

**UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT**

**‘THE RUDDERLESS SHIP AND ITS  
MAJOR RESCUER’**

**An Inaugural Lecture**

**By**

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## **ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS**

2.45 pm. Guests are seated

3.00 pm. Academic Procession begins

The Procession shall enter the CBN Centre of Excellence Auditorium, University Park, and the Congregation shall stand as the Procession enters the hall in the following order:

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After the Vice Chancellor has ascended the dais, the Congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem.

The Congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

### **THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS.**

The Registrar shall rise, cap, invite the Vice Chancellor to make his opening remarks and introduce the Lecturer. The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction.

## **THE INAUGURAL LECTURE**

The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver his Inaugural Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice Chancellor and resume his seat. The Vice-Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

## **CLOSING**

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice Chancellor to make his Closing Remarks.

The Vice Chancellor's Closing Remarks.

The Vice Chancellor shall then rise, cap and make his Closing Remarks. The Congregation shall rise for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem and remain standing as the Academic [Honour] Procession retreats in the following order:

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Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration  
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Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Development  
Registrar  
University Librarian  
Lecturer  
Provost, College of Health Sciences  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies  
Deans of Faculties/School  
Professors  
Academic Officer

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this lecture to the memory of my beloved father, namesake and lookalike, Late Sir Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham (KSJI), and my beloved mother, Noble Lady Cordelia U. Abraham.

I also dedicate it to the evergreen and cherished memory of my younger cousin, Barrister Obinuchi Chimezule (Ph.D.) who was excited about the approval of this lecture but departed this world less than three (3) weeks to the lecture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my reverence to God Almighty who has sustained me thus far, and will continue to sustain me. HE alone has my worship.

I owe a special gratitude to the former Vice Chancellors, from Emeritus Professor Nimi Dimkpa Briggs during whose tenure I was employed to the 8<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor, Prof. N. E. S. Lale who approved that I give the 170<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture which was aborted by the mysterious fire that gutted my official residence together with everything that had to do with that lecture.

I thank the incumbent Vice Chancellor Prof. Owonari Abraham Georgewill for this opportunity to pay this debt that I have owed for so long. My gratitude also goes to all former and current principal officers of the University.

To all former Deans, Faculty of Education, particularly Prof. B. A. Eheazu during whose tenure I was employed, and the current Dean, Prof. Cheta Williams, I say a profound Thank You.

I thank the EDM family, especially all the former Heads of Department of Educational Management – Prof. B. S. Okeke, Prof. P. O. M. Nnabuo, Prof. S. N. Maduagwu, Prof. N. C. Okorie, Prof. J. M. Ebong, Prof. O. G. Agabi, Prof. S. B. Nwideduh, Prof. S. O. Nwafor, Prof. S. O. Oluwuo, Prof. N. M. Abraham, Prof. C. U. Madumere-Obike, Prof. G. G. Kpee, Prof. V. C. Onyeike and the current HOD, Prof U. J. Nwogu. To my postgraduate teachers; Professors J. O. Enaohwo, B. S. Okeke, Andy Igho Joe, P. O. M. Nnabuo, S. N. Maduagwu, N. C. Okorie, J. M. Ebong, L. E. B. Igwe, N. M. Ozurumba, O. G.

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Professor Simeon Chituru Achinewhu, former Vice Chancellor of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (now Rivers State University) and first Professor from Aluu Clan has been a great source of inspiration. He has meticulously followed my academic progress, motivating me at every rung of the ladder to take the next higher step. Thank you Big Brother.

To all my students, past and present, you are the reason for my being here. Trudge on in the Socratic tradition! I also acknowledge all my research associates. Thank you so much. I thank the University of Port Harcourt Inaugural Lecture Assessment Committee for the thorough and diligent job you are doing to enrich the quality of Inaugural Lectures. Be richly blessed.

To my parents, Late Sir Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham, and Noble Lady Cordelia U. Abraham, the vessels through whom I came to be, I thank you for the good upbringing you gave me. God bless the soul of my father, and keep my mother strong and healthy.

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The Omu-Mma Ogbegbe Family (Worldwide) ably led by the Acting Family Head, Comrade (Elder) Ambrose Ogbegbe are deeply appreciated. I also respectfully acknowledge the Nwoko Dynasty (my maternal home), headed by my maternal uncle, Chief (Sir) Patrick C. Nwoko (KSJI). God bless us richly.

My appreciation reverently goes to the Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt, His Excellency, Rt. Rev. Dr. Patrick Eluke. Thank you, Your Lordship for your prayers. In the same vein, I thank all my past Parish Priests at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Aluu, and the incumbent, Rev. Fr. Dr. Solomon Chibuike Okaji, and the former Chaplains of the Annunciation Chaplaincy, University of Port Harcourt, and the current Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Dr. Donatus Okeowhor, as well as all Priests and Religious known to me for their prayers.

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I thank the President, Nigerian Academy of Education, Emeritus Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede, and the Trustees, Fellows

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I owe immense gratitude to Dr. Kenneth Kwaku Doe-Dartey and Mr. Goodluck M. Uwadia who at different times helped in typing this lecture and effecting necessary corrections.

To God be all the glory.

**Prof. Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham**

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## **Introduction**

In nautical parlance, a ship without a rudder is unable to steer and is therefore at the mercy of the sea's currents and winds. In everyday parlance, however, the phrase "THE RUDDERLESS SHIP" denotes an organization or country that lacks explicit policies, goals, direction, or leadership and is therefore drifting aimlessly and uncontrollably. It also denotes a country that has policies formulated and documented but goes about governance without recourse to the policies, or has a haphazard disposition towards the implementation of enunciated policies. In terms of individuals, this metaphor depicts a life without a clear purpose, direction or ambition. In the same way that a rudder guides a ship, ambition and goals give life direction, just as policies do to an organization or country. In the absence of them, a person may experience a sense of disorientation, lack inspiration, and lack of motivation, which can result in a sense of unfulfillment and the impression that their efforts are unproductive and ineffective. A life without a clear plan may involve bouncing between tasks, making it challenging to make significant progress or satisfaction.

A ship without a rudder is a metaphor for a lack of strategic vision, policy(ies) and or leadership in any organization, society or nation state/country. Good leadership and policies function as the entity's rudder, leading it through obstacles and towards its goals. Without this guidance, organizations may find it difficult to make decisions that make sense, wasting resources – tangible and intangible, squandering money and passing up chances, and nation states gambling with issues of policy formulation and implementation. There may be a decline in morale and productivity as a result of employees feeling disengaged and unclear about their jobs. In a similar vein, a country without strong leadership and a distinct futuristic vision as well as well thought out policies will

encounter instability, failures, poverty and stagnation, with its people feeling estranged from the institutions of government.

It is also possible to apply the idea to more general domains like politics and government. One could characterize a government or political movement as rudderless if it lacks a well-defined and feasible plan, or policy. This frequently leads to unpredictable policies, unhappiness among the populace, lack of direction, and stagnation. The public may become uneasy and mistrustful of individuals in positions of authority in the absence of strong leadership and thoughtful planning.

The effects of lacking direction can be significant. It can be the difference between a life filled with opportunity and one that is empty for a person. People, organizations, and countries that lack direction certainly will not reach their full potentials, and may experience frustration and discontent. It may result in financial losses, ineffectiveness, and a hostile work atmosphere for organizations. In countries, it manifests in weak institutions, widespread poverty of majority of the citizens, poor quality of education, lack of basic amenities and decay of few available ones, high levels of corruption, insecurity, inflation, and other negatives.

Citizens' trust in the country can be harmed by unclear goals, lack of good policies and poor leadership, just as a strong sense of purpose and direction, akin to having a functional rudder in a ship or ocean going vessel, has the power to change the people and invent a prosperous and respected country. Establishing objectives and a distinct aspiration gives people drive and a path to achievement. They may concentrate their efforts, get beyond challenges, and experience personal fulfillment and growth. For countries to overcome obstacles and achieve long-term success and sustainable development,

good policies, strategic planning and good leadership are *sine qua non*.

Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished audience, in this lecture, the **Ship** referred to is the Nigerian State. We often hear or read the phrase **The Ship of State**. Countries and nation states are likened as Ships. Wikipedia notes that ‘The Ship of State is an ancient and oft-cited metaphor, famously expounded by Plato in the Republic, which likens the governance of a city-state to the command of a vessel’. In this sense therefore, the affairs of a country and its governance are symbolized as a ship sailing on the sea. The rudder keeps the ship on course. The ‘rudderless ship’ metaphor emphasizes the significance of policies, leadership, and direction in navigating the intricacies of the affairs of governance of a country.

### **Nigeria as a Ship**

Nigeria, like other countries are likened to the ship. This metaphor effectively conveys the complicated dynamics, intricacies and difficulties of governance. In Nigeria, the varied population, with ethnic, cultural, religious, social, political and sundry diversities on one hand, and the needs, aspirations, agitations and preferences of the diverse groups on the other, coupled with the country’s desire to keep pace with the demands of a globalized and constantly changing world amid the nation’s political and socio-economic challenges truly paints a picture of a ship contending with, and traversing choppy waves. The metaphor emphasizes the importance of strong leadership since, like a country without forward-thinking leadership, a ship without a competent captain runs the risk of cruising aimlessly. A ship usually carries a large number of people and consignments, oftentimes from different social classes, and probably headed to different destinations. So it is with the Nigerian State. There are millions of Nigerians

with varying socio-economic classes and other diversities (Abraham, Malik & Ihua-Jonathan, 2014).

Without a clear direction and knowledge of the nautical map of the sea, without order, rules and regulations, it will be difficult for the ship to sail conveniently. There will be turbulence at sea, and the ship may not arrive at her destination in good time, or as scheduled. In extreme situations, there could be a ‘ship wreck’. In like manner, governance must proceed with clear direction, law and order to succeed.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Rudderless Ship**

Aspect	Explanation
Definition	A rudderless ship lacks a rudder, essential for guidance, steering and direction, resulting in aimless drifting and lack of control.
Lack of Direction	The metaphor suggests a country without effective policies or leadership is directionless, unable to navigate towards its goals.
Instability	Without a rudder, a ship is vulnerable to external forces such as wind and currents, leading to instability. Similarly, a country without clear policies is prone to external and internal turmoil.
Symbolism of Leadership	Just as a ship needs a rudder to steer, a country requires strong leadership to guide its path and ensure progress and stability.
Consequences of Rudderlessness	A rudderless ship cannot reach its destination efficiently and may end up in dangerous situations. Rudderlessness leads to uncertain situations, aimless and purposeless drifting. Similarly, a country without effective policies for governance faces risks of economic decline, social unrest, and political instability.

### **Justification of the Metaphor- The Rudderless Ship**

While the metaphor of a rudderless ship is highly effective in conveying Nigeria’s drift in educational direction, it is important to acknowledge that the failure of educational policy in Nigeria extends beyond mere absence of direction. The nation’s educational challenges are shaped by complex political economy dynamics, including federal–state power overlaps, resource allocation politics, bureaucratic fragmentation, and historical inequities in access to education. Thus, the “broken rudder” is not only a matter of policy

misalignment, but also a reflection of deep structural constraints embedded in governance, funding patterns, and institutional behaviour. This expanded interpretation preserves the evocative power of the metaphor while situating it within the broader systemic realities that shape policy outcomes.

The metaphor of Nigeria as a rudderless ship is not merely a rhetorical flourish; it is a conceptual framework for understanding the absence of functional policy direction, weak governance architectures, and institutional drift that characterize the educational sector. However, a ship may become rudderless for multiple reasons, such as poor design, weak maintenance, destructive storms, or even sabotage.

In the same way, Nigeria's educational system suffers from a combination of structural, historical, political, and managerial failures, not just the absence of coherent policies.

By extending the metaphor beyond superficial interpretation, the lecture establishes that Nigeria's crisis is not due to a 'broken rudder' alone but rather the interaction of political rent-seeking, elite capture, bureaucratic inertia, underfunding, inadequate institutional capacity; and socio-cultural pressures. The following are justifications for the metaphor of the rudderless ship:

1. Eroded Moral Values: The Nigerian State has been struggling since independence in 1960, sixty-five (65) years after. She still goes by the derogatory aliases 'Third World Country' or 'Developing nation'. It is instructive to note that virtually all countries that were tagged Third World Countries alongside Nigeria, like Brazil, Malaysia and Singapore to name but a few, have since joined the league of developed nations. These countries disciplined themselves and their citizens through sound policies that

were promptly and effectively implemented, strong institutions like the judicial system etc. that are independent and not compromised, as well as sound moral values (Abraham, 2025).

Malaysia is a classic example of countries that were at par with Nigeria as at 1960. At independence in 1960, Nigeria and Malaysia had similar Gross Development Product (GDP) per capita. Recently, Malaysia's GDP per capita is \$11,892 (as at end of 2024) while that of Nigeria for almost the same period is \$2,416.36. This shows that Malaysia's GDP per capita is about six (6) times higher than that of Nigeria. All that Malaysia did to achieve the stable economy and high GDP per capita in relation to the Nigerian situation is more of discipline, and diversification of her economy (strategic economic diversification). This is unlike Nigeria's mono-commodity economy which rests almost one hundred percent (100%) on Petroleum (Crude oil) (Nwinee, 2017).

The erstwhile 'developing nations' achieved development through well thought out and promptly/effectively implemented policies in mainly the following areas:

- Economic diversification
- Investment in human capital (education/knowledge economy and industry-specific skill development)
- Infrastructural development
- Good governance (with effective, strong and independent institutions).

2. Failure to implement Educational Policies: Over the decades following Nigeria's political independence, Nigeria has had a myriad of educational policies that were not implemented (Abraham, 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2005). The regional governments of Western Region, Eastern Region, and Northern Region had issues of

implementation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which was code-named 'Free Education' at one point or the other. The Western region was the first to introduce the Free Education programme via the Western Nigeria Universal Primary Education on January 17, 1955. The region took time to consult with stakeholders within the region, and conducted surveys to ascertain their readiness to float and sustain such an ambitious programme. The Eastern region launched its own UPE in February 1957 with little or no consultation and preparation, but more through what can best be described as 'fire brigade' approach, as if copying what the Western region had done. The Northern region launched its own UPE programme in 1958. The regions had problems that made implementation difficult; such as pupil population, dearth of qualified teachers, acute shortage of infrastructural facilities, etc. These problems were there because there was no proper planning, and policy was pronounced and implementation kick-started without following the process of policy formulation.

As the various regions, particularly Eastern and Northern regions, were struggling with UPE implementation, Nigeria's first military incursion into the political landscape via the coup d'état of January 15, 1966 announced the end of regionalization. This was the end of the regional UPE programmes. My model, the Quality Execution of Policies (QEP) would nip the problem of lack of policy implementation in the bud (Abraham, 2001).

3. Proprietors abandoning brand (Government not patronizing facilities such as schools, hospitals just mention a few): It is common in Nigeria to find public institutions like schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and other health

facilities established and funded through public treasury not patronized by government functionaries and appointees of government. They prefer to travel outside the shores of Nigeria for medical attention, and have members of their families patronize educational institutions outside Nigeria. Few that patronize institutions within the country prefer highbrow privately owned establishments to public institutions. Abraham (2000, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2025) has severally condemned this unhealthy culture. He argues that a proprietor who does not consume his product knows that such product is unwholesome, lacking in quality, and not good enough to be consumed by him and his loved ones.

Government officials' abandonment of brand (public educational and health institutions), or preference of other brands to those of public/government proprietary is public admittance that the best has not been given in terms of funding, quality assurance, supervision, maintenance, *et cetera* (Abraham, 2023; 2024; 2025). This assertion is propelled by the negative application of the Principle of Self Preservation by those who are entrusted with allocation and utilization of our commonwealth for the good of all, but rather starve the nation of world-class facilities, institutions and amenities, while spending same abroad on themselves and members of their families.

4. Religious intolerance: Religious intolerance in Nigeria can be blamed on poor education policies. For example, History as a school subject was scrapped. Children growing up were not taught history. This was a terrible mistake on the part of Education policy makers. Religious intolerance partly stems from lack of diversity and inclusion education, biased/inaccurate curriculum, lack of interfaith dialogue. Education policies in a multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country like Nigeria should dwell

deeply on diversity and inclusion education, and interfaith relationship and dialogue (Abraham, Malik & Ihua-Jonathan, 2014).

5. Insecurity: Insecurity and insurgency in Nigeria are manifestations of education policy failure. Inadequate and poor education systems devoid of knowledge and employable skills lead to frustration on the part of recipients of such education. Out of desperation, poverty, unemployment, lack of skills development and the need to be engaged, many school leavers and drop-outs have turned to crimes, and even enlistment into extremist groups, and insurgency.

Educational policy reforms, improvement of access to functional/qualitative education, poverty/unemployment reduction programmes through the creation and proper implementation of economic opportunities for youth and the unemployed will over time reduce insecurity to the barest minimum (Abraham, 2011; Abraham & Igbiniedion, 2014).

6. Instructional failure: Effective instruction is easily achieved when the basic instructional resources are available, and at the disposition of the teacher. On the other hand, instructional failure results from ineffective teaching (instructional) methods/strategies which lead to poor understanding and low learning outcomes. Researchers (Abraham & Abraham, 2001; Abraham & Abraham, 2003) opine that instructional failure could be caused by factors which include but not limited to setting unattainable instructional objectives, poorly designed curriculum, ineffective teaching due to lack of tools and resources with which to teach effectively, and lack of teacher/learner motivation. All these stem from resource starvation, lack of provision of instructional facilities like laboratories, instructional resource centres, libraries, etc., lack of

funding for regular training of teachers, and general poor implementation of educational policies (Abraham, 2003). This has been part of the bone of contention between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and successive governments in Nigeria. Instructional failure results in learner skill deficiency, frustration, decreased confidence, and obvious knowledge gaps.

7. Poor level of education: Poor level of education is one major self-inflicted problems of Nigeria, and a justification for the metaphor that the ‘Ship’ (Nigeria) is sailing rudderless. Poor level of education in Nigeria is said to be a self-inflicted injury because despite UNESCO’s recommendation that countries should fund Education with about 26% of their annual budgets, Nigeria still appropriates only about 6%. Inadequate funding of education which is a major cause of poor level of education in Nigeria results in poor/inadequate infrastructure in schools, colleges and universities, inadequate and antiquated instructional resources, and insufficient teacher training (Abraham, 2019; Abraham & Leigha, 2007a; Abraham & Leigha, 2007b).

With about five (5) years to the end of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target period, Nigeria still lags behind in achieving any of the seventeen (17) goals (Lawal & Abraham, 2020). Sustainable Development Goal 4 is ‘Quality Education’. The target is by 2030, all countries of the world, including Nigeria should ensure the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education as well as promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. A cursory look at Nigeria reveals that with a myriad of challenges bedeviling education, such as poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, obsolete curriculum, lack of instructional resources, poorly motivated teachers, and more, she is far from the global target for quality education.

8. Economic recession/ inflation: Economic recession is a slowdown period in the economic activity of a nation during which there is a significant decline in the country's economic activity that could be prolonged for two or more quarters consecutively. Nwinee (2017) posits that economic recession is usually characterized by "rise in unemployment, fall in industrial production, adjustment in the real GDP for inflation decreases, stagnation or fall in incomes or fall, especially with regard to their purchasing power ... and increase in government borrowing (p. 17). A failing, recessed, or depressed economy is caused by faulty policies, education policies inclusive. It is internationally accepted that education is a major development index, and this is the reason why virtually every country makes commitments to offer their citizens access to quality education (Odukoya, 2009; Imam, 2012).

It is important to establish at this juncture that the crises of educational policy implementation in Nigeria stemmed from the fact, among others, that the country's first National Policy on Education which was birthed in 1977 was conceived during the 'Oil boom' period – a period of surplus wealth. The country's leaders neither thought of, nor prepared for periods of economic downturn. The nation's economy was not diversified, and corruption was not checked but groomed to systemic cum institutional dimensions. The sudden and sharp decline in Nigeria's oil revenue which was caused by the global 'oil glut' of the early 1980s led to crisis in educational funding in the country (Nwagwu, 2011). The shock of the oil glut led unpleasant consequences such as unpaid salaries of school teachers, industrial actions (particularly strike actions at all tiers of education), *et cetera*. The implementation of the ambitious National Policy on Education of 1977 became stalled because of the economic crises caused by

dependence on petroleum products and the oil glut, hence the need for a quick review of the National Policy on Education which birthed the second edition in 1981. From the second edition, the clause “as soon as possible” for the implementation of certain aspects of the policy like the Universal Primary Education (UPE) became common place. Speculating possibility of policy implementation is an indication of failure *ab initio*. Ebirim, Nwogu and Abraham (2023) aver that accountability and disciplined fiscal administration are of utmost importance for goal attainment in educational systems.

9. Mono-commodity economy: As the term suggests, a mono-commodity economy is one which relies mainly on the production and marketing of a single major commodity. Mono-commodity economy comes with dire consequences some of which include vulnerability to global downward swing in the price of the commodity, and its attendant economic downturn. Nations with mono-commodity economies with little or no diversification, like Nigeria and Venezuela that depend on mostly crude oil and gas (petroleum resources) for about or more than 80% often suffer stunted economic growth devoid of stability. As global price of crude oil plummets as it did during the oil glut in the early 1980s (Nwagwu, 2011), funding for educational policy implementation drops drastically thereby leaving the huge gap that is always seen between policy formulation and policy implementation in Nigeria (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2003; Abraham, 2004; Obasi & Abraham, 2005; Okoroma, 2006, Abraham, 2022).
10. Unemployment/Dearth of Qualified Teaching Manpower: According to Global Youth Unemployment Index, Nigeria is said to have the second highest number of unemployed youth globally. No less than 53% of Nigerian youth are unemployed. The unemployment affects the highly

educated, the not too educated, and the uneducated alike. Unemployment has exacerbated the security challenges which the country currently faces, such as insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug use and abuse, internet fraud popularly called ‘Yahoo Yahoo’ in Nigeria, among others. Nigeria’s National Policy on Education promises the provision of quality education to her citizens through learner – centered teaching approach, practical and activity-based teaching and learning, equal access to quality education irrespective of socio-economic background or location, regular teacher development programmes, continuous assessment, tailoring education to community needs, etc. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). With the high level of unemployment, coupled with economic downturn, and government functionaries’ abandonment of public institutions, there is growing doubts among the citizenry if government is sincere in its policy pronouncements on quality education. This is because it was thought as noted by Imam (2012), “ ... that the far-reaching provisions of the policy would transform all aspects of national life over time” (p. 193).

There is a dearth of qualified teaching manpower in public schools, particularly in disadvantaged rural areas. This exacerbates educational disparities between the privileged higher socio-economic urban/city dwellers, and the majority low socio-economic, poor rural dwellers. Abraham (2023c) informs that prior to the employment of about 13,150 teachers for the public school system in Rivers State in 2013, some schools in the rural areas of the state had only four (4) teachers, the Principal inclusive. With such scenario, how can quality teaching be achieved?

11. Poor leadership: Leadership has been at the root of the crises in educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. Political will and sincerity of

purpose have been plagues in the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2004; Abraham, 2012; Abraham, 2022). Political change also has influence of educational policy (Imam, 2012; Abraham, 2000, Abraham, 2022, Abraham, 2025). Change in political leadership can lead to inconsistencies and stall implementation of educational policies. Educational policy making and execution is one of the most important businesses any well-meaning, conscientious, responsible, and responsive government should embark on for national development. Education is recognized as an “instrument par excellence” for achieving national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), just as issues concerning educational policies continue to top the chart among matters of critical concern in other developing countries in Africa as a necessary tool for development (Tikly,2001; Imam, 2012).

Globally, the indispensability of education to development has been established. Education is accepted the world over as a key index for measuring national development. This realization has made leaders of governments around to globe to take educational policy formulation seriously, and make serious commitments towards implementation of such policies.

Abraham (2022) authoritatively asserts that for educational policies to be reasonably or fully implemented, full commitment of government is required in the areas of funding, monitoring and evaluation, manpower engagement, training and retraining, provision and maintenance of infrastructure, etc. A situation where key government functionaries and appointees do not patronize public institutions, such as public schools, educational policies that favour such institutions will suffer lack of implementation. When a proprietor of an institution, or

producer of a good does not consume his product, that producer is simply saying that his product is not very healthy for consumption.

Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished audience, I make bold to submit that poor, insincere, reprobate and rogue leadership in Nigeria over successive regimes/governments have made the Ship of State to sail rudderless, with particular reference to educational policy formulation and implementation.

12. Executive rascality, Irrational legislative exuberance, and judicial ‘maroonity’: The terms ‘Executive Rascality’, ‘Irrational Legislative Exuberance’, and ‘Judicial Maroonity’ are not every day academic terms. They are coinages specifically chosen to drive home the complicit roles of functionaries of the various arms of government in the failure of educational policies. Each is defined contextually for the purpose of this lecture.

Executive Rascality refers to the actions taken (or not taken) by the executive arm of government that are corrupt, deceitful, or abusive of power. It is a situation where the Executive shows little or no regard for laws, rules, or ethical standards, and indulge in unjust and unaccountable behaviours – exemplified in violating constitutional principles, misappropriating public funds and ignoring legislative oversight. Abraham and Abraham (2003) have found that executive rascality is characterized by abuse of power to the extent that arbitrary executive decisions are made to undermine educational policies. This happens often with misappropriating funds meant for certain educational programmes or projects, as well as in appointments. It also resonates in lack of accountability, acting with impunity to the detriment of effective educational policy implementation. Executive Rascality which also means “Executive Arbitrariness and

Governance Indiscipline” is a situation where the executive arm of government engages in policy inconsistencies, abuses of power, discretionary decision-making, and disregard for institutional rules.

Irrational legislative exuberance refers to lawmakers acting with unchecked enthusiasm or unrealistic expectations. This leads to poor decision making and unworkable policies. Nwinee (2017) used this term in the Inaugural Lecture Series No. 140 “to refer to some critical budgetary processes, legal and constitutional provisions that have remained an albatross in our economic development as a sovereign nation”. Irrational Legislative Exuberance also means “Legislative Overreach and Procedural Imprudence” and refers to cases where the legislature engages in excessive, uncoordinated, or impulsive interventions in education, such as passing laws without adequate stakeholder consultation, duplicating agencies, or politicizing oversight roles. Legislative overreach often results in conflicting mandates, budget distortions, and duplicated functions across commissions, all of which impair policy coherence.

Judicial ‘maroonity’ may not be found in any dictionary of English lexicon. It is my coinage from the term ‘marooned’, which simply stands for ‘stranded’ – being abandoned or left alone in an isolated place, or difficult situation. This situation leads to a state of judicial indifference. Government as a secondary school subject taught us about Separation of Powers among the three (3) tiers of government – the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. This state of ‘judicial maroonity’ or judicial indifference leads to lack of oversight thus permitting executive and legislative oversteps or excesses to go unchecked. This also undermines rule of law thereby creating a loose atmosphere where educational policies are

not implemented with respect for, and in accordance with the law.

Executive rascality, irrational legislative exuberance, and judicial ‘maroonity’ are culprits in the unfortunate state of educational policy implementation in Nigeria. The trio justify the metaphor – The Rudderless Ship.

Abraham (2004a) found that the effects of these include but not limited to:

- a. Poor funding of educational programmes and projects as *ab initio* planned for by the policy. Executive and legislative actions and inactions oftentimes lead to poor funding of educational programmes, and this results in inadequate infrastructural facilities, and other educational resources.
  - b. Lack of accountability due to the ineffective and insincere functioning of the three (3) tiers of government on the principle of Separation of Powers. The result is that monies appropriated for the implementation of educational programmes and projects required for the implementation of educational policies are siphoned through large conduit pipes. To check Executive rascality, irrational Legislative exuberance, and Judicial ‘maroonity’, it is important that three (3) time-tested principles, namely Principle of Separation of Powers, Principle of Accountability, and Principle of Rule of Law be respected and always adhered to in all affairs of government.
13. Lack of Political hygiene: Political hygiene in this lecture means principles and practices that stand for and promote positive virtues such as accountability, integrity, and transparency in politics. This includes ethical governance, transparency in decision-making, accountability mechanisms, anti-corruption measures as well as civic

engagement and participation. More often than not, top political office holders appoint some of their associates and supporters to Education Ministries, Boards, and Parastatals. Some of these appointees see funds meant for the implementation of educational programmes as ‘national cake’ from which large chunks must be excised. Lack of political hygiene is the root of corruption in public offices. This causes a depletion of resources meant for educational policy implementation.

### **Who is the Major Rescuer of the Rudderless Ship?**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) in her National Policy on Education, Section 1 Sub-Section 3 declares that Nigeria’s philosophy of education is based on the following set of beliefs:

- a. Education is an instrument for national development and social change;
- b. Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria;
- c. Education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society; ... (p. 1).

Section 9 of the National Policy on Education is captioned ‘Planning and Administration of Education’. Sub-Section A (132) declares that “The success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning framework, efficient administration and adequate financing”.

The answer to the question posed by this section of the Inaugural Lecture is Educational Management (Educational Administration) as enshrined in the afore-cited sections of the National Policy on Education. I am a Professor of Educational Management with specialization in Educational

Administration. My research interest among others is in the area of Educational Policies, their formulation and implementation (or execution), where I have conducted a number of studies, published same in high impact peer-reviewed journals, and presented keynotes and lead papers at conferences. Owing to the gulf between educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, I have over the past twenty-five years after defense of my doctoral thesis carried out many studies which addressed various issues and concerns around educational policy formulation and implementation. Note that these will form the hallmark of the section of this Inaugural Lecture titled ‘**My Footprints in the Rescue Mission**’.

Educational Management is a specialized field of study and practice in Education. Its main focus is on the planning, organization, leadership, and administration of educational institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, and allied/related institutions. According to Nwankwo (2014), “management in the context of education is the arrangement of the human and material resources and programmes available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational objectives” (p. 23). Educational managers function in a wide range of work environments. However, every educational manager is basically a “planner, organizer and implementer of policies, plans and programmes meant for specific educational objectives”(Nwankwo, 2014; p. 23). Though the Educational Manager contributes in some form in policy making, his main role is in the area of policy implementation. Areas where Educational Management offers expertise include but not limited to:

1. Planning and Policy Development
2. Policy Implementation or Execution
3. Leadership and Governance

4. Curriculum Design, Development and Implementation
5. Coordination and Motivation
6. Teacher Management and Development
7. Student Affairs and Services
8. Budgeting, Financial Management and Resourcing
9. Mobilization and deployment of resources
10. Facilities and Infrastructure Management
11. Community Engagement and Partnerships
12. Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation
13. Quality Assurance and Improvement

Abraham (2022) submits that effective educational management requires the following, among others: Strong leadership and vision; Collaborative and inclusive decision-making; Strategic planning and goal-setting; Effective communication and interpersonal skills; Ability to manage change and innovation; Understanding of curriculum design and implementation; Knowledge of teaching and learning processes; Familiarity with educational technology and digital resources; Ability to manage and allocate resources effectively; and Commitment to continuous professional development and improvement.

My interest in policy studies as an Educational Manager and Administrator came from the gulf between formulated policies and their implementation which I noticed from my readings and researches. As the son of a teacher and long-standing headmaster, I witnessed long periods of trade disputes between the government and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) occasioned by strike actions by teachers, and the consequent truncation of academic calendars of primary and secondary schools. As a post graduate (Doctor of Philosophy) student, I found that the problem of public school education in Nigeria stemmed from policy issues – government’s lack of will to

implement formulated policies. This led me to research for my Ph.D. Thesis into the ‘Patterns of Policy Formulation and Execution in School Administration in Rivers State’.

The term ‘policy’ is widely and often wrongly used in several quarters. It is common to hear that someone made a policy statement at a political rally, an association’s meeting or even at informal gatherings such as a dinner party. A policy is more than a mere statement made maybe, just for the purpose of the gathering. A policy is a plan of an organization to do something in order to achieve predetermined aims and objectives of that organization. Bell (2020) notes that “policy consists of set of aims, goals or statements of what should happen in any given set of circumstances”. In the view of Harman (1984) in Bell (2020), policy is “the implicit and explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed, or to be followed in dealing with a recognized problem or matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals”. Adams (2014) offers the simplest definition that “policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (p. 24). Policies are purposive intentions aimed at producing desired outcomes.

Policies are guides to educational administration. They are not completely prescriptive *per se*, rather they allow the implementer the use of discretion. Corroborating this view, Bell (2020) affirms that “policies rarely emerge fully formed, and so the enactment process involves revising, re-ordering and re-inventing” (p. 32). Education policies according to Okoroma (1988) are “public policy decisions made by society for itself through elected representatives” (p. 112).

My interest in educational policy studies has been to find out why government (policy formulator) will enact a policy and will not follow through with commitment to ensure that the policy is implemented. This guided all my researches and publications in the area of educational policy studies some of which we can find in the section on **My Footprints in the Rescue Mission**.

### **The Process of Educational Policy Making**

Educational policy making is an arduous task that the government and its agencies embark upon in a bid to provide her citizenry with focus, literacy and education. They guide the intentions of government in the fulfillment of her obligations to her youths and teeming population.

Policy making is the process of formulating/creating, implementing, and evaluating the rules, regulations, and guidelines that direct and govern the actions and operation of individuals, organizations, or governments. Educational policy formulation is the process of articulating, developing and designing policies that guide and govern the education system. It involves the identification of key issues related to education, setting goals and objectives, and drawing up strategies and actions that would be followed to achieve the set goals and objectives (National Education Commission, 2023). Abdulkadir, Garba and Bokko (2025) submit that “educational policy formulation is the process of creating and designing plans, strategies, and guidelines to guide the development and improvement of education systems” (p. 45).

There are different models of the Policy formulation process, but we shall examine the Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems by Howlett & Ramesh (2023).

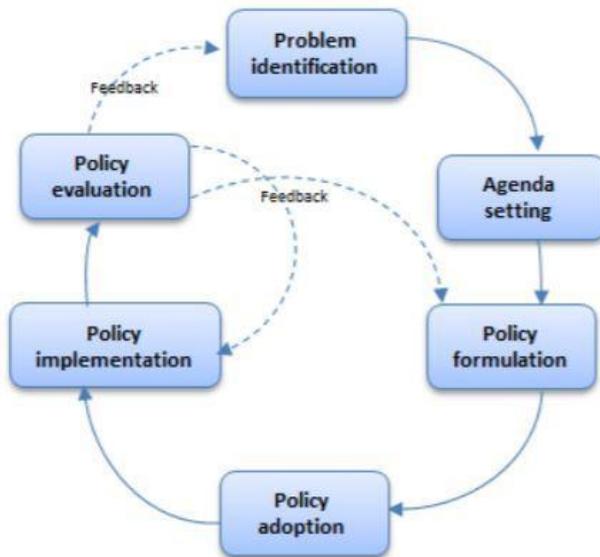


Figure 1: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems

Source: Howlett & Ramesh (2023). *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, Oxford University Press.

The policy making model above like most others is a cycle. Policy making is a cyclical process. This is because there must always be a feedback which emanates from the policy evaluation section of the process. The process has the following sections:

- Problem Identification
- Agenda Setting
- Policy Formulation
- Policy Adoption
- Policy Implementation
- Policy Evaluation

At the Policy Identification (PI) stage, problems, issues, innovations, and opportunities that require policy attention are identified. This may be problems or issues known to political office holders, or may be brought to the knowledge of government from the agitations of individuals, or groups from the larger society (Abraham, 2000). It could also be a United Nations policy directive for which every country has to make its own policies to domesticate the worldwide policy. Examples include the Child Rights Act, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), etc.

The Agenda Setting stage is the second in this model adopted from Howlett and Ramesh (2023). This is the stage at which the elements of the identified problem or issues are articulated. It is also the stage at which strategies for resolution of the identified problem(s) are brain-stormed on, and plausible options are identified and decided on. It is important to note strategies or solutions with least cost in terms of manpower, time, finance and other inputs are preferred. This however does not suggest going for lesser quality.

Policy formulation is the stage at which course(s) of action is/are selected usually after developing and deliberating on policy options, and thoroughly analyzing all alternatives. The policy formulation stage requires a concise knowledge and consideration of all the necessary facilities and means through which the objectives for which the policy is being made are achieved. Just like planning, the policy formulation stage entails 'foretelling the future and preparing for it'. Educational policies address problems in the educational system by formulating laws that will reverse the trend to something better than the status quo. Policy formulation stage is a very important one in the policy making process. If it is haphazardly

done, or reliable data not gathered prior to the formulation, it may result in a crisis situation.

Okeke (1988) posits that the “formulation of educational policy is a laborious process involving large numbers of highly trained and specialized people” (p. 32). Government and her agencies have in the past formulated policies some of which recorded no success at all. Policies reflect ideological emphasis of the government in power (Jones, 1993). Such ideological emphases must be conscientiously framed or formulated. There must be a prudent translation of such ideas into achievable objectives.

Policy Adoption is the stage at which the formulated policy is approved. This stage makes the preferred/chosen policy legitimate. When a policy has been formulated by the government agency, it has to be approved by the government. This stage of the policy-making process is known as the ‘policy adoption’ stage. It involves a defense of the proposed policy by its formulators. They will have to justify the formulation of such an educational policy with such facts as ‘what benefits are derivable’, the cost of implementation both in terms of manpower and material resources, the life span of the policy, likely impediments etc. If government is satisfied with the policy, it is adopted and given the necessary legal backing (Berebon, 2024). According to Brooksbank and Anderson (ed.) (1989), “initiative may arise from the education committee or council from governing bodies of schools and colleges or from voluntary bodies such as churches, pressure groups. Whatever their source, they become policy when they have been considered and approved” (p. 47). It is therefore after the adoption or approval of a policy initiative that it actually becomes a policy.

The next and seemingly most important state is that of policy implementation. Until a policy has been implemented it remains a mere wish; an intention. Some good intentioned policies have in the past, failed at the implementation stage. Examples abound, but the most brutal shock that has happened to Nigeria's educational system is the failure of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. It may be an overstatement by the researcher that the system has failed, but no apologies. The '3-3' segment of the system has so woefully failed that retracing our steps as a nation now looks tortuous. The policy initiative of the 6-3-3-4 system of education was the outcome of beautiful brains, but the nation dabbled into something we are not ready for. As at the time Nigeria adopted the 6-3-3-4 system of education, there were no workshops for vocational subjects, no teachers in the technical cum vocational subjects, virtually every school lacked and still lack the relevant facilities and equipment.

Policy formulation and execution have never been easy tasks. They are time consuming and also emanate from the efforts and technical know-how of experts in the field where the problem that needs solution exists. Going by Corson's approach to the policy process, non-experts have no business there, including political office holders who are 'novices' in the field of the problem. This leads us to the next part of the lecture dealing with the influence of politics in the formulation and execution of educational policies.

### **Politics and the Formulation and Execution of Educational Policies**

In a study titled 'Politics, educational policy formulation and execution in school administration' published in the African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 5(1), 147-151, I found that educational policy formulation and implementation are heavily

laced with politics. The conception of the policy/agenda setting, its formulation, and adoption are purely the functions of political office holders and government functionaries. The provision of resources for the implementation also follows a political process as much as the policy evaluation and revision (Abraham, 2004). This finding is corroborated by Bell and Stevenson (2013) when they averred that the formulation of educational policies is almost completely a political affair since education is implicitly and explicitly a political issue. Education is meant to serve the society and so “cannot be disconnected from the wider views about the society in which it is located” (Bell, 2020; p. 31). What is taught or not taught in schools, how pupils and students are taught, and how schools, colleges and other educational institutions are organized are fundamentally political questions and issues. Bell (2020) further asserts that “the extent to which the focus of policy is on conserving or changing is largely determined by political responses to the prevailing dominant discourses” (p. 31). According to him, it is such education policy that ultimately frames and directs what happens in the educational institutions and also shapes the experiences of members of the schools’ community – those who study as well as those who work in the educational institutions.

Abraham (2001) and Abraham (2022) reported from two separate research findings that it is better to have a close monitoring of programme from its formulation, step-by-step, through its implementation. Lapses that are discovered at each step are quickly and cheaply corrected as against the wasteful method of watching the whole programme collapse before you start thinking of picking up the carcasses.

## **Problems of Policy Formulation and Execution**

Every responsible government knows that the future and development of a nation largely depends on the quality and quantity of education its citizenry receives. In view of this, most nations of the world, including Nigeria, take the formulation of educational policies with a measure of seriousness (Abraham, 2022; Abraham, 2023a; Odukoya, 2009; Imam, 2012). Osokoya (1987) commenting on the importance of education to a nation stated that “it is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership” (p. 2). Educational policy is targeted at improving the quality of life of people via education (Abraham, 2023c). This presupposes that good educational policies that are adequately executed will lead to a better living standard for the people, while on the other hand, poor policies or even good policies that are not properly implemented spell doom (Abraham, 2000; Dillon, 2024).

There have been series of educational policies in Nigeria. What appears to be conspicuously lacking is the country’s will to implement the policies. This difficulty has to some extent been traceable to lack of leadership commitment and continuity which also may not be unconnected with the country’s political instability, and change of governments (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2003; Okoroma, 2006; Swamy, 2023; Offor-Douglas, 2024).

Abraham (2004a) had found that a number of other factors account for the problem of policy formulation and execution. These include:

- i. unclear information as per the objectives to be pursued;
- ii. dearth of adequate and reliable statistical data for formulation of policies;

- iii. inadequate funds and lack of political commitment for implementation; and
- iv. laxity and total lack of control at the implementation stage.

The principal constraints impeding the implementation of the National Policy on Education as enshrined in the Blueprint of the Implementation Committee for the National Policy on Education (1978-79) include:

- i. Establishing basic facts (the dearth of accurate and reliable statistical data)
- ii. Determining cost/effectiveness
- iii. Relating education to assessed manpower needs
- iv. Improvement required in administrative capacity
- v. Unqualified and under-qualified teachers
- vi. Finance

Osokoya (1987) suggested a set of guiding principles for the formulation and execution of educational policies: these are:

- i. Policies should be formulated and adopted through a political process, and this is a process which acknowledges the realities and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among participants.
- ii. It should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals.
- iii. It should contain certain information of the broad objectives that should be reached.
- iv. It should be binding on the action of those implementing.
- v. It should be enforceable and enforced by the society which formulated it.

Political influence is a major problem of policy formulation and implementation (Ojo, Fadare, Sunday & Odulami, 2025).

This is more at the implementation phase where the educational administrator should be given a free hand to do his job. As Okoroma (1988) puts it; implementation of policy decision is greatly hindered as the administrator is often confronted with the difficulties of activating a listless bureaucracy.

The above situation suggests that apart from the problems emanating from political office holders, bureaucracy which is synonymous with the civil service red-tapism also limits the administrator in the implementation of educational policies.

### **Educational Policies and how they were implemented in Nigeria**

Nigeria is not bereft of educational policies of good quality. However, what has been lacking is commitment to implementation of already formulated policies. In this section of the lecture, we shall do a synopsis of examples of policies that were not properly implemented or not implemented at all, which have contributed to the rudderlessness of the ship of state.

1. The 1960 Eric Ashby Commission White Paper on Education Development (1961 – 1970) – In April 1959 the Ashby Commission was set up with the task of investigating the higher education need of Nigeria for a period of 20 years, for the production of high level manpower to replace the British colonialists after independence. The Commission was under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Ashby. Its report was submitted in 1960. Among key recommendations of the Ashby Commission was that new universities should be established. The policy recommendation regarding establishment of new universities was that “all universities should have national outlook” (Kosemani & Okorosaye-

Orubite, 1995). Implementation of this recommendation by the Ashby Commission led to the establishment of University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife; and University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. Note that the proviso on the recommendation was that all the universities to be established “should have national outlook”. Rather than follow this policy recommendation, the universities that were established between 1960 and 1970 were regional and not national in outlook (Fafunwa, 1971; Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995).

2. The 1976 National Policy on Primary Education – This policy is the first nation-wide Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) where it was declared that “the poorest child from the poorest part of Nigeria would have access to a free six-year primary education...”. This policy was made without adequate statistical data and proper projection. The 1970s when the UPE policy was made was the period of ‘oil boom’ and buoyant era in the history of Nigeria. Nigeria had so much money due to global rise in the prices of crude oil – the mainstay of the country’s economy. However, by early 1980s, there was a sharp drop in the prices of the commodity. This meant that Nigeria could not afford to cater for the large numbers of pupils who came to enroll for the free primary education in terms of infrastructural facilities provision, teacher emoluments, etc. The policy was not successfully implemented as a result of the aforementioned issues, and more so, due to lack of political will, particularly from the inception of the second republic in 1979 (Abraham & Abraham, 2003).
3. National Policy on Education (1977, 1981 and 1998 Editions) – In 1973, a Seminar of distinguished educational experts was convoked under the chairmanship of Chief S.

O. Adebayo had served as Nigeria's Permanent Representative at the United Nations. At the time of the Seminar assignment, he was Chairman of the National Universities Commission (NUC). The experts who were drawn from a wide range of background and representing a wide range of interests including Christianity and Islam, the academia, the National Universities Commission, interested external agencies, women groups had the mandate to "deliberate on all aspects of a National Policy on Education" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1977, p.3).

The work of the distinguished experts and other Seminar participants, and the inputs of the National Council for Education, the Joint Consultative Committee on Education, the National Educational Research Council, and the Federal Ministry of Education officials produced what was submitted to the Federal Government as draft of the first ever National Policy on Education. The first edition of the National Policy on Education after due consideration was dated 1977, and became operational thenceforth. From the onset, Government set up a National Education Policy Implementation Task Force with the mandate to

...translate the Policy into a workable blueprint that will guide the bodies whose duty it is to implement educational policy, and will also, develop a monitoring system of the progress of the planned educational evolution to ensure that infrastructures are prepared and bottlenecks removed in time to facilitate the effective smooth implementation of this National Policy on Education (FRN,1977:3).

Section 1, sub-section 7 reads in part: Government will take various measures to implement the policy. Accordingly:

- a. Education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instrument of change as any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution;
- b. Lifelong education will be the basis of the nation's educational policies;
- c. Educational and training facilities will be multiplied and made more accessible, to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice; ...
- d. Modern educational techniques will be increasingly used and improved at all levels of the education system; ... .

The 1977 edition of the National Policy on Education in Section 2 (Pre-primary Education), sub-section 11(3) averred that Government will “ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community” (FRN, 1977: 6). Government also pledged to produce books in the local languages, and provide junior libraries for primary school children.

One major addition that the 1981 edition of the National Policy on Education brought was the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education; that is, six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary (upper basic education), three years of senior secondary education, and four years of university education. The junior secondary segment emphasized the pre-vocational hands-on educational activities meant for the development of technical and technological skills and trades. However, it has been noted in this discourse that Nigerian universities and colleges did not have programmes for the production of Vocational Education

teachers as at when the 6-3-3-4 system was hoisted on the country. The 6-3-3-4 system of education fell short of successful implementation because of the failure of the junior secondary component to provide hands-on vocational skill training in workshops, etc. This important element of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy was never actualized (Oyelade & Abolade, 2018). It is therefore glaring that most pledges of the policy failed soon after commencement of implementation. Primary Education Policy specifies a six-year duration but what is practice almost everywhere in the country is five (5) years, and in some places four (4) years. This misnomer goes on with impunity without any penalty to those who contravene the law. This portrays the policy as weak or inconsequential.

4. National Policy on Education (2004; and 2014 Editions) – The Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) programme was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1999 by the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, just about four months after assuming office as a democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The target was to provide free, universal, and compulsory basic education to every Nigerian child of school-going age. It is important to note that such an ambitious programme was kick-started without an enabling legal framework or policy document. It was until May 2004 that the Universal Basic Education Act was provided (Abraham, 2012). The National Policy on Education for the Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) is still ongoing, but its implementation so far can best be described as chequered and haphazard. For instance, the U.B.E. policy pledged to be **Free, Universal, and Compulsory**. The programme is conceived to be free, but pupils and students are still charged fees designated as anything but tuition. The Universal component of it means that all Nigerian children

of school-going age anywhere in Nigeria, irrespective of whatever diversities will be given basic education of good quality. It is meant to be compulsory hence the provision in the UBE Act (2004) of warnings, fines, and two-year jail term for any parent or guardian who denies his/her child or ward access to basic education. With the free, universal, and compulsory elements of the U.B.E. policy, Nigeria still has an alarming rate of out-of-school children hawking wares along traffic, or begging for alms. There is no news of one parent or guardian being prosecuted for denying a child access to basic education. The Mass Literacy and Nomadic Education components of the Universal Basic Education programme are not properly implemented (Okoroma, 2006).

5. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
  - The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is provided for in Section 3(B) of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014). Section 3(B), subsection 50 enshrined that the goals of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) shall be to:
    - a. Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advance craft and technical levels;
    - b. provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and
    - c. give training and impart the necessary skills to individual for self-reliance economically.

Nigeria requires TVET for technological advancement, but it is sad to note that its implementation is poor due to paucity of funds for the procurement of equipment and tools, the establishment of workshops, and provision of electricity that

are prerequisites for functional TVET programme (Ogbondah, 2021).

In order to combat youth unemployment and provide students with employable skills, technical and vocational education and training, or TVET, has been highlighted in contemporary educational strategies. TVET programmes seek to close the skills gap between school and the workforce by equipping students with the knowledge and abilities required for a variety of trades and professions. However, TVET programmes in Nigeria frequently lack the facilities, trained instructors, and resources they require. Comprehensive strategies that link TVET to industry demands and incorporate it into the larger educational system are necessary for strengthening it. According to Ogunbiyi (2023), there must be promotion of TVET programmes to provide students with practical skills and competencies for the labor market, collaboration with industry and private sector stakeholders to align TVET programmes with labour market demands and address skills gaps and enhancement of the status and recognition of TVET to encourage greater participation and improve the perception of vocational education. The Nigerian government has launched a number of measures to enhance educational management after realizing the need for change. Olukotun (2023) underlined that these include the creation of regulatory bodies like the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to ensure quality assurance in higher education and technical and vocational training, as well as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which aims to provide free and compulsory basic education for all children. Nevertheless, there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome. More reforms in educational management are required in Nigeria in order to solve problems of inadequate funding, curriculum creation,

teacher quality and training, infrastructure, and technology integration in the classroom.

6. Teacher Education Policy – Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), Section 8, Sub-section B (70a.) notes, “Since no education may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development”. In Section 5, Sub-section B (92a) of the sixth edition of the National Policy on Education, FRN (2014) re-couched the what it had in the fourth edition by noting that: “In recognition of the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels, teacher education shall continue to be emphasized in educational planning and development” (p. 43).

Some of the goals of teacher education as enunciated in the National Policy on Education include to: (a.) Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system; (b.) further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; (c.) help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals; (d.) provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations. The emphasis talked about here appears to be limited to the pages of the National Policy on Education because commitment to the realization of the afore-listed goals has been lacking. The Nigerian teacher is the least motivated in the world. Teachers at all levels in the country are poorly remunerated, and have been subjected to the lowest level of social stratification. The consequence is that the teacher in Nigeria has a very low social image, and so, most young people who take up teaching appointments do so for want of jobs with better public image.

7. Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Compulsory Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) for non-professional teachers – The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) aims to ensure professionalism and excellence in the teaching service in Nigeria by setting standards, and promoting continuous development. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) in Section 8, Sub-section B (100) directs “b. Only professionally qualified and registered teachers shall be allowed to practise at all levels. c. Newly qualified teachers shall serve a period of one (1) year internship”(p. 44). Over the years, persons without qualification in pedagogy, that is, those who did not study Education, and as such not qualified teachers, and not registered still function as teachers in schools and colleges. This is yet another example of the huge gap that exists between policy formulation and policy implementation in Nigeria.
8. Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (for Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects) – Section 3, sub-section 38.2.5 of the National Policy on Education listed 34 Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects for Senior Secondary education among groups of subjects from other fields of studies like Science and Mathematics, Technology, Humanities, and Business Studies (FRN, 2014). Students may choose minimum of two (2) and maximum of five (5) from each of their preferred four fields of studies provided for in the policy. The idea is that each student should have at least one (1) subject from each field of study, to a minimum of eight (8) or a maximum of nine (9) subjects to be examined for certification at the Senior Secondary School level. The Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects are designed to prepare secondary school leavers to be self-employed and in some cases, become employers of labour. However, the long list of Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects

remain in the Education Policy document without adequate number of professional teachers and facilitators, workshops, other facilities and equipment for trade subjects such as Auto Body Repair and Spray Painting, Auto Electrical Work, Auto Mechanical Work, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Carpentry and Joinery, Furniture Making, GSM Maintenance and Repairs, etc.

9. National Board for Technical Education Act, No. 9 of 1977 – The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) Act, No. 9 was promulgated on January 11, 1977 with the core mandate to advise the Federal Government on all aspects of technical education outside the scope of universities in Nigeria. The key functions of the Board include:
  - i. Advising on, and coordinating Technical Education
  - ii. Setting standards and accreditation
  - iii. Financial guidance and allocation
  - iv. Technical assistance and research
  - v. Certification and Quality assurance.

The effectiveness of the NBTE Act is seen more in monotechnics and polytechnics, with neglect of technical and vocational institutions in the country.

10. National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) – The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) has the policy initiative to promote mass literacy, adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. The main mandate of the Commission is to eradicate illiteracy and provide non-formal and continuing education within the context of lifelong learning and sustainable development. NMEC has programmes such as Literacy By Radio which is a radio broadcast programme used reach wider audiences, location not constituting an impediment, and

promote literacy. The Commission also has the Rural Facilitator project which is an initiative used to support mass literacy delivery in remote rural communities through trained facilitators.

At the moment, NMEC policy implementation is ineffective. In addition, her duties/functions are conflicting with those of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) which is moribund at the moment with the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

11. Education Trust Fund (ETF) – The Education Trust Fund (ETF) which later transformed to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was established via Act No. 7 Of 1993 to support all tiers (levels) of education in the country, Nigeria. At the primary education, ETF was to support the funding for infrastructure, provision of instructional materials, and teacher development; at the secondary school level support for facilities and equipment provision, and training of teachers, while at the tertiary education level support the provision of infrastructure, funding of research and staff development in Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education.

In 2011, the ETF Act was repealed, and its place the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Act No. 16 was made refocusing the intervention scope to public tertiary institutions exclusively. Though a number of reasons were advanced for the repeal of the ETF Act and replacement with the TETFund Act, and refocusing the mandate scope from the entire education system to only tertiary education, we still categorize it as an education policy which failed at the level of implementation.

12. Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act No. 11 of 1993 – This Act was made to guide the establishment, governance, and operations/management of public

universities in Nigeria. It was amended in 2003 to grant universities greater independence in their management, growth, and development. The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Act 2003 purposed to enhance university autonomy, restructure governance by clarifying the roles of Governing Councils, Senates of universities, and University Management. The Act metamorphosed into the University Autonomy Act of 2007 when it was gazetted to allow “universities to govern themselves, appoint key officers, determine staff conditions of service, control student admissions and academic curricula, manage finances, and operate without undue government interference”. The Act was further amended in 2012 specifically to increase retirement ages of academic and non-academic staff, and limiting the tenure of principal officers to single term of five years.

University Autonomy and Academic Freedom has been an issue, with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) insistence that there is still so much influence of government on the university system.

13. Local Language/French as a ‘Second Official Language’ Policy - From the maiden edition of the National Policy on Education, Nigeria have always emphasized the language. FRN (1977, p.5) and FRN (1981, p. 9) being the first and second editions of the National Policy on Education declare that:

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. In this connection, the Government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba.

The third edition of the National Policy on Education added the following to the citation above: “For smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria, and it shall be compulsory in schools” (FRN, 1998: 8-9).

In the fourth edition, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) specified the level of schooling at which French language shall be compulsory, that “ ... French ... shall be compulsory in primary and Junior Secondary Schools but Non-Vocational Elective at the Senior Secondary School.” (p. 10). The rationale for this policy was perfect. The local language policy was to ensure preservation of the people’s culture and in the interest of national unity, while the French as a second official language policy was necessary because all Nigeria’s immediate neighbours are francophone. The importance of language in human interactions, including governance, foreign affairs/relationship, and business cannot be over-emphasized, hence government’s introduction of the French as a second official language policy. This policy held some positive implications for Nigeria and Nigerians as trade would be facilitated, and schooling across the country’s borders would have been easier. However, it is not a secret that not much was done by successive governments to ensure the implementation of both the local language policy, and the French as Second Official language policy.

Abraham and Iwowari (2007) conducted a study to assess the extent of implementation of the French as a second official language policy in the secondary schools in Rivers and Ondo States of Nigeria. The scholars used inventory and document analysis to ascertain the number/percentage of secondary schools in these two states that offered French as a subject, as well as French teachers : students ratio in the schools. It was found that:

out of a total of 246 public secondary schools in Rivers State, only 39 offer French as a subject. This represents 15.9%, whereas 84.1% of schools in the state did not offer French as a subject. Ondo State has 289 public secondary schools, out of which 228 offer French. This represents 78.9%... (p. 168).

In the entire Rivers State public secondary school system, there were only 77 French teachers. This translates to 31.3% availability of this category of teachers in the school system in the state. The study by Abraham and Iwowari (2007) further revealed a mean value of 0.31 which implied that far less than half the number of schools had even one (1) French teacher.

This scenario has not changed. One then wonders how Nigerian children will learn French, and when the language will truly become the second official language of Nigeria. The subject is not compulsory at any level of schooling in the country; a complete negation of the National Policy on Education. This adds credence to the submission that there have been instances when laudable educational policies were formulated, but died prematurely at the stage of implementation (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2003; Abraham, 2004; Obasi & Abraham, 2005; Ogunode & Adah, 2020).

The most recent drama as it concerns educational policy formulation and execution in Nigeria took place at the 69th National Council of Education which held in Akure, Ondo State between the 3rd and 6th of November, 2025 where the Honourable Minister of Education pronounced the cancellation of the Education in Indigenous Languages Policy. This is in contradiction of the policy that at the junior primary level pupils would be taught in their native languages or the language of the immediate environment, while English is taught only as a school subject and not the general medium of instruction. The action of the Honourable Minister favours the use of only English language as the medium of instruction in Nigerian schools. This cancellation has been condemned by the Nigerian Academy of Education, and many other critical stakeholders.

14. Educational Support Services - Educational Support Services are of utmost importance in the educational systems at all levels. To underscore its importance, the entire Section 8 of the National Policy on Education is devoted to it. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), “Educational Support Services facilitate the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system” (p. 57). The goals of educational support services as enshrined in Section 8, Sub-section 126 of the sixth edition of the National Policy on Education shall be to:
- a. develop, assess and improve educational programmes;
  - b. enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers;
  - c. provide conducive environment for learning;
  - d. make learning experiences more meaningful and realistic for children;

- e. make education more cost effective;
- f. promote in-service education;
- g. enhance access to education;
- h. develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools; and
- i. promote partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Development Partners (IDPs) to access resources.

The following are listed as the educational support services that shall be provided in schools for the successful implementation of educational policies:

1. School Library
2. School meals and incentives
3. School gardens
4. Health and other nutritional services
5. Sports and recreational facilities
6. Guidance and Counselling
7. Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Referral Services
8. Providing care and support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
9. Education Resource Centres
10. Laboratories and workshops
11. IT hardware and software laboratories.

We shall look at few of these services to see if they have implemented or not.

### **School Library Policy**

FRN (2014) enshrined the following statement in the National Policy on Education:

The library is at the heart of the education enterprise and one of the most

important educational services. States/FCT and Local Governments, as well as proprietors of schools shall establish functional libraries in accordance with the established standards and actively promote reading culture in all their educational institutions. They shall also provide for the training of librarians, library officers and library assistants for these services (p. 58).

Visits to public primary and secondary schools reveal that there are no functional libraries. Most do not have any physical facility or space designated as Library. The few that had physical structures or spaces designated as Library do not have books, periodicals, atlases, manuals, and other library facilities in them (Abraham & Abraham, 2001; Abraham & Leigha, 2012). They also do not have Virtual Libraries (Obasi & Abraham, 2005). Private proprietors of schools try to maintain libraries in their schools as a major educational support service which helps to attract clients to them. The reading culture among the young generation is almost at the lowest ebb, and this is attributable to the lack of functional school, and public libraries.

### **School Meals and Incentives**

It is enshrined in the National Policy on Education that “Government is encouraged to provide school meal deriving from the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme in order to ensure healthy development of the child and encourage retention in school” (FRN, 2014, p. 16). This sounds more like a suggestion. However, Onwuliri in FRN (2014: viii) authoritatively declares that

A Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme (HGSFHP) that provides basic health services and a free balanced meal per day for every child that attends public primary or junior secondary school is being implemented to facilitate the success of the UBE.

This policy was briefly implemented in few schools and abandoned. During the Covid-19 lockdown, it was claimed that over Five Hundred Million Naira (>₦500,000,000.00) was spent on the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme through a “modified take-home ration” to provide food to vulnerable households even though schools were closed. It was reported that 3.1 million vulnerable households in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun states were targeted for the modified take-home rations of the HGSFHP. Many argue that expended sums were misappropriated.

Punch (2025) informs that the Federal Government is working to expand the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme to 50 million primary school pupils in 2026. The expanded programme aims to also provide daily meals for 20 million out-of-school and underserved children in 2026. The proposed expansion raises questions about how well those in the school have been served before adding those that are out-of-school. Also, won't the inclusion of out-of-school children in the HGSFHP be tantamount to encouraging and further exacerbating the already bad out-of-school problem?

## **School Gardens**

The school garden is a very important educational support service which provides pupils and students opportunity to engage in small-scale practical (hands-on) learning in crop farming, and training the child on food production. It also fosters love for nature and the environment, as well as promoting sustainability. School gardens are basic requirements for approval of schools. Public schools had vast lands that were used as school farms, but due to the fact that there were no perimeter fences around the schools, and with the ever-increasing value of land, most original land-owner families took over portions of the school lands not built up. This situation has left most schools without spaces to be used as school gardens.

## **Guidance and Counselling**

Guidance and Counselling services remain one of the most important educational support services that can be provided for the success of the educational goals of the country. In view of this, it is provided for in the National Policy on Education that “Government shall continue to make provision for the training of teachers in Guidance and Counselling; establish and equip Counselling Clinics, Career Resource Centres, Information Centres” (FRN, 2014: 59). It is also Government policy that “proprietors of schools shall provide adequate number of guidance counselors for their institutions” (Op cit). It is important to note here that as important as this service is, and acknowledged to be, not every school (primary and secondary) has a Guidance Counselor, nor do they have Counselling Clinics and related resources (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2003; Babalola, 2003).

## **Laboratories and Workshops**

Laboratories and workshops occupy a very important place in the educational system. They provide practical, hands-on experiences that aid pupils/students understanding of scientific concepts (Eru, Ogi & Ikpe, 2019). They also help in the development of critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills. Availability of well-equipped laboratories and workshops aids teaching and enhances learning (Abraham, 2001; Abraham & Abraham, 2003, Abraham, 2004). Unfortunately, there is acute lack of laboratories and workshops across public primary and secondary schools in Nigeria.

The creation of a high-quality, inclusive, and egalitarian education system that can propel national growth and satisfy the wide range of demands of the populace has been the goal of these programmes. However, a number of obstacles, including socioeconomic restrictions and infrastructure deficiencies, have made it difficult to implement these regulations, which has reduced their efficacy.

Nigeria's educational policies have a long history, dating back to the British colonial government's establishment of a system that was largely intended to serve the administration's purposes. The goal of the aristocratic educational system was to create clerks and administrators for the colonial authority. The discrepancies in access to education that Nigeria still faces were made possible by this system. Nigeria started a quest to improve its educational system after gaining independence in order to better serve its populace and promote national growth. The National Policy on Education (NPE), which was first published in 1977 and has since undergone multiple revisions, is one of the first notable policy texts. The NPE sought to advance a national education system that was standardized and

of high quality. With six years of basic education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education, and four years of postsecondary education, it established the 6-3-3-4 educational system. With a focus on science and technology education and vocational training, this policy aimed to improve access to education and make it more relevant to the demands of the Nigerian economy.

Notwithstanding the well-meaning policies, Nigeria's educational system has consistently encountered difficulties. The education sector's insufficient funding has been one of the biggest problems (Pinnock, 2020). Nigeria has always dedicated a lower portion of its budget to education than the 26% that UNESCO recommends (Odigwe & Owan, 2019). The quality of education has been compromised by this underfunding, which has resulted in dilapidated and grossly inadequate facilities, limited teaching resources, and inadequately prepared teachers.

### **The Patterns of Policy Formulation and Execution in Nigeria**

Understanding the various elements that influence policy development and implementation, such as political, economic, social, and institutional factors, is necessary to comprehend the multifaceted and complex patterns of policy formulation and execution in Nigeria, which are reflective of the nation's diverse socio-political landscape and historical context. Policy formulation involves the development of strategies and frameworks aimed at addressing specific issues within the country, while execution refers to the implementation of these policies to achieve desired outcomes.

Vice Chancellor Sir, and very distinguished audience, in the 1999/2000 session when I defended my Ph.D. Thesis titled

‘Patterns of Policy Formulation and Execution in School Administration in Rivers State’, Nigeria was just returning to democratic governance after long years of military dictatorship. The two (2) main patterns of policy formulation and execution were: (a) Via Military fiat, and (b) Through stakeholder consultation and engagement. Traditionally, military dictatorships rule with decrees, with the constitution suspended. Pronouncements are made by the military junta in power, most times without inputs from experts and other stakeholders. Military fiat is speedy and less time consuming, but often lack the thoroughness that should have existed if experts were engaged to analyze options and sieve out the best line of action.

The second pattern had to do with the consultation and engagement of experts and other stakeholders. This pattern may be a little bit time-consuming, but its advantage over the other is in its thoroughness. In all of my studies on educational policy making, I have always advocated the stakeholder involvement and wide consultation pattern. In a study titled ‘Patterns of educational policy formulation and execution in Rivers State’ published in *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4 (1), 77-81, the inaugural lecturer found among others that the pattern of policy formulation dictates the pattern of educational policy execution. I also found in the study that school administrators were not involved in policy formulation neither were they given free hand in the implementation (Abraham, 2003).

Nigeria's policy-making process has historically been greatly impacted by the colonial past. Centralized governance structures were established by the British colonial administration with the primary goal of controlling and extracting resources. This legacy of centralization has remained post-independence, impacting the way policies are

produced and implemented. In Nigeria, the central government has considerable influence over policy choices, which frequently results in a top-down strategy that might not always take local needs and circumstances into account.

The role of government ministries and agencies is one of the most important factors in the formulation of policy in Nigeria. These organizations are in charge of recognizing problems, coming up with fixes, and creating policy documents. However, the effectiveness of these agencies is often hampered by bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of capacity, and political interference. For instance, policies related to education, healthcare, and infrastructure development are typically formulated by the respective ministries, but the process can be slow and cumbersome due to the hierarchical nature of the government.

Effective policy formulation requires public consultation and stakeholder engagement, both of which are frequently lacking in Nigeria. Ideally, input from a variety of stakeholders, such as representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, and the general public, should be incorporated into the formulation of policies; however, in practice, this is not always the case, and many policies are formulated with limited consultation, which results in a lack of buy-in and support from the public.

It is impossible to overstate the impact of political factors on the formulation of policy in Nigeria. Politicians frequently prioritize policies that benefit their personal interests and their constituencies over national cohesion, and policies are sometimes used as tools for political gain rather than to address pressing issues. For instance, during election seasons, politicians may make promises of new policies or reforms to

win support, but these promises are not always kept after the elections are over. Politicians also take ethnic and regional dynamics into account when formulating policies.

### **My Footprints in the Rescue Mission**

My interest in educational policy studies began from my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programme days. I had read about educational policies that looked good in all intents and purposes but failed at the level of implementation. Therefore, I decided to do my Ph.D. Thesis on ‘Patterns of Policy Formulation and Execution in School Administration in Rivers State’. The thesis was defended on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, 2000 in the University of Port Harcourt. The purpose was to find out if the issues that led to poor policy implementation stemmed from the pattern of its formulation. The study which adopted the ex-post facto research design had six (6) research questions and four (4) null hypotheses. The findings included that there are two main patterns of policy formulation in school administration, namely, one in which policies were not really formulated, but imposed by political office holders – including military dictators (Executive Fiat), and the other in which government officials sought the opinions and advice of educationists and other critical stakeholders; the pattern of policy execution is dictated by the pattern of policy formulation – meaning that there is positive relationship between pattern of policy formulation and pattern of policy execution; factors that determined the pattern of policy formulation and execution include asking school administrators to furnish the Ministry with reliable statistical data for policy formulation, giving school administrators free hand to manage resources allocated for policy execution, regular monitoring, etc. This thesis marked my incursion into studies in educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria.

One of my earliest and cherished contributions to knowledge as it relates to this inaugural lecture is the Quality Execution of Policies (QEP) Model which I developed in 2001. Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished audience, early in my career I published an article titled ‘Ensuring successful management of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme through Quality Execution of Policies (QEP)’ where I proposed the QEP as a model for effective policy formulation and execution. This was in *Nigerian Journal of Empirical Studies in Psychology and Education*, 1(5),156-162. The guiding principle of the model is Promptness. One of the major problems of educational policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria is **long time lag**. Oftentimes we delay and allow too much time gap between policy formulation, provision of resources for the implementation, and actual policy implementation. QEP is the antidote to that anomaly. It is a technique for successful implementation of policies. The stages in QEP are as follows:

- Appraisal of the policy(ies) formulated.
- Analysis of the requirements for implementation.
- Choosing the option with minimal difficulty and cost (in terms of time and other resources).
- Policy implementation.
- Periodic review of policy implementation.

The key word in the Quality Execution of Policies (QEP) is ‘promptness’ in doing what should be done. Doing the right thing right, and at the right time. This requires:

- Promptness in carrying out tasks and assignments;
- Promptness in acquiring reliable statistical data for planning;
- Promptness in making funds for policy implementation available; and
- Promptness in providing infrastructural facilities and other basic requirements.

This model was introduced to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in 2011. It was adopted and used in the establishment of Almajiri schools in mainly the northern states of Nigeria between 2011 and 2014. Recently, it has been adopted by the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board. With the QEP Model, the usual waste of time on frivolities is cut off. QEP Model recognizes that time is an irreplaceable resource. If the QEP Model is adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria and conscientiously followed for the implementation of all educational policies in particular, and sundry policies, the rudders of the ship will be effective and fully operational.

Over the years, I have proposed and severally spoken and published the **‘Because I am involved’** theory. At the 38th Annual National Conference of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) with the theme ‘Quality Assurance in the Management of Education: Prospects and Challenges’ held at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of October, 2019, I presented a Lead Paper titled ‘Quality Assurance: Managing Education for School Improvement’. It was published in the 2020 Annual Book of Readings of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) edited by S. Oyeniran, H. Imam, V. Onyene, L. A. Udida, J. A. Undie & C. R. Aguba. In that paper, I proposed the **‘Because I am involved’** theory for effective educational service delivery. The logic is that if as a serving President, serving Federal Law makers, State Governors, Ministers, Commissioners, Chairmen of Boards and Parastatals, etc., their children are in public schools in Nigeria, because of their children, they will ensure that educational policies and programmes are implemented to the letter. There will be proper funding, proper supervision, provision of adequate instructional materials, well stocked

laboratories and libraries, periodic retraining of teachers, etc. The conference was covered by a number of electronic and print media, and the communiqué was widely circulated.

Distinguished audience, it is with a feeling of fulfillment that I note here that what I had advocated over the years is now a proposed bill in the House of Representatives. On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025, a legislative proposal was introduced as “A Bill for an Act to Prohibit Public and Civil Servants from Patronizing Private Schools and Health Care Services and for Related Matters (HB 2487)”. The bill is sponsored by Honourable Amobi Godwin Ogah who remarked that the proposed legislation marks a watershed moment in the country’s efforts to address the declining state of public institutions.

I found in a study with a research associate that migrant fisher-folks in the deltaic region of Nigeria suffered social alienation in terms of access to quality education. We (Abraham & Tabotndip, 2006) carried out a study titled ‘Redressing the social alienation of migrant fisher-folks through Quality Execution of Policies – The Millennium Development Goals imperative’ which was published in *Adult Education in Nigeria: African Journal of the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education*.11; 86-95. In the same vein, Abraham and Leigha (2007) published an article titled ‘Teaching manpower and infrastructure availability in migrant fisher-folk schools in Bayelsa: Implications for access to quality Basic Education’ in *Adult Education in Nigeria: The Journal of the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education*. 15; 106-120. Both were commissioned papers, the outcome of which was adopted by the Rivers and Bayelsa State Governments in revamping the migrant fisher-folks schools in the states.

Teaching manpower in public primary and secondary schools in Rivers State was abysmally low in the early 2000s. That situation led the inaugural lecturer to carry out a number of studies. In conjunction with a research associate, I conducted a study titled ‘Viability of public primary schools and the achievement of EFA goal in Rivers State’ published in *African Journal of Contemporary issues in Education (CONTEMPOR)*, 1(1), 15-19. (Ghana). We found among others that public primary schools in Rivers State were not viable and risked not achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals due to acute shortage of teachers (Leigha & Abraham, 2007a). We also found from a study on ‘UBE programme, literacy and numeracy development in Nigeria: Issues, constraints and prospects’ that for the UBE programme to be properly implemented, and for thorough literacy and numeracy development of pupils, there was need to employ adequate number of trained teachers (Leigha & Abraham, 2007b). We also found that enrolment rate into primary schools between 2000 and 2006 increased exponentially without commensurate increase in available teaching manpower. As at the time, this had grave implications for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the article published in the *European Journal of Social Sciences*, (London); 6(3), 325-330, we recommended that more teachers should be employed for the implementation of the basic education programme (Leigha & Abraham, 2008).

In a related study on ‘Teacher supply and demand in relation to achieving the millennium development goal of Universal Primary Education...’ published in the *International Journal of Pedagogy, Policy and ICT in Education*, (Ghana). 1(2), 53-61, Abraham, Leigha and Abraham (2011) found that the supply of qualified teachers was far less than the demand, and this had negative consequences for the achievement of the

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of Universal Primary Education. Similar result was obtained in the study by Abraham, Leigha and Benwari (2011) on ‘Demand and supply of lower secondary education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria: Implications for socio-economic development’. Consequent upon these findings, I in conjunction with my late senior friend and mentor, Professor A. K. Okorosaye-Orubite advised the Rivers State Government to massively employ and staff primary and secondary schools with teachers. In response to this clarion call, the then State Government of Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi employed and staffed public primary and secondary schools in the state with over 13,000 teachers, in 2013. In training the newly employed teachers, I coordinated the recruitment of all the resource persons.

### **Link between the Lecturer’s Works and the Rescue Mission**

The cumulative impact of these publications demonstrates my long-standing academic engagement with the core managerial, policy, and leadership deficiencies that shape Nigeria’s educational challenges. My body of work consistently argues that without deliberate investments in leadership capacity, managerial professionalism, and evidence-driven policy formulation and execution, Nigeria will continue to drift. These footprints form the intellectual foundation of this lecture’s central thesis: that education management, anchored on research, leadership accountability, and sound policy implementation, is the major rescuer capable of restoring direction to the Nigerian ship of state.

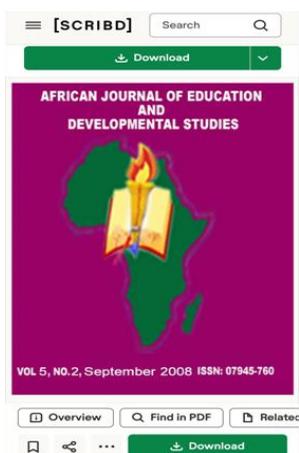
Nigeria does not suffer from a shortage of policies but from a chronic inability to implement them effectively. Most policies exist only as documents without translation into actionable programmes. This phenomenon is rooted in weak institutional

systems, governance indiscipline, political interference, and inadequate managerial capacity. Therefore, the rescue mission focuses on strengthening the structures that transform policy intentions into results.

Leadership remains the most critical factor in the success of educational policy. Without visionary, accountable, and ethical leadership, even the best policy becomes impotent. Leaders serve as the helmsmen of the national ship, without competence and discipline, they cannot steer the ship regardless of the quality of its rudder blades.

### **Other Contributions to Knowledge**

In 2004, I founded the African Journal of Education and Developmental Studies (AJEDS) – An International Journal for Multi-Disciplinary Studies. It was the first journal in the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt to be hosted on the internet ([www.ajeds.com](http://www.ajeds.com)).



In the area of research, I have to my credit one (1) textbook on Educational Administration, six (6) edited books, and over one hundred (100) impactful articles, forty-five (45) of which are

international publications published in highly reputable journals across the globe.

I have attended numerous local and international conferences where I presented papers, including keynotes, and lead papers. I served two terms as Head of Department (2014 – 2018) during which period I successfully organized three (3) conferences. The last conference I organized as Head of Department in 2018 was personally graced by Her Excellency Justice Suzzette Eberechi Nyesom Wike, as a sitting First Lady of Rivers State. Her very rich academic address was published in the 2018 Conference Edition of the Departmental Journal – African Journal of Educational Research and Development (AJERD).

I served as Director, College of Continuing Education (C.C.E) from 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 to 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024. During this period, the College got back the B.Sc. Geography programme that was discontinued sometime earlier. We also expanded the Certificate (Pre-Degree) programme that used to be only in departments in the Faculty of Education, and two departments in the Faculty of Humanities to cover all departments in the Faculties of Education, Communication and Media Studies, Humanities, Management Sciences, and Social Sciences. This has helped to increase enrolment to the programme that was ailing.

We got the Senate of the University to approve Amnesty for part-time students who could not graduate due to the closure of the Yenagoa Study, and related issues. We initiated the idea of establishing a Study Centre in Okrika so as to serve the teeming population that do business in and around the Port Harcourt Refinery. We completed the spade work and handed over to my successor, Professor Love A. Akonye.



Visit to the Palace of His Royal Majesty, King Ateke Michael Tom, J.P., Sekuro I of Niger Delta, Amanyanabo of the Ancient Okochiri Kingdom on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.



Visit to His Royal Highness, King (Air Commodore) T. E. O. Ogude (Rtd.), Amayanabo of Okrika (Kirike) Kingdom on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023. (The King was represented by some members of his council)

\*\*\* Also on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 the University of Port Harcourt CCE Team visited HRM King E. T. I. Obudibo (Ikwo V), Amayanabo of Ancient Ogoloma Kingdom.

Today, the Okrika Study Centre is running.

## **Future Research Focus**

The target year for the attainment of the global agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is December, 2030. It is only about five (5) years to the target year. Different nations of the world have been working assiduously to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4 is on Quality Education. I hold the view that all other SDGs can be easily attained if Quality Education is achieved.

I will devote attention to researching on appraising the extent of attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria. Already, I have set machineries in motion to conduct a study on ‘Five Years to Target 2030 – Where is Nigeria in Sustainable Development Goal Attainment?’.

We shall appraise educational policies to see if they have been sufficiently implemented, with a view to determining how qualitative different levels of education in the country are.

## **Conclusion**

Vice Chancellor Sir, and distinguished audience, I conclude this Inaugural Lecture by presenting to you the ‘**Treasure and Heart**’ (**Matthew 6:21**) **Theory**: The Holy Bible in Matthew’s gospel, Chapter 6, verse 21 conveys the words of Jesus Christ that “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (King James Version). This Scripture reveals how the priorities and values people hold to high esteem are reflected in what they treasure. The true passions and focus of individuals are usually shown in what they value most. Education can simply be defined as the transmission of knowledge, skills, culture, acceptable norms of the society, etc. from one generation to another. One operational term in the definition above is ‘transmission’. It is important to note that the transmission process is very crucial since it helps to maintain cultural identity and continuity, build on past achievements and

innovate for the future, and equip recipients/future generations with knowledge and skills as tools for success in an ever-changing and globalized world.

Education is a life-long process. It is also a link between the past, present, and future. Being a life-long process, education starts from birth; from childhood. As humans - rational and humane humans, there is no treasure more treasurable and more valuable than our children. The quality, and effectiveness of education service delivery is intricately connected to the passions, priorities, and values of major stakeholders, particularly, the policymakers. Knowing that policy as simply defined by Adams (2014) is “whatever governments choose to do or not to do”, if government of any country truly wishes to bequeath the citizenry with public education of the highest quality and most effective service delivery, the first thing to do is to legislate a prohibition of children of political office holders/government functionaries, and public/civil servants from patronizing schools outside the country where their parents hold such political/public office(s). They should attend only public schools within such country.

With such a legislation, and with the most cherished ‘treasures’ of all political office holders/government functionaries, and public/civil servants in public educational institutions within the country, public school education will be prioritized. It will be such that educational policies will be effectively implemented with the necessary inputs such as adequate funding, quality teachers, adequate infrastructural facilities and instructional materials of contemporary quality, regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation promptly provided. Accountability and transparency will be practiced ensuring that all stakeholders are held accountable for education outcomes. This leads to effective utilization and

management of resources. Teacher development, with periodic retraining of teachers will become a norm.

All these positive turnaround happen because the policymakers cannot make provision of excellent school environment and conditions only for schools where their children (treasures) are, but will do so for all public schools. Consequently, for the fact that their ‘treasures’ (children) are in public schools, their hearts will be there, and they will use the instruments of their offices to ensure that all public schools get the best. The country will be better for it, and have real sustainable development since countries can only develop to the level of their education.

The ‘Treasure and Heart’ theory can also be called the ‘Matthew 6:21’ theory. It is my modest contribution as the magic wand for effective service delivery in public educational institutions.

## **Recommendations**

### **This Rudderless Ship must be Rescued!**

Vice Chancellor Sir, and distinguished audience, I have in preceding sections of this lecture justified Nigeria – a nation state as a ship, borrowing from the idiom ‘Ship of State’. From the nautical parlance, we have borrowed the idea that metamorphosed into the title of this Inaugural Lecture: ‘**The Rudderless Ship and its Major Rescuer**’. The crux of the matter in this lecture is that educational policies are to a country what the rudder blades are to ocean-going vessels or ships. Just as a ship with dysfunctional or faulty rudders are tossed about by the waves on the sea, and cannot keep to its course, and may get wrecked in some cases, so it is with a country without carefully formulated and sincerely implemented educational policies. Quality of education in such

clime is usually poor; educational malpractice which leads to every form of anomaly including examination malpractice is rife, and national development is slow with catastrophic consequences as enunciated earlier.

In this section, issues in Educational Management which if adopted and adhered to will salvage the rudders, and rescue the ship; that is, educational policies will be carefully and qualitatively formulated, and conscientiously implemented.

1. Involve specialists in the process of policy formulation: Policy formulation is predominantly a political affair (Okeke, 1988; Abraham, 2002; Abraham, 2004). It is the responsibility of the government in power to formulate policies for the country, or state, as the case may be. Educational policy formulation requires in-depth research, and the search for, and collection and collation of data. If a President or a Governor sits in his office and makes policy pronouncements without confirming what is required to implement such policy, it may end up as a 'wild goose chase', an exercise in futility, and a wasteful venture. Therefore, professionals and experts in the area that such policy affects must be consulted and used to brainstorm and give specialist advice and guidance for the policy formulation process. The Ministry of Education, both at the Federal and State levels is one Ministry where just any person could be appointed Minister, or Commissioner. This does not happen in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, and others. In the same vein, there is this erroneous belief that anyone can make educational policies, and administer education in Nigeria. This makes government officials to engage their political associates and cronies, on the grounds of political patronage, in educational policy formulation process, even when they lack functional

specialization. Such situation spells doom for educational development, and national development.

Educational Planners, Curriculum development experts, Statisticians, Educational Policy experts, School Administrators, professional bodies like the Nigerian Academy of Education, and other relevant professionals and experts must be engaged, and given free hand to work and submit reports to guide the formulation of educational policies. The overall national interest must be put over and above selfish party or personal interests in the formulation of educational policies.

2. Use adequate and reliable statistical data: One major reason for the failure of educational policies at implementation stage is planning with unreliable statistical data (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2004a; Fafunwa, 2004; Imam, 2012). In fact, the pre-independence regional Universal Primary Education, and the 1976 Universal Primary Education programmes failed mainly due to planning with inadequate and unreliable statistical data (Abraham, 2000; Abraham, 2002; Abraham & Abraham, 2003). Planning without adequate and reliable statistical data is an invitation for policy failure at the stage of implementation. This is corroborated by many scholars (op cit), as well as Imam (2012) with reference to the UPE where she notes that “the programme which took off with much promise, failed to achieve its goals of eradicating illiteracy largely due to inadequate planning, which is consequence of lack of adequate data”(p. 189).

Planning education without adequate and reliable statistical data leads to underestimating number of pupils and students expected to be in school per session, underestimation of infrastructural facilities requirements, underestimation of the quantity and quality of teaching manpower. When the UPE policy implementation crisis

unfolded, the pupil enrolment figures overshoot the number planned for by far, with the resultant problems of overcrowded classrooms, and dearth (acute lack) of qualified teachers. Many primary school leavers were given one – year crash teacher training in some Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) established by government. This has grave implication for quality of education. It is there important that going forward, educational planning and policy formulation must rely on reliable statistical data.

3. Adequate financing/funding: The Ship has been sailing rudderless partly because of inadequate funding. Education is an expensive venture, and since it is a globally accepted fact that education is a critical tool for development, UNESCO recommended that countries should appropriate a substantial part of the annual budget, about 26%, to education. Nigeria has consistently underfunded education. A cursory look at the Nigerian Education budget for 10 years, 2016 to 2025 reveals that the least percentage was 4.72% in 2025 while the highest percentage was 7.90% in 2016. Please see Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Budgetary allocation to Education in Nigeria, 2016 - 2025**

Year	Amount Budgeted for Education	% of Budget for Education	Total Budget
2016	₦480.27 Billion	7.90%	₦6.076 Trillion
2017	₦455.7 Billion	6.13%	₦7.44 Trillion
2018	₦651.2 Billion	7.14%	₦9.12 Trillion
2019	₦634.5 Billion	7.12%	₦8.91 Trillion
2020	₦686.82 Billion	6.48%	₦10.59 Trillion
2021	₦771.46 Billion	5.68%	₦13.58 Trillion
2022	₦899.28 Billion	5.25%	₦17.12 Trillion
2023	₦1.07 Trillion	4.93%	₦21.8 Trillion
2024	₦1.58 Trillion	5.78%	₦27.5 Trillion
2025	₦2.59 Trillion	4.72%	₦54.99 Trillion

Source: The Internet

Note that the highest sum ever budgeted for Education in Nigeria (2.59 trillion naira) came in 2025, followed by 1.58 trillion naira in 2024, and 1.07 trillion naira in 2023. It is necessary to commend the present federal government for the large sums appropriated for Education in recent years, and also encourage government to have the positive political will to step up education sub-sector allocation to the UNESCO recommended 26% of the country's annual budget.

4. Prudent management of funds and other resources: It is one thing to appropriate and release funds for programmes and projects for educational policies implementation, and yet another thing to have the funds prudently managed and utilized for the purpose it was appropriated. As scholars (Okoroma, 2006; Abraham, 2002; Abraham, 2022) noted, one of the reasons for non-implementation or haphazard implementation of educational policies and programmes in Nigeria is that sometimes monies appropriated are either looted or depleted and misappropriated. For us to get it right, there must be mechanisms put in place to ensure that funds appropriated for educational policy implementation must be promptly released, and prudently utilized in line with the Quality Execution of Policies (QEP) model developed by Abraham (2002).

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) are anti-graft agencies established in Nigeria to fight corruption and promote probity and transparency in governance. These institutions seem to be doing their best, but it appears as though they are constrained; that is, not given free hand to function as they should. Nigeria should grow to a level where there are no 'sacred cows', and corrupt individuals are not shielded from the law because of their political party affiliation, or other considerations. Embezzlement of funds meant for

projects and programmes that should serve the common good of society is sacrilegious, and should be severely punished to deter others in future. It is only by so doing that prudence in managing funds and other resources meant for educational policy implementation will be assured and restored.

5. Sincerity of purpose: Sincerity of purpose on the part of government functionaries and even the educational administrators at the unit school levels is a major factor for the successful implementation of educational policies (Abraham, 2003; Abraham, 2022). It is important that every stage in the policy process is guided by the principle of sincerity of purpose. Policies are not mere statements; they are statements of intent of what a country, or organization plans to do so as to achieve the predetermined goals and objectives of such country or organization (Abraham, 2000). Education, as Ukeje (1986) affirms unlocks the door to modernization and development. Therefore, educational policies must be developed and implemented with all amount of sincerity if truly we seek modernization and national development.
6. Positive political will: Positive political will refers to the commitment and willingness demonstrated by political leaders and governments in addressing specific issues, problems, or challenges related to policy initiatives, collaboration/partnership, leadership and accountability, resource allocation, etc. Positive political will is vital for ensuring meaningful change and progress in governance, particularly in the areas of improving educational access, and quality, enhancing access and quality of healthcare, fostering economic growth and development, etc. Leaders' political will inspires citizens and stakeholders to trust and have confidence in their leaders, and also mobilizes private sector and foreign partners support.

When there is positive political will, policy formulation, development, and implementation will be effective. This translates to tangible improvement in the quality of lives of the people, and overall development of the country, or state (Abraham, 2022; Abraham, 2023c).

7. Regular supervision: Regular supervision is *sine qua non* for effective educational policy implementation. Regular supervision is necessary to monitor progress of implementation, and hold stakeholders accountable for lapses in the process. Supervision is key in quality assurance by maintaining education standards and quality. Through supervision also, teachers and other staff are provided support and guidance which will lead to enhanced teacher performance and improved student outcome. Regular supervision through monitoring and evaluating helps to track the progress of policy/programme implementation as well as assess its impact. It helps in cutting down cost as defects could be detected early and corrected.
8. Leadership by example: This is a leadership approach where the leaders demonstrate the values, behaviours, and work ethics expected from subordinates. The advantage of this approach is that it inspires trust as leaders show their commitment and dedication, members of the group are encouraged by the leader's example and emulate same. Public institutions in Nigeria, schools inclusive, that were established and funded by government through public treasury, are not patronized by representatives/functionaries of government. This raises issues of the quality of what government has provided (Fitness-for-use). A producer of a good/product, or proprietor of an institution should be at the forefront patronizing his product, good or service. This builds trust as to the quality of the product or service.

Vice Chancellor Sir, distinguished audience, I have for many years advocated through public lectures like Keynote Addresses and Lead Papers at local and international conferences, as well as articles published in reputable journals, for a legislation making all government functionaries – the President and all his appointees, Federal Legislators, Governors and all appointees at the State level, State Legislators, Local Government Chairmen and all LGA appointees, all Civil/Public servants to patronize only public institutions, including schools and hospitals in their domains, 100 per cent. This means that children of all government officials will compulsorily attend public schools and universities, and the officials and their families must use government hospitals for healthcare services whenever the needs arise.

This proposal, if taken and implemented, will be the magic wand to fix most of the problems plaguing our public institutions, including the problem of security.

9. Periodic review: Periodic review of educational policies is very necessary. We live in a dynamic, ever-changing world. Therefore, periodic reviews lead to updating of educational policies to accommodate the changes and innovations in technological advancements, as well as changing societal needs and economic realities of the time. Reviews help to identify areas that need improvements that will culminate in enhancement of educational standards. As the times change in the globalized world, so do emphasis of education. It is only through periodic reviews issues that demand for future planning are thrown up.

Thank you for listening.

**Professor Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham**

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MNAE, MNIM, FNAEAP, FA'EMAPP, FCAI*

Prof. Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham was born on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1966, to the family of Late Sir. Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham and Noble Lady Cordelia Ukachi Abraham (nee Nwoko), from Omuigwe Community, Aluu Clan in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

He started his primary education in 1972 at State School 1, Ozuaha when his father taught in the school and did Primary 2 to Primary 6 at State School 1, Aluu, earning a Credit Level Pass at the School Leaving Certificate Examination in 1977. Between September 1977 and June 1982 he had his secondary education at the prestigious County Grammar School, Ikwerre/Etche. He qualified as a teacher before the age of 19 when he earned the Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) in 1985. He holds a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) (Hons.) from the University of Ibadan (1989).

Prof. Nath. Abraham did the mandatory National Youth Service Corps (N.Y.S.C) in the defunct Gongola State where he functioned as the Corps Liaison Officer (C.L.O) in charge of Wukari Local Government Area. He earned a State Merit Award at the end of the national service. He holds Master of Education (M.Ed.) (1992) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (2000) from the University of Port Harcourt.

He started his teaching career at the former Rivers State College of Education (now Ignatius Ajuru University of Education) as an Assistant Lecturer (1995–1999). He joined the services of the University of Port Harcourt in February 1999 as Assistant Lecturer and rose through the ranks to become a Professor on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2013.

In 2004, the Inaugural Lecturer founded the African Journal of Education and Developmental Studies (AJEDS) – An International Journal for Multi-Disciplinary Studies. It was the first journal in the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt to be hosted on the internet ([www.ajeds.com](http://www.ajeds.com)).

He has taught pre-degree (Certificate Programme), undergraduate, and post-graduate courses, and has mentored, and still mentoring many students.

Prof. Nath Abraham has supervised numerous Ph.D. theses, M.Ed. dissertations, and First degree projects. Many of his former students and supervisees are Professors, academics at different levels, and others who are public office holders, or privately employed. His contribution to human capital development is a source of fulfillment to him.

He has assessed many candidates for Professorial, and Readership promotions from virtually the six geo-political

zones of Nigeria. Prof. Abraham has served, and still serves as post-graduate and undergraduate External Examiner in the following universities:

- University of Calabar (Ph.D. & M.Ed.)
- University of Benin (Post-Graduate and Undergraduate)
- Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (Post-Graduate)
- Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (Ph.D. & M.Ed.)
- Rivers State University (Ph.D. & M.Ed.)
- University of Africa (Undergraduate)

He was Editor-in-Chief (National Editor) of the Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning (NJEAP) – the journal and other publications of Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) from 2014 – 2018. He is a Consulting Editor, and Member of Editorial Boards of many journals, in Nigeria and overseas.

The Inaugural Lecturer had served as Chairman, and Member of National Universities Commission (NUC) Programme Accreditation Teams, as well as Chairman, NUC Student Support Services Resource Verification.

In the area of research, he has to his credit one (1) textbook on Educational Administration, six (6) edited books, and over one hundred (100) impactful articles, forty-five (45) of which are international publications published in highly reputable journals across the globe.

He has attended numerous local and international conferences where he presented papers, including keynotes, and lead papers.

He served two terms as Head of Department (2014 – 2018) during which period he successfully organized three (3) conferences. The last conference he organized as Head of

Department in 2018 was personally graced by Her Excellency, Justice Suzzette Eberechi Nyesom Wike, as a sitting First Lady of Rivers State. Her very rich academic address was published in the 2018 Conference Edition of the Departmental Journal – African Journal of Educational Research and Development (AJERD).

Prof. Nath. M. Abraham served as Director, College of Continuing Education (C.C.E) from 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 to 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024. During this period, the College got back the B.Sc. Geography programme that was discontinued sometime earlier. CCE under his Directorship also expanded the Certificate (Pre-Degree) programme that used to be only in departments in the Faculty of Education, and two departments in the Faculty of Humanities to cover all departments in the Faculties of Education, Communication and Media Studies, Humanities, Management Sciences, and Social Sciences. This has helped to increase enrolment to the programme that was ailing.

He, as Director CCE got the Senate of the University to approve Amnesty for part-time students who could not graduate due to the closure of the Yenagoa Study, and related issues. He initiated the idea of establishing a Study Centre in Okrika so as to serve the teeming population that does business in and around the Port Harcourt Refinery. He and his team completed the spade work and handed over to his successor. Today, the Okrika Study Centre is running.

He served in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Governing Councils, representing Congregation, 2021 to 2025. During this period, Council ensured that staff promotions were prompt, as well as staff and student welfare. He moved the motion for the approval of the Career Structure proposal for Administrative and Technical Staff which had lingered for years, among

others. The motion was unanimously supported and approved by the 16<sup>th</sup> Governing Council, hence the birth of the New Career Structure.

Prof. Abraham served as President, Senior Staff Club of the University between 2017 and 2019, during which time, in addition to other innovative services, we procured a 50 KVA soundproof diesel generator to provide power and make the Club House cozy and comfortable for staff to unwind, and get reinvigorated for better service delivery and productivity.

He was Chairman of Council Committee on Students Welfare, and also served in other Committees. Other responsibilities held in the University include serving as Member, Committee on Eradication of Activities of Illegal Lecturers (2002); Member, Students' Disciplinary Committee (2002 – 2004); Member, Committee for the Publication of Introduction to Education (April, 2004); Secretary, NUGA Forum (2004); Hall Warden, Aminu Kano Hall C (2005 – 2007); Assistant Director, Centre for Research Management and Development (6<sup>th</sup> April – 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020); Chairman, Faculty Research Committee (June 2018 – May, 2022); Chairman, Departmental Accreditation Committee (2024 till date); Chairman, Departmental Graduate Studies Committee (2024 till date).

### **Leadership and Administrative Contributions outside the University**

- i. Founding National Chairman (President-General), Ikwerre Youth Movement (IYM)
- ii. First Centre Manager, National Teachers' Institute (NTI) Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Programme, Port Harcourt (2004 – 2014)

He started the Centre with forty-six (46) students in 2004. With zero tolerance for examination malpractice, and facilitator truancy, the Centre's reputation grew such that, a

couple of years later, the Centre had hundreds of students, and metamorphosed to three (3) vibrant centres operating till date. Some former students of that Centre are Professors and Lecturers in our University, and other universities within and outside Rivers State.

- iii. Resource Person, NDDC Re-training Programme for Core Subject Teachers in NDDC States (2008 – 2012)
- iv. Manager, Community Relations; Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (on Leave of Absence)
- v. The 2008 MDGs Teacher Retraining Programme under the Millennium Development Project, Rivers State (**as Centre Coordinator**), 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2008.
- vi. The 2009 MDGs Teacher Retraining Programme under the Millennium Development Project, Rivers State (**as Centre Coordinator**), 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2009.
- vii. The 2010 MDGs Teacher Retraining Programme under the Millennium Development Project, Rivers State (**as Centre Coordinator**), 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2010.

Professor Nath. M. Abraham enjoys the grace of a stable family. He is happily married to his friend and professional colleague, Professor Lois Nkechi Abraham, and the union is blessed with six (6) promising adult children, three (3) males and three (3) females.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I present to you this astute teacher and erudite scholar, prolific writer, and humane administrator, Professor Nathaniel Mbonu Abraham to deliver the 206<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled: **THE RUDDERLESS SHIP AND ITS MAJOR RESCUER.**

**Professor Owunari Abraham Georgewill**  
**Vice Chancellor**