planned and launched the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) scheme in February 1957. This scheme unfortunately suffered a setback as a result of inadequate planning, infrastructure and funds. The cost was borne by the local authorities who found it difficult in most cases to meet the financial requirements of the scheme. The bulging school population could no longer be adequately accommodated and financed. Consequently, many teachers were laid off in 1958 and many schools were closed down due to lack of funds. While finance played a significant role in this major reversal, one other important factor was largely responsible for the virtual collapse of the scheme. The Catholics who constituted more than 60 per cent of the Christians in the East owned more than 60 per cent of the primary, secondary and teacher-training institutions in the region. They objected so strongly to the scheme that they threatened to found a Catholic Religious Party to contest the election, and particularly the free education scheme. The protestant mission schools were also considered threatened by the scheme. The opinion of the Catholic missions was expressed through the Eastern Catholic Bishops in the dailies: "The right is entirely fundamental. Children belong to their parents by natural law, and the parents are responsible before God for their proper upbringing and education. They cannot fulfill this responsibility unless they are free to choose the agency to which they give their

41 *Report of the Commission appointed to review the educational system of Western Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1961, 1.

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children. Freedom to choose a school for one's children is an essential freedom. It should not be removed by any government."[42] This was an open challenge to the government and against its future plan to take over the administration of all schools. The debate went on: "If we accept this first step (that is, the establishment of local education authorities proposed by the Eastern government) without protest, the second and third steps will provide a "full education service" which will exclude our Catholic religion from all grant-aided schools. This loss of Catholic education will be followed inevitably by the loss of faith."[43]

The government was then put under pressure and it set up the Dike Committee in 1962 whose report really put a damper on the government's enthusiasm to establish a free primary education system; and later the Ikoku committee was set up to review anew the whole educational system in the East. The committee recommended, among other things, the consolidation of primary schools and discontinuation of non viable schools; complete government control of all primary schools; the involvement of local government councils in primary education and setting up local school boards; reduction of the length of primary school education from seven to six years; improvement of teachers condition of service and the provision of in-service courses for teachers; introduction of a six-year secondary education course and the elimination of the sixth form as soon as practicable.[44] This Ikoku report awakened once again and strengthened government's desire to take over the running of schools from their mission proprietors.

In the North, the development of education lagged behind. The Northern Region was unable to enter the race of awarding a universal primary education for a number of reasons. The bias against Western education was already there and is still preponderant. The Quranic schools have gained more ground in the lives and minds of the people. Lack of finance was also a major factor, compounded by the enormity of the number of children of school age in that region. Meanwhile the Northern government set up the Oldman Commission whose analyses of the situation and recommendations could not encourage the government to embark on such a venture like universal free primary education. Moreover the Northern government at this time was concerned more with the development of education in rural areas, and the promotion of adult literacy than with universal primary education. Nevertheless, the enrolment of pupils in primary schools at this time was noticeably encouraging more than before.

The Universal Primary Education (UPE) later became a federal government educational programme. The federal government constituted the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC) in 1964 to deliberate on some policies on edu-

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42 CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA, "A Short Note on Universal Primary Education", in: *The Leader*, Owerri, 9 June 1956.

43 *The Leader* (Editorial), 8 September 1956.

44 *Ikoku Report on the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria*, July 1962.

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cation. This council comprised of representatives of the federal and state ministries of education, universities, colleges of education and other agencies. Between 1973 and 1975, this council organized a series of workshops on curriculum and material production at primary, secondary and teacher education levels. These workshops aimed at preparing syllabuses and text-books in anticipation of the proposed new national education policy – among which is the UPE. The UPE was nationally launched on, September 6, 1976 by General Obasanjo and all the military governments in the nineteen states. Instead of the 2.3 million children expected, 3 million children showed up to start the program, resulting in an under-estimation of thirty per cent. Consequently there was serious shortage of classroom spaces, teachers and equipment, but, as Fafunwa expressed it, Nigeria had launched one of the greatest education projects in the history of African education. When the UPE was launched in 1976 it meant that one out of every three African children attending primary school in Africa was a Nigerian! The UPE triggered off a phenomenal rise in pupil population. Enrolment figures kept rising and jumped to 6 million in the year preceding UPE (1975/76) to 8.7 million in 1976/77, the first UPE year and to 12.5 million in 1979/80. By 1982 the pupil population rose to 15 million.[45]

One can really assert that the Universal Primary Education scheme is predicated on the assumption that every Nigerian child has an inalienable right to a minimum of six years of education, if he is to function effectively as a citizen of a Nigeria that is free and democratic, just and egalitarian, united and self-reliant, with full opportunities for all citizens. To this end, the objectives of the national policy on primary education were: a) inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively; b) the laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; c) citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; d) character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes; e) developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment; f) giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capabilities; g) providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts by linking the school with the trades and crafts of the locality.

It was hoped that with these plans and objectives, the poorest child from the poorest part of Nigeria would have access to a free six-year primary education, irrespective of the religious, social or economic status of his or her parents. To achieve these objectives the new primary school curriculum was updated to involve the following:

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45 FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 237ff.

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a) Language arts, using the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community for the first three years and English at a later stage,
b) Mathematics,
c) Elementary science,
d) Social studies,
e) Cultural arts,
f) Health and physical education,
g) Religious and moral instruction,
h) Agriculture and
i) Home economics.

There was however no evidence that this update has helped to achieve the required objectives especially in those parts of Nigeria where children are not encouraged to attend Western oriented schools.

5.4 Modern Structural Educational Reform in Nigeria

The states in the federation promulgated laws and laid down new rules and regulations in respect of the administration of education, stipulating the statutory system and structure of public education. Four major levels of education are outstanding: Three years of Pre-primary education (about the ages of 3-5 years); six years of Primary education (between the 6th -11th years of age); six years of Secondary education (which lasts between the ages of 12-18, this level is subdivided into junior and senior secondary schools of three years each – to accommodate the basic and pre-vocational training required by all before those who are able can decide for professional education); and a four or more years of Higher education (around the ages of 19-22 and above).

5.4.1 Pre-School (Nursery) Education

The early years of childhood are the most receptive moments in the life of a human being. Proper education (when not official, at least unofficial) must begin at this stage. According to M. O. A. Durojaiye, "To develop our young children's intellectual capacities to the fullest, our investment must be in the pre-school child…. It is only by such investment that we can hope to produce a new generation of intellectually alert and imaginative Africans who will be better equipped than we are to meet the challenge of a developing continent, and to help their own children in making further strides ahead." [46] Today, modern societies show

[46] DUROJAIYE, M.O.A., *A New Introduction to Educational Psychology*, London/Ibadan/Nairobi, 2004, 111.

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serious concern for the education of their young ones for obvious reasons. It is common practice in most societies to make provision for early-childhood or pre-school education programmes of various sorts for children below the official school age (usually six years) mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools. For the children themselves, there can be no better effective beginning for learning in life than a purposeful, good structured and richly equipped pre-school education situation like a modern kindergarten or nursery school.

Some writers argue for, others against the need for or the effectiveness of such early childhood education programmes for the subsequent educational development of children. Those against it argue that young children are not mature enough to learn complex skills demanded by pre-school educational programmes and that the warmth of motherly love and the fostering of children's emotional security are more important than any form of educational programme. They contend that early childhood years should be utilized in firmly grounding the child in his/her sub-culture and that exposing him/her to pre-school programmes, which emphasize intellectual skills, would impose middle class values on the child and destroy the positive aspects of his/her sub-culture.[47]

Following this line of argument, people, like Weikart[48], and Zeigler[49], doubt the wisdom in exposing young children very early to formal education, expressing the fear that the short-term academic gains would be offset by the long-term stifling of their motivation and self-initiated learning. Others cautioned that early academic gains in reading skills associated with formal instruction of pre-schoolers could have long-term negative effects on achievement.[50] Probably the contention of the adherents of this school of thought is to discourage the high sophisticated and systematized systems in the formal and official educational policies. The daily experiences of the mother should be sufficient in satisfying the educational needs of the child at this stage. The problem here is to determine how experienced the mother is.

On the other hand, Robinson and his group have persuasively argued that beginning early to educate children should not pose any dangers, as it is difficult to see how pleasant experiences, stimulating within reasonable limits, and logically sequenced, can be harmful to mental health or to cognitive development.[51] Moreover, some research evidences indicate that early childhood education has

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47 REISSMAN, F., *The Culturally Deprived Child*, New York, 1962.

48 WEIKART, D., *Early Childhood Education: Needs and Opportunity*, Paris, 2000.

49 ZEIGLER, E., "Formal Schooling for Four-year Olds? No", in: *American Psychologist*, 42, 3, 1987, 254-260.

50 STIPEK, D., et al, "Effects of Different Instructional Approaches on Young Children's Achievement and Motivation", in: *Child Development*, 66, 1, 1995, 209-223.

51 ROBINSON, H.B., et al, „The Problem of Timing in Pre-school Education", in: *Early Education* (ed. HESS, R.D.), Illinois, 1968.

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positive influences on children's affective, conceptual and social development in subsequent years.[52]

In the modern Nigerian context, with the phasing out of 'infant classes' (which existed in the colonial time for children who could not yet belong to the official classes), some parents began to feel the need for nursery schools. The demand for nursery education was, however, very low until recent times. The African traditional extended family system made it and still makes it possible for parents to leave their little children with their extended relations who would care for them in their absence. Most parents did not value pre-school education until the Nigerian educational administrators and policy makers issued an official National Policy on Education in 1977.

In the current *National Policy on Education* early childhood education is labelled as pre-primary education and is defined as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five, prior to their entering the primary school. As stated in the policy document, the purpose of pre-primary education includes, among others: Providing a smooth transition from the home to the school; preparing the child for the primary level of education; providing adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work; inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, and the local environment, playing with toys, artistic and musical activities; teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colors, shapes forms, etc. through play; and finally inculcating social norms.

Following this document, a number of measures must to be taken by the government to ensure the achievement of the objectives of pre-primary education. They include: encouraging private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education; making provision in Teacher Training institutions for the production of specialist teachers in pre-primary education; ensuring that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the local community; ensuring that the main method of teaching in pre-primary institutions will be through play; regulating and controlling the operation of pre-primary education, ensuring adequate training of staff and provision of essential equipment. [53] In addition to these measures, appropriate levels of Government (State and Local) are required to establish and enforce educational laws that will ensure that established pre-primary schools are well-run, pre-primary teachers well qualified, and other appropriate academic infrastructure provided. Ministries of education are expected to ensure maintenance of high standards.

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52 BAKER, G., "The effectiveness of Nursery school on the affective and conceptual development of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children", in: *Development Psychology*, 2, 1973, 140. (See also JERSILD, A.T. & co, *Child Psychology*, New Jersey, 1975).

53 Federal Government of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, Lagos, 1998.

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The official recognition given to pre-primary education in the *National Policy on Education* of 1977 combined with a number of factors to give rise to an unprecedented expansion in the provision of child care and pre-primary educational institution or nursery schools in the country. Nearly all the pre-primary education in the country, however, is provided by private proprietors. Some of these establishments go by the names 'day care centres' or 'playgroups' and take care of the children while their parents are at work or go for other engagements, but most of them are nursery schools for providing early childhood education. In some instances a group of parents hire and pay a teacher to take care of their pre-school age children and teach them the rudiments of numbers and alphabets. Very few of the establishments operate as child-care or child-minding units only; others operate as both child-care units and nursery schools.[54] It depends on the quality of the staff.

What is in vogue now is for these establishments to operate as nursery schools for two years or a bit more and subsequently apply for license to operate as both nursery and primary schools. Most of them accept children aged two into their nursery sections who later transit to the primary sections of the same establishments at the age of five or even less. The number of children in these institutions varies widely. However, owing to the high demand for pre-primary education by parents, it does not take a long time for newly established pre-primary institutions to grow and develop. Nowadays nursery schools are located in various places and buildings – campuses of some universities and colleges, premises of some industrial and business organizations, church premises, residential buildings some part or the whole of which are hired for use as nursery schools only or both nursery and primary schools, and so on, while some are set up mainly in some towns as full-fledged nursery and primary schools with their own building and premises. The physical structures vary widely in terms of quality and aesthetics from one establishment to the other. So do the facilities and equipment.

With the possible exception of the few nursery schools established by some universities, colleges of education, companies and a few rich individuals, teacher quality is generally low. It is only a few of the nursery schools, especially those owned by educational institutions, private companies and wealthy individuals that can afford to engage the services of university graduate teachers and the holders of the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) qualifications. Most others employ a few N.C.E. teachers, who are usually underpaid, while others employ mainly Grade Two teachers and secondary school leavers with the School Certificate or General Certificate (Ordinary Level) qualification. The nursery schools that engage the services of qualified teachers, especially those owned by

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54 A good part of the information on Pre- school education stems from EJIEH, M.U.C., "Pre-Primary Education in Nigeria: Policy Implication and Problems", in: *Elementary Education Online* 5(1), 58-64, 2006.

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private individuals usually charge high fees while those that charge relatively low fees usually employ unqualified teachers. Employing unqualified teachers who receive low pay is a strategy used by many proprietors to make their services affordable to a great majority of parents and at the same time maintain a satisfactory profit margin. In such cases the quality suffers.

Although the *National Policy on Education* prescribes that the child in the pre-primary institution should be involved in active learning, the document detailing guidelines on the provision and management of pre-primary education is silent on the curriculum contents of such an institution. In the absence of such guidelines and copies of the curriculum for pre-primary education, proprietors and teachers resort to curricula of their choice. The emphasis of most of them is on the intellectual development of the children. Much more time is devoted to the learning of alphabets and memorization of facts, information, poems and some short passages from various books in the English language than to recreational and social activities. This emphasis laid on children's intellectual development is because the yardstick for assessing the quality or effectiveness of nursery schools by parents seems to be the age at which the children attending them are able to count, recognize the alphabet, read and, in particular, recite memorized information, poems, verses and passages, and most importantly, speaking good English. The younger the age at which children attending a particular school can do these, the higher the quality of the school is adjudged to be by members of the public, and the more patronage it is likely to receive from parents if the fees charged are not excessive. In the attempt to show how effective their nursery schools are, the proprietors of some combined nursery and primary schools admit children at the age of two, as we pointed out earlier, and allow them to transit to the primary section of such schools at the age of five or even four, both of which are below the official school-going age.[55] This transition to primary education below the official entry age often receives a nod from those parents who wish to show how fast their children can progress through the educational system, and how intelligent they are. Bringing the children up in the local languages (as stipulated in the national policy on pre-primary education) is no longer an interesting topic, and of course it is against the motives of the parents who want to see their wards speaking English as early as possible.

Following the fact that most of the Pre-primary institutions are in the hands of private proprietors, and without adequate control from the government, there are a lot of abuses. Proper upbringing and education at this level is often sacrificed or compromised for commercial interests. Basically, the lack of supervision to ensure the maintenance of standards, has led to increases in numbers of both quack pre-primary and primary education institutions in the country; and the government is not making any effort to train qualified teachers to handle this

[55] Confer EJIEH, M.U.C., *Ibid*, 2006.

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sector of education professionally. Even the play method of teaching that is advocated in the National Policy on pre-primary education is not effectively used in most of the schools, as most of the teachers are not trained on the use of it. Proprietors and teachers provide the children with toys to play with mainly for recreational purposes and not for instruction. Very few, if any, nursery school teachers in the country have received formal training in the use of the play method or any other type of learning activity to inculcate social norms in preschool children as advocated in the policy document. I think there is an absolute need for the Federal or State or even local governments to set up and run few model pre-primary education institutions with adequate facilities to serve as a guide to proprietors who are interested in establishing such. And the government must endeavour to enforce the regulations laid down by the Federal Ministry of Education with regard to the provision of pre-primary education. Effective quality monitoring units should be set up and provided with necessary logistic support to ensure that minimum standards are maintained in both public and private pre-primary institutions. A proper foundation in the form of an early childhood education is an investment that can yield high returns.[56] And no nation can afford to leave this opportunity in the hands of quacks who just want to make money at the expense of quality education.

5.4.2 Primary Education

At the primary school level, the child begins officially his formal education. The national policy on primary education tried to put up some regulations: (a) Pupils should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents; (b) provisions should be made in public institutions relating to one's race, language and religion; (c) there should be secular instructions in public institutions; (d) Religious instructions are provided for in public institutions, community schools and voluntary agency institutions, but must not be compulsory.[57]

Since the beginning of formal education in Nigeria, the stated or implied aims of primary education in all the states of the federation were geared towards helping the child: 1. to master the three Rs – Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, and thereby develop permanent literacy; 2. to develop sound standards of individual conduct and behavior; 3. to acquire some skill, and appreciate the value of manual work. To achieve these aims, the following subjects were taught: arithmetic, physical training, history, geography, religious instruction, music and singing, elementary science – nature study, art and handiwork. The enthusiasm for science and technology begins already at this primary stage. Local

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56 See BARNETT, W.S., "Research on Benefits of Preschool Education: Securing High Returns from Preschool for all Children", in: *National Institute for Early Education Research*, Jan.10, New York, 2006.

57 Federal Government of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education*, Lagos, 1977.

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materials were used during handiwork to improvise for desirable international technological gadgets. Thus we find Bamboo microscopes, bamboo cages, wooden guitars, etc. Domestic sciences were also taught: needlework and cookery (mainly for girls). English language and the languages of the locality are also taught as subjects. The local languages are used as a medium of instruction for the first two or three years of the primary school. In the third or fourth year of the primary school, the medium of communication switches over to English, which from this stage gains priority as the official national language.

The Nigeria-Biafra civil war of 1967-1970 changed a lot of things in the educational system. There was total disorder and almost a halt in education within this period of time. School premises had other needs to satisfy than mere education: refugee camps, emergency clinics, and sometimes Army-training centres. Among other things, the missions – especially the Catholic Church – organized help from Europe to assist the suffering victims of war, women and children who had nothing more to live on. This charitable role of the church was misinterpreted by the Nigerian government as sabotage. This led, after the war in 1970, to the massive expulsion of the catholic missionaries from the eastern region of Nigeria (especially from Igboland – the then Biafra region). Since education, gingered by Christianity was the active strength of the people of this region, the government began the plot of secularizing education.[58]

This plot yielded its result in the government take-over of schools from the missions, voluntary agencies and individuals (against the wishes of the proprietors and owners of the schools, and against public protests) in 1971 – just a year after the war. The administrator of the East Central State, Ukpabi Asika, announced on the 21st January 1971 the Public Education Edict, which included among other things:

- The government of East Central State of Nigeria is anxious that schools in the state become functional within the shortest possible time after the vast destruction and damage suffered by existing schools in the course of the civil war;
- It is desirable and necessary that the state takes over all schools within the state and their control, management and supervision in order to secure central control and an integrated system of education which will guarantee uniform standards and fair distribution of educational facilities and reduce the cost of running the schools;
- The take-over will ensure that schools which are in effect financed by the people and managed by their accredited representatives will more readily provide stability, satisfy the people's basic educational and national needs, combat sectionalism, religious conflicts and disloyalty to the course of a united Nigeria;

58 See NWAEZEAPU, L., *The Nigerian Church and the Challenge of the Secularization of Education*, Rome, 1986.

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– The proprietorship and management of most schools and institutions in the state have hitherto been in the hands of voluntary Agencies, mostly Christian Missionary and private individuals, and very recently local government councils, and were thus in the majority run on purely philanthropic basis as institutions of public welfare;
– The take-over of these schools is for the efficacy, order, stability and good governance of the state particularly in its relationship with other states in the federation.[59]

The painful part of the take-over on the side of the proprietors was that they did not only lose the management of their schools, they automatically lost all properties associated with those schools. The names of the schools were changed in order to erase the links to their former proprietors. This take-over brought about enormous changes in the school system in the East Central State. Some critics wrote: "The policy to take over schools from the missionaries and voluntary agencies in the former east central state of Nigeria was shabby and vicious. The then east central state government perhaps saw it as the way to penalize the missionaries who it believed, were supporting Biafra during the civil war. The unplanned way the take-over of schools was carried out has affected education adversely in those states since then."[60]

Now, like every other institution which belongs to or is directly controlled by the government, schools do not get any direct attention any longer. It has now become obvious that the Nigerian factor – 'nonchalant attitude' in public civil service – has drastically reduced the quality in education. The high rate of indiscipline which was later experienced among teachers and students was a follow up to the schools take-over. Furthermore, the dilapidation of infrastructure, which is a common phenomenon in the government run institutions and parastatals is weighing down the education sector. The take-over did not only affect primary schools but also the post primary and higher schools.

5.4.3 Post-Primary (Secondary and Higher) Education

Post-primary education in Nigeria in the past and in some way today, has many facets, represented by many different types of schools:

– Secondary Grammar schools,
– Secondary Modern schools,
– Comprehensive Secondary schools,
– Commercial Secondary schools,
– Trade and Craft Schools,

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59 Cf. Government of the East Central State of Nigeria, *Public Education Edict*, 1970.
60 UCHENDU, P.K., *Perspectives in Nigerian Education*, Enugu, 1993, 23.

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– Technical secondary schools,
– Grade II Teacher-Training Colleges. (This, however, does not exist anymore.)

Most of these schools no longer exist in their original forms. Today some are either integrated in others or have been totally transformed. In the colonial time, the grammar school was very popular, and was patterned according to the English grammar school with its classical orientation. The original aim at that time was to train people for working in the church, and clerks for the government and commercial houses. The first known grammar school – C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos, founded in 1859 – taught at that time mainly Latin and Greek, and little or no science. This shows that the original aim of the colonial masters in introducing Western Education was not to develop Africa, but to serve the colonial interests. Later however, the Grammar school offered a wide range of arts and science courses, which geared towards entry into higher education: English language and literature, history and geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, art, music, religious knowledge and physical education. Some grammar schools have also modified their curricula to include technical, commercial and agricultural subjects. Students who completed secondary school and successfully passed the West African School Certificate Examination could then proceed to the university or other higher schools of learning, as the case may be.

The secondary modern school was found more or less in the western region of Nigeria and offered a three-year terminal course for those children who were unable to pursue a normal grammar school course. It prepared them to enter the labour market. The courses offered were general and practical in nature: English, arithmetic, history and geography; and then more practical subjects like: needlework, domestic science, handcraft, rural science, civics, music art, physical education and religious instruction. The Craft school, on the other hand, was principally found in Northern Nigeria, designed to cater for the pre-vocational needs of the pupils in woodwork, building, technical drawing and metalwork. This course lasted for three years after which one can seek a semi-skilled employment in commerce and industry or one can opt for further training in a technical institute.

Commercial schools, which could also be called vocational schools, were meant to train young people to fit into the commercial field, to work in offices for example, or in other areas corresponding to their level of qualification even without acquiring any higher education. Such schools offered courses in subjects like typing and shorthand, accounting and principles of economics, as well as some academic subjects like English and mathematics, history and geography. The vocational courses enable them to seek employment in government and commercial enterprises as typists, accounting clerks, etc. The Comprehensive secondary school, on its part, offered two years of general education and three years of specialized education in academic subjects, commercial, technical and agricultural training and home economics through the counseling system. Later however, most of the voluntary agency grammar schools modified their curricula

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to reflect the comprehensive idea by introducing some specialized programs, particularly commercial and agricultural courses.

The Grade II Teacher-Training College (which has gradually been faced out) offered the secondary modern school leavers and the primary school leavers the opportunity to acquire skills for teaching others at this lower level. Those who could not go higher academically, but were considered good enough to teach were also trained as teachers. The Missions were in an urgent need to train teachers for the propagation of their message. In the words of Fafunwa therefore, "The curriculum of the early training institutes combined theology with teaching methods as would-be catechists would also have to teach some classes, and those who were trained as teachers were also expected to serve as evangelists and catechists. Under such circumstances, the syllabus comprised: the New Testament criticism, Christian Faith, school method and management, preaching and theology, hygiene, history and geography, English, geometry and arithmetic, local language, carpentry and masonry".[61] Some institutions however offered more or less courses depending on the areas of need.

Those who were to study in the early teacher-training institutes were drawn from standard VI. Before starting the two-year training course, they were expected to have served as pupil-teachers for two years, and to have passed the pupil-teacher examination. This enabled them act as assistant teachers, after which they had to take the prescribed teachers-certificate-examination and certified as successfully passing the examination. After the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and the unification of their education departments, two types of teacher-training institutions evolved: The Elementary Training Centres (E.T.C.) – for lower primary school teachers; and the Higher Elementary Training Colleges (H.E.T.C.). With the founding of the Yaba Higher College, the diploma in education was introduced to cater for secondary school leavers who passed both the Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination and the Yaba College Entrance Examination. And gradually, the era of the boom of higher institutions began in Nigeria. In 1956, the Nigerian Universities started incorporating the departments of education and consequently awarding degrees in Education. By 1970, there were six universities in Nigeria: Ibadan, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello, Ife, Nsukka and Benin, which offered courses in special areas like engineering, science and medicine. But today Nigeria has over 94 accredited universities (federal/state government or private owned), more than 95 accredited polytechnics, and numerous numbers of colleges of education and other institutions of higher learning.

On the whole, the structure and goals of Nigerian post-primary education have changed but cannot be totally distanced from the goal of the secondary education in the colonial times. In effect, the structure, content and teaching methods of secondary schools in Nigeria (with the exception of very minor

61 FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 212.

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modifications) follow closely those of Britain. A realistic appraisal should criticize the system, bearing in mind the cultural, political and economic situations, and the identity differences between the two countries. In this sense, I find the observation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.) regarding the secondary school curriculum in Africa very ad rem: "The attainment of independence in Africa now makes it necessary to re-examine the type of education which in many African countries was formerly designed to "assimilate" young Africans to the culture of the metropolitan countries. Curriculum reform is a corollary of political emancipation – cultural emancipation being the means by which the "African personality" can be asserted. This calls for the rediscovery of African cultural heritage and the transmission of that culture of African adolescence in secondary school."[62] This is a reasonable call that demands utmost care being taken to ensure that Western education, instead of inculcating and developing positive values in the African society in which the African child lives, does not alienate him (educate him out of) from his cultural environment. The economic interests of the West must not dictate the values with which the African must bring his young ones up. It then became absolutely necessary as a result of this awareness to redefine the goals, as well as restructure the system (affording a national curriculum), of education in Nigeria.

5.5 Re-defined Goals of Education and the new National Curriculum

Although it was undoubtedly a disaster, with very drastic consequences, especially for the people of the eastern part of Nigeria (as the losers of the war), but it generally looks as if the experience of the three-year war (1967-70) seemed to have re-kindled the Nigerian faith in education as the major vehicle for national rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation. Regrettably, the reconciliation has not been achieved in the real sense of the word till today. However, the struggle goes on in uniting our young ones through education to build up a formidable nation and society. It must also be noted that before the civil war many Nigerian educators and parents had been concerned about the lack of relevance of the Nigerian educational system in meeting the pressing economic, social and cultural needs of the nation. It was claimed that even after five years of Nigeria's independence, the educational system of the country was not only colonial, but more British than the British themselves; that is to say, the Nigerian school children were being educated to meet the needs of a foreign culture and were therefore better fit for export than for life in their own country!

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62 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.), Conference Report on: *The Adaptation of the general Secondary School Curriculum in Africa*, Tananarive, July 1962, 5.

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This is the reason why the Joint Consultative Committee (J.C.C.), which is the national advisory committee on education, proposed in Enugu 1964 a "National Curriculum Conference" which should involve a cross-section of the Nigerian public – parents, business organizations, civil servants, religious bodies, farmers, workers' unions, youth clubs, women organizations and professional bodies. The idea behind the proposal was that the generality of the Nigerian people should have an opportunity to deliberate on the type of education they want for their children. The proposed National Curriculum Conference was held in Lagos in September 1969 and became a major landmark in the history of Nigeria and indeed, in the history of education in Africa. According to the compiled report of Adaralegbe, "It was not a conference for educationists alone; it was necessary also to hear the views of the masses of people who are not directly engaged in teaching or other educational activities, for they surely have a say in any decisions to be taken about the structure and content of Nigerian education. This explains the wide coverage of participation. Furthermore, we were determined that the conference should be a purely Nigerian affair; thus, although we had participants from places as far away as Europe, the United States and other countries in Africa they came in as observers, and the main papers submitted for the conference were all written by Nigerians."[63] It was supposed to produce a nationally unified decision on education.

Initially, the conference was not concerned with the development of a national curriculum, nor was it expected to recommend specific contents and methodology. Rather, in this first phase, it was to review old and identify new national goals for Nigerian education, bearing in mind the needs of youths and adults in the task of nation-building and national reconstruction for social and economic well-being of the individual and the society. The objectives of the Conference included: the National philosophy of Education, goals of primary education, objectives of secondary education, purposes of tertiary education, role of teacher education, functions of science and technical education, the place of women education, education for living, and the control of public education.

This National Curriculum Conference was the first national attempt to change the colonial orientation of the Nigerian educational system and promote national consciousness and self-reliance through the educational processes. A total of sixty-five recommendations were made. Following the analyses of Fafunwa[64], let us highlight the few that specifically emphasized national unity, citizenship, national consciousness, nationalism and national reconstruction.

Recommendation 3 states: "… Nigerian education should be geared towards self-realization; better human relationships; self and national economic effi-

63 ADARALEGBE, A., (ed) *A Philosophy for Nigerian Education: Report of the National Curriculum Conference*, Heinemann, 1972.

64 FAFUNWA, A.B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan (1974) 2004, 226ff.

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ciency; effective citizenship; national consciousness; national unity; social and political progress; scientific and technological progress; national reconstruction." Recommendation 4: "The implication of the foregoing recommendations suggests equality of educational opportunity for all Nigerian children so that each can develop according to his own ability, aptitude and interests."

There were also recommendations relevant to the levels of education which we have earlier discussed. Recommendation 7 advises: "Primary Education should serve to help the child towards self-realization and to relate to others through mutual understanding: effective citizenship through civic responsibility; and social and political awakening. It should facilitate national consciousness in cultural diversity and towards national unity and should create scientific as well as technological awareness." On secondary education, Recommendation 18 said: "The youths must learn their privileges and responsibilities in society. The schools should start developing and projecting the Nigerian / African culture, arts and language, as well as the world cultural heritage. Students should be able to think reflectively about Nigerian common national problems, for example, Nigerian unity in diversity. All schools must fire students with a desire for achievement and excellence and for continuous self-education and self-improvement."

The conference also found adequate words for higher institutions and university education. Recommendation 23 declared: "Universities must strengthen the primary objectives of education at all levels, in addition to which they must be actively involved in the process of nation-building. They must develop, transmit and reform our national consciousness and loyalty to truth and principles, provoke and promote enlightenment and informed public opinion, co-ordinate national research activities, become instruments of change, develop and encourage Nigerian human-resource talents, foster international relations through scholarships, and disseminate knowledge."

About teacher-training, Recommendation 27 states: "The objectives of Nigerian teacher-education should emphasize the training of highly motivated, conscientious and successful classroom teachers for all education levels; encourage in potential teachers a spirit of inquiry, creativity, nationalism and belongingness; help the prospective teachers to fit into the social life of home and community; provide teachers with intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment; produce teachers who by their training and discipline will be adaptable to the changing roles of education in society; and produce knowledgeable, progressive, and effective teachers who can inspire children to learn."

The social, political, economic, and psychological values and goals which the child needs for life and existence are emphasized in Recommendation 48: "Education for living must make children and adults ready to be leaders and followers in the task of nation-building. Although it is not specifically job-oriented, the school should aim at giving children the basic concepts, understanding, values, attitudes, abilities and skills that they will require to enter into the world and es-

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tablish themselves in it. Such an education must therefore release the springs of personality development, be concerned with the individual child's needs, emotions, wants, fears, intellectual, spiritual and physical growth into a mature adult capable of self-direction through self-discipline. It must be geared towards national unity, national reconstruction, and social as well as economic progress."

There are three other recommendations that attempted to lay a solid foundation for an educated Nigerian citizenry. They are: Recommendation 55 – "In the event of the state control of education, all schools should become community schools serving as the intellectual, aesthetic and social centres of the community, therefore avoiding duplication of facilities, waste and inefficient use of scarce human, natural and physical resources." And Recommendation 56 suggested that "As a first step towards implementing these recommendations, there should be a free and compulsory primary education for all children now. Within the next five-years' educational plan, it should be possible to extend the policy of free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 15, while within the next ten years, education should be free up to the full secondary school stage." Meanwhile, consideration should be given to the problem of financing university education in the country to enable the nation to tap its manpower potentials to the full. Thus, university education can be free or partially free as at present by augmenting government subsidies with a revolving student loan system repayable after graduation. The implementation of these noble ideas were started in some areas, but the "Nigerian problem" – corruption and irresponsibility in public service did not let some of the programmes (like the free education) survive for long.

The major milestone in restructuring education was brought in the 59th Recommendation: "A six-year primary school course followed by a six-year secondary school course broken into a three-year junior secondary and a three-year senior secondary course, and lastly a four-year university education is recommended for the attainment of the nation's educational objectives, that is a 6-3-3-4 plan. The entire purpose and place of the sixth form should be reviewed within this context. Existing sixth form centres could become the nuclei of two-year junior colleges providing inter-mediate and terminate (professional, commercial, technical and academic) education for post-secondary students as part of a unified four-year university education for intermediate manpower development."[65] One can here freely assert that the Curriculum Conference of 1969 examined among other things the philosophy that should govern the direction of Nigerian Education in order to secure for her a good foundation and a glorious future.

65 ADARALEGBE, A., (ed.), Report of the National Curriculum Conference, 1972.

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5.6 The new adopted model: "6-3-3-4" Education Policy

A National Seminar on Education convened by the Federal Commissioner for Education, Chief A. Y. Eke in 1973, and chair-manned by Chief S. O. Adebo adopted among others the recommendation 59 of the National Curriculum Conference, which proposed a 6-3-3-4 system of education – which involves a full six-year primary education, followed by a three-year junior and a three-year senior secondary education, culminating in a four year university course. (There are however some exceptions in some special professions, like Medicine for example, which may last more than four years of university studies).

This system wants to lay emphasis on the scientific and technological development of the nation; which was conspicuously lacking in the preceding "colonial" educational policies. The core of the new education policy with particular reference to the 6-3-3-4 is the three year junior secondary school, which follows the basic six-year primary education. According to the new policy of education the broad aims of secondary education within the Nigerian context are to: prepare the students for useful living within the society; and to prepare those who are able for higher education, providing them with the opportunity for high quality education irrespective of sex, religion, social class, and ethnic origin. Further aims are to: – diversify the curriculum to cater for a variety of talents, namely: the technically, commercially or academically inclined; – equip students to live effectively in this age of science and technology;- develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage;- raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect feelings of others, respect dignity of labour and live as good citizens;- foster Nigerian unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity;- inspire students with desire for achievement and self improvement.[66]

The specific objective of the junior secondary education are to develop in the students the manipulative skills, otherwise known as manual dexterity, inventiveness, healthy attitude towards things technical, and above all the respect for the dignity of labour. The first three years of junior secondary education therefore is both pre-vocational and academic inclined. And all students irrespective of their callings and later professions are early in life and at this first stage of the secondary career equally exposed to the same chances of personality development, before they begin in the next stage of the secondary education to choose and specialize in specific subjects that will qualify them for specific professions.

The following subjects are offered to ensure the achievement of the required goals: There are core subjects, pre-vocational subjects, and the non-vocational electives. Among the core subjects include: Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Introduction to Technology, Art and Music, Practical Agriculture,

66 Federal Ministry of Information: *National Policy on Education*, Lagos, 1977, 9.

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Religious and Moral Instruction, Physical Education, and two Nigerian languages. Here every region teaches its own language and in addition, every child is expected to learn a second national language – from any of the three main Nigerian languages: Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. The exact stipulation of the policy as regards language is as follows: "In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the Government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother-tongue."[67]

Among the pre-vocational subjects, we have Woodwork, Metalwork, Electronics, Mechanics, Local Crafts, Home Economics, and Business Studies. The reason for the introduction of such technological foundations is not farfetched: "In the contemporary world order, one of the most basic prerequisites for social and economic advancement, as well as for accelerated technological development, is a scientific culture. Science and Technology constitute, in a large measure, the language of today and the promise of the future."[68] The pre-vocational subjects outlined above are to be offered to all pupils irrespective of sex. The non-vocational Electives are subjects like Arabic studies, French and etc.

This programme will be guided with constant monitoring, inspection and continuous assessment of the pupils. The overall goal of the junior secondary education within this 6-3-3-4 programme is to ensure that the future Nigerian doctors, lawyers, teachers, economists, administrators and people of such academic professions will at least know how to repair their bicycles, prepare their breakfast, needle the buttons on their shirts, replace their electric bulbs, change their car tyres, and tend their own gardens; while the practical workers – farmers, plumbers, tailors, carpenters, and masons will aspire to be experts in their various professions. "The programme is to be geared towards developing and tapping all the talents and skills in its beneficiaries in order to make them highly productive and self-reliant after their education. The emphasis of the 6-3-3-4 model is on the sciences, technical education and the education of children in art and craft so as to ensure a dexterous use of their hands, hearts and heads in making creative valuable things."[69] The basic idea behind the pre-vocational training is not necessarily to make just carpenters and masons out of our children; but to develop in them the aptitude for things technical, and to improve manipulative skills, inventiveness, self-reliance, and respect for the dignity of labour. This is all with the hope to enable those who may not be so talented to go further academically, to decide with confidence to go technical. This makes a good foundation for self-reliance.

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67 *National Policy on Education*, Lagos, 1977, 9.

68 OKAFOR, F.C., *Nigerian Teacher Education: A search for new Direction*, Enugu, 1988, 145.

69 *Daily Times Editorial*, "Primary Science Teaching and the 6-3-3-4 in Nigeria", 30 August, 1985.

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The second phase of the secondary education is also of three-year duration for those students who are able to get on with the academic pursuit as determined by the aptitude tests. The so-called senior secondary school has two aspects in its curriculum: the core subjects and the electives. The core subjects are compulsory for every student. They include: English language; one Nigerian language (either Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba); Mathematics; one science subject (either biology, chemistry or physics); either literature in English, history or geography; either Agriculture or any vocational subject. These core subjects will enable students to pursue either arts or science courses in their tertiary education. And the future interest and choice of career would be determined by the performance in these compulsory subjects and also in the non-compulsory subjects, which one must choose in accordance with the future career requirements. The list of the elective subjects include: Biology, Physics and Chemistry, additional Mathematics, Commerce and Economics, Book-keeping, Type-writing and Shorthand, English Literature, History and Geography, Agricultural Science and Home Economics, Bible Knowledge, Islamic Studies and Arabic Studies, Music, Art, French, Government, Health Science and Physical Education.

It is obvious that the government cannot guarantee or provide all the fundamental infrastructural facilities and technical knowhow for such a broad and an elaborate programme without involving the private sector. This new national policy on education therefore calls for and requires the experiences of people from the private sector and communities. Through this programme indirectly and consequently, the government opened the way once again for the participation and contributions of the voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of secondary schools in addition to those provided by the federal and state governments. At this juncture, however, the government could neither guarantee nor promise the return of the schools already taken over by the government to their original proprietors.

It was the initial plan of the 6-3-3-4 programme that candidates who successfully concluded the senior secondary education with the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) should gain automatic admission into the university. This could not work. The reality today is that after the student must have successfully passed the SSCE, further qualifying examinations are set by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and must be passed before one gets admission into the university or any institutions of higher learning. This process eliminates some who would have loved to attend higher education.

Meanwhile, the noble 6-3-3-4 educational programme, with all its numerous advantages and credits, is not spared of loopholes and criticisms. Since the government could not follow up this "scheme for a future technologically developed nation" at the secondary level and also at the tertiary level of education, as could be seen in the increased number of Federal universities of technology and the establishment of numerous Federal and State Polytechnics all over the country, the

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realization of the objectives of this beautiful programme has remained more of a dream that reality. The excessive concentration of the programme on the post-primary education minimized the attention and basic foundations that should have been laid on the pre-primary and primary levels of education. And the programme in itself was not preceded by the necessary adequate preparations before the take-off. For example, there was a massive lack of trained and qualified teachers in the areas of the vocational and technical subjects. And the relevant information, infrastructure, equipments and the funds required for a take-off were not in place or (let me be fair), were not enough. As a result, the aims remain unachieved. P. K. Uchendu opined: "A review of the Programme so far has not shown much difference between the graduates of the new system and those of the former one. The glaring difference is that the latter spent six years instead of the normal five years in the secondary school."[70] These criticisms notwithstanding, I personally see this programme as ideal, and something, when properly applied, that places the nation on the right path to the way forward. This programme should not be discarded. I earnestly only see the necessity and need to reassess and reinforce the implementation of the programme.

Generally, one fact is obvious. The desire that Nigeria should be a free and an enlightened, just and democratic society, and a land full of opportunities for all its citizens, a nation able to generate a great and dynamic economy, and growing into a united, strong and self-reliant country cannot be over-emphasized. There was also no doubt that there was need to develop a new philosophy of education for Nigeria, which must equip its citizens with national identity and international competence. Nigeria's national philosophy of education consequently must be based on equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. And the programmes must reflect the African cultural heritage and development, and at the same time passing the tests of international standards.

We appreciate the efforts of the policy-makers, but must add that policies, when made, must be followed up and consequently implemented. At this point in the national development, education should be made a priority 'number one' in the budget-development plans, because education is the most important instrument for change. Consequent to this obvious fact, any desired fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society must necessarily be preceded by an educational revolution. So, in harmony with the Nation's stated and re-defined educational objectives, the upbringing of the young must be geared towards serving the need for self-realization, effective citizenship and national unity as well as international competence. Lifelong education should be the basis for the nation's education policies, and efforts should be made to relate education to the employment market, overall community needs and national development.

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70 UCHENDU, P.K., *Perspectives in Nigerian Education*, Enugu, 1993, 62.

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Furthermore, to achieve consistent results which tally with the ability of the individual, educational assessments and evaluations should be liberalized – basing them in whole or in part on the continuous assessment of the progress of the individual student. In addition, educational technology should be increasingly used and improved at all levels of the education system.

On another note, the educational system should be structured to activate the practice of self-learning and moral development as well as sensitivity towards the feelings of others. Opportunity should be made available for religious/moral instruction provided that no child is forced to accept such an instruction contrary to the wishes of himself and his parents. Our education should be used to develop and emphasize moral/socio-cultural values and attitudes which make for the growth of good character. In fact, education should be consciously used as a means of promoting national unity and integration among communities, tribes and religions. That is the only way forward in such a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-racial nation like Nigeria; and the only way to equip the young person for the challenges ahead in our multi-national, multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-ideological globe. Educational programmes must have in view the fact that no individual, no tribe, no nation is an Island. Regional and national educations must be in the position to meet the regional/national as well as international/global needs.

The above discussed, as well as the forthcoming, African experiences are only examples of evolvements of regional pedagogical structures which can inform and motivate educational psychology globally. The Objectives for bringing up the young must have to transcend national and regional interests to include global interests, since we are bound to exist and survive together as humanity. Children remain children all over the world and must be helped adequately in their various facets of development to meet, not only regional objectives, but also in view of the global human interests.

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