

TRCN

PhD Study Material

on

PQE 001: *History of Education*

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Concept and Rationale of History of Education

The history of education in Nigeria reflects the interaction of three major systems: *traditional*, *Islamic*, and *Western* education. Each system has shaped the educational landscape with influence on the content, methods of instruction, and philosophy of education in Nigeria.

Traditional Education in Nigeria

Traditional education in Nigeria refers to the indigenous system of learning and knowledge transmission that existed before the introduction of formal Western and Islamic education.

It is informal, practical, and community-centred reflecting the values, norms, and customs of Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. Unlike formal schooling, traditional education is not structured in classrooms but took place within families, peer groups, and the community.

Key Features of Traditional Education in Nigeria

- 1. Practical and Vocational Focus:** Traditional education aims at preparing individuals to function effectively within their community. Children learn practical skills like farming, fishing, hunting, weaving, and craftsmanship through hands-on experiences and apprenticeships. These skills are essential for survival and economic productivity in rural and agrarian societies.
- 2. Oral Transmission of Knowledge:** Information is passed down orally from generation to generation. Elders, parents, and other

experienced members of the community play the role of educators, teaching through stories, proverbs, folklore, and songs to preserve the history, traditions, and cultural identity of the community.

3. Character and Moral Development: Traditional education places a strong emphasis on character building and moral development. It seeks to instil values such as respect for elders, honesty, hard work, communal responsibility, and social harmony. Elders are respected as custodians of wisdom, and children learn important life lessons by observing and interacting with them.

4. Community-Centred Learning: The community itself is the primary space for education. Every member of the society, from parents to elders and peers, contribute to the upbringing of a child. Learning takes place during daily activities like farming, ceremonies, festivals, and social gatherings, where individuals absorb societal norms and expectations.

5. Holistic Approach: Traditional education is not limited to academic or vocational training. It also incorporate elements of religious belief, social etiquette, health education, conflict resolution, and leadership skills. This comprehensive approach ensured that individuals are not only skilled in trades but also socially responsible members of their community.

6. Cultural and Religious Integration: Education in traditional Nigerian societies is closely tied to the culture and religious beliefs of the people. Rites of passage, rituals, and festivals play an educational role, teaching children about their heritage and preparing them for adulthood. Traditional education lay the foundation for social cohesion

and continuity, especially in preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage.

Islamic Education in Nigeria

Islamic education in Nigeria began with the arrival of Islam in the **11th century**, particularly in the Northern regions. It played a significant role in shaping the educational landscape in these areas and beyond.

Islamic education focuses on the teachings of the Quran, Islamic law (Sharia), and the Arabic language.

Key Features of Islamic Education in Nigeria

1. **Quranic Schools (Makaranta Allo)**: These schools focused on teaching students how to read, write, and memorize the Quran. Learning was done on wooden slates, and students were taught Islamic principles, prayers, and moral values.
2. **Advanced Islamic Studies (Ilmi Schools)**: For those seeking deeper knowledge, Ilmi schools provided advanced education in Islamic jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and sciences. These schools trained future Islamic scholars and religious leaders.
3. **Arabic Language**: Arabic, the language of the Quran, became widely used in education, religious, and administrative settings in northern Nigeria. It also facilitated trade and communication within the Muslim world.

4. Integration with Local Cultures: Islamic education blended with local traditions and cultures. It provided a structured educational system in northern Nigeria and influenced governance, law, and social structures. It ran parallel to traditional education, influencing the religious and intellectual landscape with its impact still in the dual educational systems in many parts of Nigeria.

Western Education in Nigeria

Western education in Nigeria was introduced by Christian missionaries in the **mid-19th century** and expanded under British colonial rule.

Unlike traditional and Islamic systems, Western education focused on literacy, numeracy, and Christian teachings. It marked a significant shift towards formal, classroom-based learning in Nigeria.

Key Features of Western Education in Nigeria

1. **Missionary Schools:** Christian missionaries established the first Western-style schools, teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious studies. These schools aimed to spread Christianity and provided early education to indigenous communities.

2. **Colonial Government Involvement:** During British colonization, the government became more involved in expanding education, establishing government schools, and developing a curriculum that included secular subjects like Science and History alongside religious education.

3. Formal Curriculum: Western education introduced a structured, formal curriculum with a focus on modern subjects like Mathematics, English, and Sciences, which were essential for administration and economic development under the colonial government.

Western education laid the foundation for Nigeria's modern educational system, including the 6-3-3-4 structure (*six years of primary, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education*).

It facilitated social mobility, access to political power, and economic opportunities for those who adopted this form of education. However, it also created disparities between those educated in Western schools and those in traditional or Islamic systems.

Evolution of Educational Policies and Practices in Nigeria

1. The Phelps-Stokes Commission Report (1920s)

This report highlighted the need for contextually relevant education, focusing on vocational training, agriculture, and practical skills.

2. The Ashby Commission Report (1959)

This report recommended expanding tertiary institutions in preparation for Nigeria's independence, leading to a focus on science and technology education.

3. National Policy on Education (1977, revised in 1981, 1998, 2004, and 2013)

This policy outlined the structure of the Nigerian educational system, emphasizing national unity, self-reliance, and individual potential. It

established the 6-3-3-4 system: six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education.

4. **Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme (1999)**

This program sought to provide free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian children, reflecting Nigeria's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Educational Supervisory Commissions Roles in Policy-Making

1. **National Universities Commission (NUC)**: is responsible for the coordination and quality control of *university education*.
2. **National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)**: oversees *technical* and *vocational* education, ensuring the development of skilled manpower.
3. **Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)**: implements the Universal Basic Education program, ensuring access to basic education.
4. **Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)**: regulates the teaching profession and promotes quality teaching and learning.

National Policy on Education and the Nigerian Constitution

The National Policy on Education (**NPE**) in Nigeria serves as a comprehensive framework designed to guide the educational system.

It reflects the government's vision and goals for education, grounded in the principles enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution.

Key Elements of the National Policy on Education

- 1. 6-3-3-4 System:** The NPE introduced a structure that includes six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education.
- 2. Promoting National Development:** The policy emphasizes education as a tool for national unity, self-reliance, and economic development. It prioritizes producing citizens who can contribute meaningfully to society.
- 3. Free and Universal Basic Education:** The NPE aligns with the constitutional mandate to provide free and compulsory education for children up to the junior secondary level, ensuring access to education for all citizens.
- 4. Functional and Practical Education:** The policy advocates for vocational and technical education to equip students with practical skills needed for employment and self-reliance.

Link with the Nigerian Constitution

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees the right to education under Chapter II, Section 18, which emphasizes:

- The duty of the government to provide free, compulsory, and universal primary education.
- The promotion of science, technology, and vocational education.

- Equal educational opportunities for all citizens, regardless of background, ethnicity, or religion.

Integration of Formal and Informal Education

The *NPE*, in line with the Constitution, seeks to harmonize both formal and informal education systems. It aims to integrate traditional, Islamic, and Western educational systems into a cohesive national structure, promoting inclusivity and cultural relevance in education.

Educational Reforms:

The National Policy on Education undergoes periodic revisions to address emerging challenges and align with global educational trends.

These reforms are crucial for ensuring that the educational system remains relevant, competitive, and responsive to Nigeria's socio-economic and political goals.

In summary, the National Policy on Education serves as a strategic blueprint for implementing Nigeria's constitutional mandate on education, focusing on national development, inclusivity, and the provision of quality education for all.

Challenges in the Nigerian Education System

1. Inadequate funding
2. Teacher shortage
3. Access to education

4. Insecurity
5. Corruption

Remedies to Nigeria's Educational Challenges

1. Increase Funding
2. Improve Teacher Training
3. Promote Inclusive Education
4. Collaborate with the Private Sector
5. Leverage Technology

PRACTICE QUESTIONS ON THIS TOPIC: HISTORY OF EDUCATION (001)

1. Which group primarily introduced Western education in Nigeria?

- A. Local governments
- B. Islamic scholars
- C. Christian missionaries
- D. British colonial officials

2. Which system of education primarily emphasised practical skills and community integration?

- A. Islamic education
- B. Traditional education
- C. Western education
- D. Modern education

3. What is a primary goal of the National Policy on Education?

- A. To promote religious education only
- B. To provide free education exclusively for boys
- C. To emphasize practical and functional education
- D. To limit education to urban areas

4. What is a key component of the 6-3-3-4 educational system?

- A. One year of tertiary education
- B. Six years of secondary education
- C. Three years of junior secondary education
- D. Four years of primary education

5. What is the current emphasis of Nigeria's educational policies?

- A. Exclusively Western education
- B. Integration of various educational systems
- C. Elimination of traditional practices
- D. Focus solely on vocational training

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