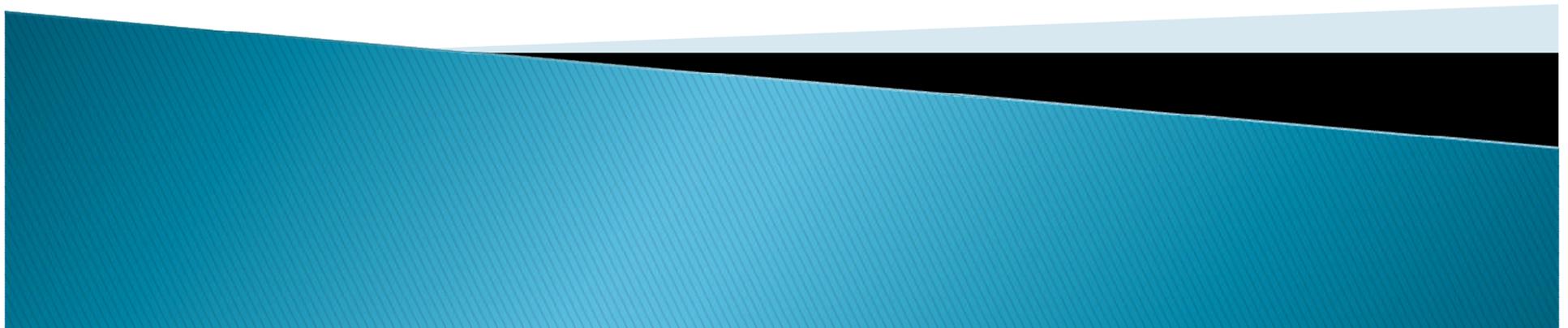


POLITICS OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION: THE NIGERIAN STORY

By
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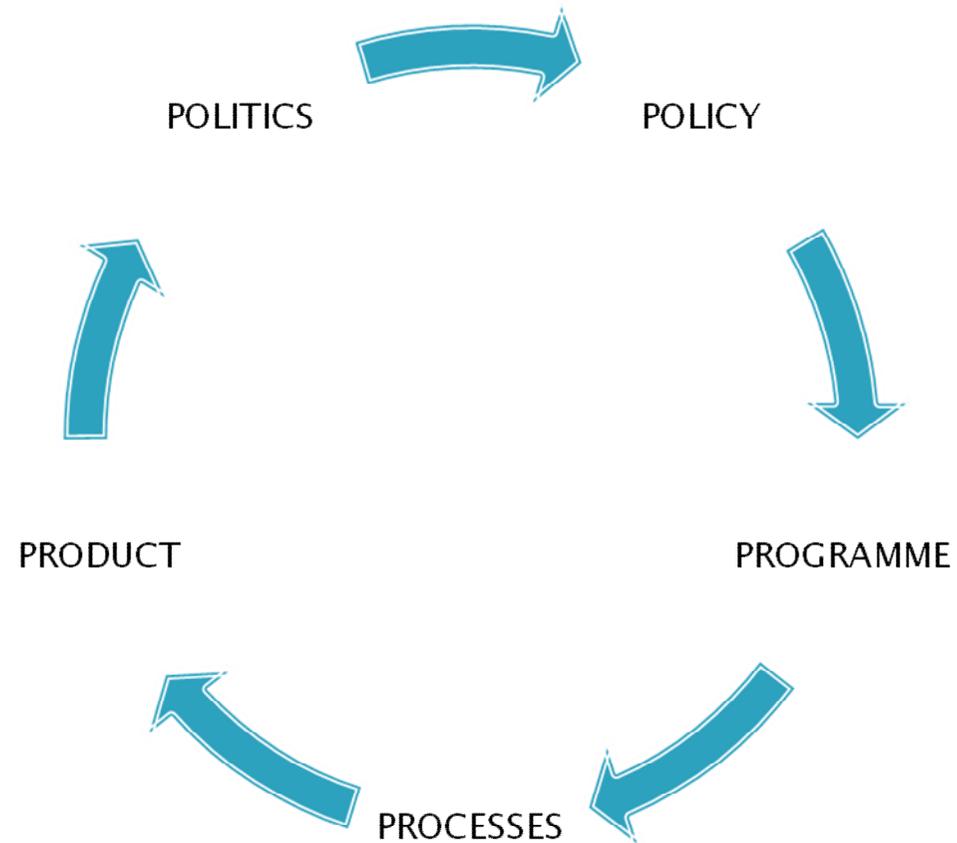
A DISCUSSION IN FIVE PARTS

- ▶ PART ONE – Good politics for good education
- ▶ PART TWO – Talking about Nigeria
- ▶ PART THREE – Politics in Nigeria over the Years
- ▶ PART FOUR – Nigeria-type politics in/of Education
- ▶ PART FIVE – For improved access to Education, politics must be transformed from BAD to GOOD

PART ONE: GOOD POLITICS FOR GOOD EDUCATION



THE 5-p EDUCATION CHAIN



BAD versus GOOD POLITICS

| Main features | Politics in its <u>raw</u> sense | Politics in its <u>noble</u> sense |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Perception of political power | 1. Political power for self aggrandisement | 1. Political power for public service |
| 2. The Priority | 2. Priority is the next election | 2. Priority is the next generation |
| 3. Style of operation | 3. 'Rule the people' | 3. 'Serve the people' |
| 4. Discourse Mode | 4. Since we came to power' | 4. 'Since the coming of this administration' |
| 5. Set Goal | 5. 'To be seen now and be hailed here and now' | 5. To live in people's hearts long after I am gone'. |
| 6. Impact on the polity | 6. Political instability | 6. Political stability |
| 7. Sum Total (effect on Education) | 7. Bad politics; not good for Education | 7. Good politics; good for good Education' |

PART TWO-LET'S TALK ABOUT NIGERIA



BASIC FACTS ON NIGERIA

- ▶ physical size and large human population of some 148 million people – Africa's most populous country.
- ▶ greatest wealth is its diversity, in terms of people, languages, cultures, ecology, natural resources and geographical features.
- ▶ administered as a Federation of 36 states (and a Federal Capital Territory FCT),
- ▶ each state having a number of local government areas (774 local governments in all).
- ▶ The political juggling of the country also includes the concept of geo-political zones (
- ▶ of which there are six -- north west, north east, north central, south east, south west, south-south

NIGERIA – POTENTIALLY RICH, BUT CURRENTLY POOR

| Index | Value | Ranking (out of 182 countries) |
|--|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Human development Index (HDI) | 0.511 | 158 |
| Life Expectancy at birth (years) | 47.7 | 167 |
| Adult Literacy (% of age 15 and above) | 72 | 112 |
| Combined gross enrolment ratio (%) | 53 | 150 |
| GDP per capita (PPP US\$) | 1,969 | 141 |
| Human Poverty Index (HPI) | 36.2 | 114 (out of 135 countries) |
| Possibility of surviving till age 40) | 37.4 | 146 |
| Adult Illiteracy | 28 | 112 |
| % lacking improved water source | 53 | 142 |
| Proportion of children underweight for age | 29 | 112 |

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PART THREE – POLITICS IN NIGERIA OVER THE YEARS



A CHRONOLOGY OF POLITICS IN NIGERIA

1. Pre-Colonial Period
2. British Colonial Days
3. Anti-Colonial Politics
4. 'First Republic' Politics
5. The Civil War
6. Entrenched Military Rule
7. The last ten years (next slide)

NIGERIA TODAY – Positive Side

- ▶ that civil rule has even lasted this ‘long’ is considered a plus.
- ▶ Civil society groups are beginning to come alive.
- ▶ The press has become more pluralistic, more independent, and more vibrant.
- ▶ Tele-density has improved, due to the introduction of cellular technology.
- ▶ Internet connectivity is on the rise.
- ▶ Nigeria is no longer considered a pariah nation by the international community
- ▶ international development assistance and foreign direct investment has been trickling into the country.

NIGERIA – Negative Sides

- ▶ Good politics is yet to take roots.
- ▶ Political controversy is yet to begin to focus on issues.
- ▶ Elections are still ‘flawed’ and the people feel that their votes do not count.
- ▶ The people are asking ‘where does the money go to’, as huge earnings from oil do not seem to impact on people’s lives.
- ▶ Corruption is still rampant, and Nigeria still ranks high on the corruption perception indices of Transparency International

NIGERIA – Corruption Score Card

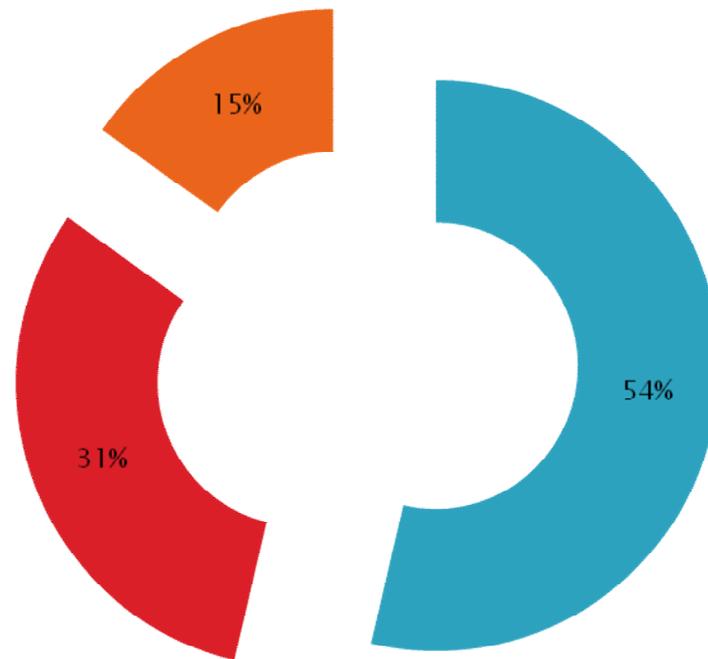
- ▶ Corruption has increased in Nigeria with the country currently ranking 130th out of 180 countries surveyed in the 2009
- ▶ Last year Nigeria scored 2.7 points and took 121st position out of 180 countries but this year the country's CPI score dropped to 2.5
- ▶ CPI ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians.
- ▶ Nigeria's CPI index in the span of an eight year period dating back to 2001 did not improve until 2006
- ▶ when it ranked 142nd out of 163 countries.
- ▶ Before then the country ranked second to last for four years consecutively with its lowest CPI
- ▶ (source: allAfrica.com – quoting DAILY TRUST newspaper – September 2009)

TRUE/FISCAL FEDERALISM

- ▶ a call for ‘true federalism’ – a shift of responsibilities to local and state governments.
- ▶ a call for ‘fiscal federalism’ – a change in current revenue allocation formula that is heavily tilted towards what has become known as the ‘federal might’

NIGERIA – Revenue Distribution Formula

■ Federal Government ■ 36+1 State Governments ■ 774 Local Government



MAJOR POLITICAL WORRIES

- ▶ deepening of inter-ethnic and religious intolerance. recurrent cases of civil unrest and violence in the past ten years
- ▶ The Niger Delta, where the bulk of Nigeria's oil is produced, has also been a theatre of violence..
- ▶ political discourse is yet to address issues of national development.
- ▶ an imperfect and lop-sided federation in which decentralisation is yet to translate into de-concentration and devolution of powers.

PART FOUR: POLITICS IN/OF EDUCATION I NIGERIA



'COMPLEXITIES' OF THE NIGERIAN POLITY

1. Strong entrenchment of ethnic and religious loyalties in a situation in which national cohesion is needed.
2. Lack of popular participation in a political process classified as multi-party democracy.
3. A federation characterised by over-centralisation of power.
4. A strong north-south divide even though both sides were amalgamated by the British way back in 1914.

All these complexities – and more – have had some impact on the development of Education in Nigeria, and on Access to Education

COLONIAL POLITICS AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- ▶ The Missionaries and Education in the South
- ▶ Islamic and Western (non-Christian Education) in the North
- ▶ Good politics with un-intended results – an UNEVEN EDUCATIONAL TOPOGRAPHY
- ▶ British Indirect Rule and self-help/community contributions to Education
- ▶ Elitist but non-assimilation secondary education
- ▶ Low status of non ‘grammar school’ secondary education
- ▶ A University with high standards, but restricted access/narrow range of programmes
- ▶ Poor response to social demand for higher education

THE ERA OF THE NATIONALISTS: 1952–1966

- ▶ Politics of free primary education
- ▶ Expanding access to secondary education—capitalizing on local communities
- ▶ Expanding access to higher education (response to social demand and political competition)

THE MILITARY YEARS – The Positive Side

- ▶ Nigeria's National Policy on Education
- ▶ published in 1977, after wide-ranging stakeholder dialogues that began in 1969 with a national curriculum conference.
- ▶ supported by detailed implementation guidelines developed with external technical assistance.
- ▶ also a technical secretariat to monitor its implementation.
- ▶ been subjected to revisions by successive governments and has remained the major education guidelines instrument for the country.
- ▶ an integral part of efforts at re-building Nigeria after the civil war
- ▶ closely linked with the national development plan of the mid 1970s

THE MILITARY YEARS – The Negative Side

1. Military-type unified command structure
2. Proliferation of higher institutions
3. Misapplication of the federal character principle
4. Detachment from the people
5. A Cult of Inefficiency
6. Assault on institutional autonomy

POLITICS IN / OF EDUCATION ACCESS IN THE LAST TEN YEARS

- ▶ ZONING OF POLITICAL POSTS
- ▶ since 1999, the post of Minister of Education has rotated between South West and South East
- ▶ That of Deputy Minister (Minister of State) has rotated between North East, North West and North Central.
- ▶ Experience and competence have not often been considered as worthwhile criteria
- ▶ Orderly development of Education has been the victim

INSTABILITY/POLICY SOMERSAULTS

- ▶ the head of a para-statal recently expressed deep frustration in ‘working with eleven ministers and 14 permanent secretaries in the past eleven years’.
- ▶ The minister in office from 1999 to 2001 was preoccupied with seeing through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.
- ▶ His successor was more concerned with ensuring the take off of the National Open University.
- ▶ The next successor focussed on curriculum reform and the review of the National Policy on Education.
- ▶ After him came a minister who vigorously pursued structural reforms of the sector
- ▶ The minister who came after that was pre-occupied with ‘reforming the reforms’,
- ▶ the minister currently in post has as pet project a national education ‘Roadmap’

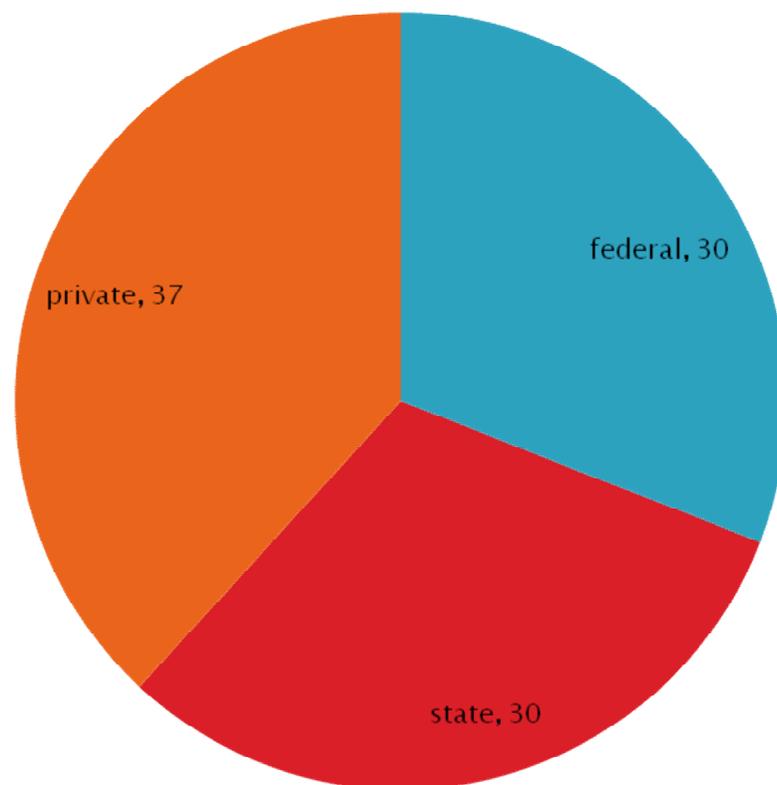
REVERSE-ORDER PLANNING

- ▶ Taking a firm decision on an educational initiative and insisting that ‘there is not going back’, before any form of planning.
- ▶ the fate of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, for which
- ▶ no measurable targets have really been set and
- ▶ for whose implementation there is no efficient structure

PROLIFERATION OF INSTITUTIONS

- ▶ mainly for the old reason of ‘fair geo-political spread’,
- ▶ often without any rigorous test of viability.
- ▶ on the surface, private participation in the provision of higher education is good politics.
- ▶ In the Nigerian case, the weight of the private sector has attained some 30% (next slide)
- ▶ only in terms of number of universities.
- ▶ nothing to do with broadening access in terms of increased opportunities for higher education,
- ▶ especially for the poorer segments of the population.
- ▶ Neither have there been increased opportunities in terms of range of courses offered.

NIGERIA – OWNERSHIP OF UNIVERSITIES



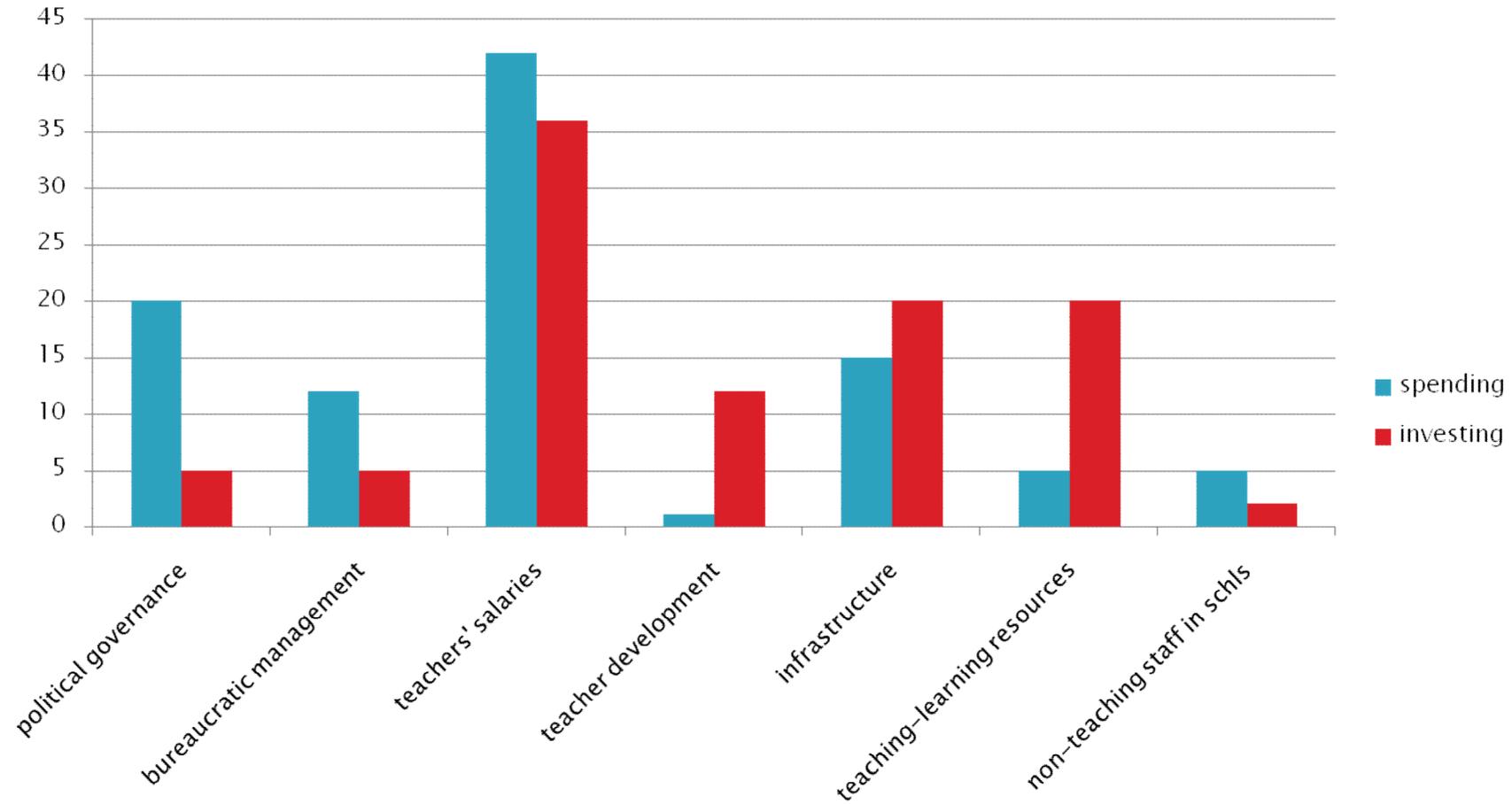
POLITICS AT PLAY IN THE PROLIFERATION OF UNIVERSITIES

1. 'Federal might' must be felt in all parts of the country,
2. Location of institutions must reflect 'federal character'.
3. Each state sees the possession of a university as a political status symbol.
4. Ownership of private universities must reflect diverse political interest groups
 - Christian groups (different denominations),
 - Muslim groups,
 - business interests, cultural groups, powerful political forces, etc.
 - ▶ In the final analysis, it is genuine access to university education that suffers.

INFLUENCE OF POPULATION POLITICS

- ▶ Population censuses are a part of the political power play in Nigeria.
- ▶ Census figures are fiercely disputed as each group sees itself as 'undercounted' and other groups 'inflated'.
- ▶ Since high figures mean improved shares of the 'national cake', accurate statistics is a rarity.
- ▶ The problem becomes really compounded when funding of government programmes is the issue.
- ▶ There are therefore hardly any accurate figures on the funding of education.
- ▶ Every tier of government claims to be spending a 'huge chunk of its annual budget' on Education, but
- ▶ the question that is being raised by the people is 'where does the money go?'

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



THREAT TO SELF HELP/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ▶ helped the development of grammar school education in western Nigeria.
- ▶ became well entrenched in the life of the Igbo, through their town and clan unions
- ▶ The self-help/community participation zeal was lost to the bad politics of the post civil war military regime.
- ▶ Government political message at the time was ‘government can do it all alone’.
- ▶ The result was total abandonment of responsibilities by parents and communities.
- ▶ The present civilian government has since been preaching another doctrine, that of PPP (Public-private-partnership).
- ▶ Recent introduction of (SMCs) in schools, but public reaction has been lukewarm.
- ▶ bad politics of ‘free education at all levels’ of most state governments is not understood to include any form of contribution by parents and communities.

IN SUMMARY

- ▶ Nigeria's education politics has changed very little over the years.
- ▶ The return to democratic rule does not seem to have erased the political memories of the past.
- ▶ Regimes may have changed but the political players have not..
- ▶ Reforms have been introduced in different directions,
- ▶ there have been increases in numbers, as well as increases in spending
- ▶ but the demand for education is has not been sufficiently stimulated
- ▶ where demand has been stimulated, it is yet to be met.
- ▶ This conclusion is well captured by the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report (next slide)

NIGERIA: EFA SCORE CARD

| Index | Rank/Score |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Overall EDI rank | 111 (out of 129) |
| 2. EDI score | 0.734 |
| 3. Primary NER | 0.696 |
| 4. Adult Literacy | 0.691 |
| 5. Gender Specific EDI | 0.81 |
| 6. EFA Index | 0.822 |
| 7. Survival Rate to Fifth Grade | 0.726 |

PART FIVE: FOR IMPROVED ACCESS, POLITICS MUST BE TRANSFORMED FROM **BAD** TO **GOOD**



NIGERIA'S WEALTH

- ▶ Neither agricultural products, nor solid minerals, nor Oil.
- ▶ Its wealth is the People.
- ▶ Denied access to Education, the country's huge population becomes a mere crowd
- ▶ Empowered through unfettered access to Education, the population becomes the country's major resource.
- ▶ Education is the key to transforming the huge population into the solid intellectual and skills base
- ▶ on which Nigeria's possible participation in the knowledge economy of the present century can be premised

TOWARDS A PARADIGM TURN-AROUND-

Good politics is the beginning of educational wisdom

- ▶ FOUR political-type concrete steps
 1. Electoral reforms, to reduce the incidence of flawed elections, ensure that the people's votes really count, encourage the emergence of governments that would reflect the people's will
 2. Good governance that enshrines accountability and espouses a philosophy that public office is to be held in trust for the people.
 3. Return to 'true federalism' – eliminating over-centralisation and giving strong political and financial muscle for the management of basic human development needs to local and state governments
 4. Drastically reducing wastage and corruption in the entire system, to release energies and resources for genuine national development endeavours

FIVE PILLARS TO LEAN ON

1. the major focus should be on strategic planning
2. the development of strong institutions for educational service delivery, particularly at the local and state levels.
3. need to capitalise on established/inherited traditional institutions, like the British colonial government did.
4. Capitalizing on Social networks, like the town unions among the Igbo, the trades' guilds among the Yoruba, the Islamic clerics and powerful traditional rulers of the North
5. DEMOCRATISING the education development process by really involving (not merely consulting or informing) all classes of stakeholders.

ONE LAST POINT

- ▶ Nigeria must eliminate ‘census politics’ from the Education.
- ▶ Orderly development of Education cannot take place in situations of
- ▶ either absolutely no data
- ▶ or the prevalence of unreliable/unusable data

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KNID ATTENTION



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