

Political Parties Manifesto and its Contributions to Educational Policy Development and Management in Kenya

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Abstract

Education of any country is an integral tool for the general developmental process of that particular nation. There are myriad factors that influence national systems of education. They inevitably range from social, economical, technological to political influences. This paper sought to investigate political parties manifesto and its contributions to educational policy development and management in Kenya. The target populations were County Directors of Education, Key Ministry of Education officials and members of County Education Boards in Uasin Gishu County, parliament and party leaders within the county. They were purposely sampled through non-probability sampling. The philosophical paradigm used was constructivism. It adopted qualitative research design where data was collected through interviews, document analysis of government policy documents, Parliamentary Hansards on educational development were transcribed, theme development observed and interpreted. Content and construct validity was observed. Data analysis was done through thematic coding; content, narrative, discourse and framework analysis. It was established that the challenges bedeviling educational sector would be effectively addressed through collaboration and involvement of the key stakeholders as espoused by stakeholder theory embraced in the enquiry. The study recommends that government should prioritize provision of education through sound policy frameworks as espoused in their political manifestos and key policy documents. The government and key stakeholders should plan; manage implementation and evaluation of educational programmes to achieve equity, access and quality. The findings are significant to the government in coming up with progressive policies, stakeholders in engagement and researchers. It foregrounds and interrogates the stakeholder theory as applied in educational provision.

Keywords: *manifesto and education, political parties manifesto, education and politics and educational policy development.*

1. Introduction

Education is ubiquitous as witnessed in national and international politics; it is explicit how often education is a pertinent discourse in political debates all over the world. Education today makes regular appearances in many election campaigns, political speeches, rallies and government strategies: inherently linked to the social-democratic policy of the “Third Way,” education had been observed as cornerstone component of European social democratic politics, conceived as an important element to qualify for continuous employment and to update skills linked to all types

of jobs in the economy. By emphasizing the knowledge society, the European Lisbon, strategy ideally relied on education and training. The Bologna and Copenhagen processes as well as the 2007 European Lifelong Learning Program endeavored to establish education as an important cornerstone in European civil and economic development (World Bank, 2018; Benavot & Köseleci, 2015).

The ultimate objectives of all societies are inextricably similar and have a universal character suggesting that educational development by respective governments would promote its achievements. These objectives typically include (i) political equality; (ii) social justice; (iii) human dignity including freedom of conscience; (iv) freedom from want, disease, and exploitations; (v) equal opportunities; and (vi) high and growing per capita incomes, equitably distributed (Government of Kenya [GOK] 1965; World Bank, 2018). Thus it has been incumbent upon the governments to foreground them in their respective political manifestos and implement the policies espoused therein with due considerations to national and international policies.

Party manifestos play an integral role in education in USA, Africa and the world over (Eshiwani, 1990). Empirical studies have revealed that educational development would concomitantly lead to accelerated economic growth, more wealth and income distribution to all and sundry, greater equality of opportunity, availability of skilled human power, a decline in population growth, long life span, better health outcomes, low crime rates, national unity and political stability. This belief has made many individuals and nations to invest immensely in education (Eshiwani, 1990; Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007).

Political responsibility through party manifestos has been witnessed in Kenya through commitment to education as witnessed after 1963 elections, when the Kenya African National Union (KANU) became the ruling party. The party published a manifesto that committed the party to offering a minimum of seven years of free primary education. In the 1969 election manifesto the party again re-echoed its commitment to the same and pledged to extend its educational programmes to sparsely populated areas and those which were neglected during the colonial rule so that every Kenyan could participate fully in nation building. In 1971, a presidential decree abolished tuition fees for the districts within unfavorable geographical location such as Arid and semi Arid Lands (ASAL) (Ojiambo, 2009; Bogonko, 1992). 2002 general elections, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) made the provision of free primary education (FPE) part of its election manifesto again. Fees and levies for tuition were abolished as the government and development partners pledged to meet the cost of basic educational materials as well as salaries for non-academic faculty and co-curricular activities (Sifuna, 2005; World Bank, 2018). It is evident that respective political parties have foregrounded educational development in their elections manifestos which make them committed to achieve for the betterment of their electorates and citizens.

It is apparent that parties which form government through their manifestos provide education as an obligation due to the following reasons: improved economic growth; social mobility of the poor; political socialization and cultural homogenization; manpower considerations and as a basic human right as enshrined in the international treaties. Murunga & Nasong'o (2007) contends

that democracy entails myriad characteristics the most prominence being democracy in which people have some real decisions making power over and above formal consent of the electorate choice. This entails among other things a powerful legislature, decentralization of power to local democratic formations, and considerable emphasis on development of institutions for articulation of interests. It has to be social democracy that invests heavily in improvement of people's health, education and capacity so that they participate effectively in the nation building (Bogonko, 1992; Amutabi, 2003; Ojiambo, 2009; World Bank, 2018).

Previous studies reveal that Kenyan governments have continued over time to invest heavily informal education. In the last three decades, for instance, public spending in education in Kenya as appropriation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased from 5.1% in 1980/1981 to 15% in 2008/2009; 2018/2019. Expenditure on Education: Total: % of GDP data is updated yearly, averaging 5.509 % from December 1971 to 2015, with 34 observations (World Bank, 2018). Ojiambo (2009) contends that: - compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with similar GDP per capita, Kenya spends considerably more funds on education in relation to its total Government expenditure and Gross National Product (GNP). This is in the realization to the fact that education acts as a catalyst for socio - economic development of a nation.

From these studies, it is evident there is a significant research gap on role of political parties in education policy implementation in African countries. While whole works have examined the role of the public bureaucracy in provision of education (Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007; Sifuna, 2005; KIPPRA, 2018) these studies do not deal with political party manifestos' role in the education sector, and their contribution to a wider systems level that goes beyond institutional bureaucracy. This study therefore focused on political parties manifesto and its contributions to educational policy development and management in Kenya

2. Methodology

The study employed constructivism philosophical paradigm thus delineates the advocacy of policies espoused by political parties through their respective party manifestos in this study. Bryman (2006) propounds that a paradigm as a cluster of beliefs and dictates which, for scientists in a particular discipline, influence what should be studied, how research should be done [and] interpreted. Paradigms are opposing worldviews or belief systems that are a reflection of and guide the decisions that researchers make (Creswell & Clark, 2012). Qualitative research design was employed in the study since the study sought to provide more insight.

The target populations were County Directors of Education, Key ministry of education officials and members of County Education Boards in Uasin Gishu, parliamentary and Senate party leaders. Data was collected through interviews of County Directors of Education, Teachers Service Commission and Ministry of Education, document analysis of government policy documents like commission reports; Acts of parliament like Children Act, 2001, Education Act, 1968; presidential pronouncements and ministerial circulars. Parliamentary Hansard on educational development was coded, transcribed, theme development observed including written messages from interview of which were interpreted. KANU, NARC and Jubilee parties' manifestos on education policy on access, equity and quality were coded thematically. They

were purposively selected since they have ruled the country. Content and construct validity was observed.

Data analysis was done through thematic coding; content, narrative, discourse and framework analysis of key policy documents. Validity is seen as evaluative judgments' that are made on the inferences of assessment results that is whether correct interpretations are made and actions are taken based on the inferences from interviews with key informants, documents and audio- visual materials of policy deliberations by the government.

3. Results

The results were based on the following aspects:

3.1 Government commitment to Provision of Education

Document review of key policy documents and interview results from County Directors of Education and politicians revealed that the Kenyan government commitment to education improvement is evidenced by several post independence commissions. The Kenya Education Commission-Ominde Commission (GOK,1964,GOK ,1965), The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy-Gacathi Report(GOK,1978), The Presidential Working Party on the Second University-Mackay Report (GOK,1981),The Presidential Working Party on Education and Man-power- Kamunge Report(GOK,1988) and Commission of Inquiry into the Education system of Kenya-Koech Commission (GOK, 1999).The commissions heralded sessional policy and strategy papers such as GOK,1965, Sessional paper No.10 of 1965: "African Socialism and its Application to planning in Kenya" and sessional Paper No.14 of 2012 among others.

The educational framework in use was built on and reformed or modified to reflect the needs and aspirations of national development. The legislations, commissions, acts of parliaments, presidential pronouncements and policies constitute the legal policy framework of the country's education system. After independence in 1963, the government laid emphasis on education as a medium for human resource and national development. Actually, education plays an integral role in the development of human capital that is important factor of production (GOK,2005; GOK, 2007; Sifuna, 2005)

It is instructive to note that political pronouncement has over time changed the educational environment. President Moi's programme in Kenya, which was popularly known as 'Nyayo free milk', was meant to improve health of pupils and encourage school attendance in early 1980s. NARC government under in Kenya in 2003 focused on Free Primary (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education programmes (FDSE).The subsequent Jubilee government focused on Free laptop programme, Competency Based Curriculum (CBC),enrolment in Vocational and Technical education programmes by the youths who do not qualify to join universities in order to acquire skills to achieve big four agenda which focuses on attainment of manufacturing; affordable housing; universal healthcare; and food security in Kenya(GOK,2005; KIPPRA, 2018)

3.2 The Right to Education

A Senate member and County Director of Education interviewed reiterated the right to education:

Every child has a right to access, equity and quality education as per our Basic Education Act no.14 of 2013.

The above results are supported by empirical findings which reiterate that the right to education is enshrined in key international documents (GOK, 2007; Mwenje&Kessio, 2015). It is evident that while the Free Primary Education (FPE) program has increased access to primary education especially among poorer households, ancillary costs of primary education such as school uniform, school infrastructure development and refurbishments costs, among other expenses shouldered by parents and guardians, continue to hinder the educational attainment of many children. In addition, the provision of quality education remains a challenge (Eshiwani, 1990; World Bank, 2018).

3.3 Policy challenges in implementation of education

County Director Interviewed reported that

Several research reports in Kenya have brought to the fore glaring discrepancies of the basic education system in Kenya and its inability to deliver quality education

It is supported by the Koech commission (GOK, 1999; World Bank, 2018) which evolved the concept of Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQUET) to reflect the vision of Kenyan education. TIQUET, as a concept embraced the values and substance that was to characterize the education system. It was to be total because it was expected to be inclusive, accommodative and life-long. It was to be integrated in its view of the purpose of learning. It focused on of delivery and outcome of the education and training process (Amutabi, 2003; Sifuna, 2005; GOK, 1999).It was anticipated that it would enhance access; equity and quality in education in Kenya thus spur economic development through multi sectoral approach (GOK, 1981; GOK, 1999)..

TIQUET had inherent innovations, namely: the expansion of access to basic education; elimination of disparities in education based on geographical, social and gender factors; introduction of manageable curriculum content; introduction of modular learning approach and credit accumulation in post- secondary education; increased access to education through expanded alternative and continuing education; flexibility in university admission; introduction of early childhood, special and technical education and; continuous assessment. The purpose of this was to make education demand-driven and to tie it to the labor market thus reduce unemployment (GOK, 1999; Amutabi, 2003; Sifuna, 2000; Kessio et.al., 2014)

Content analysis and interview with key informants revealed that the following challenges impede realization of access, quality and equity in education:

inadequate teachers, some schools at the ratio of 1:72; limited infrastructure in terms of teaching and learning materials; delay in disbursement of funds by the Ministry of education; misappropriation of funds at some levels; retrogressive cultural practices like

early marriages, child labor; mismatch between what is learnt and labor market required skills; banditry and cattle rustling in some areas due to insecurity which hinders learners from participation in schools.

County Director of Education reiterated that Sexual abuse, early pregnancies and gender stereotypes continue to affect girls' education. Although Kenya made free primary and day secondary education, there are still some indirect fees. Other issues are: high ratio of teacher to pupils, poor teacher remuneration thus regular unions unrests, poor quality of education in public school, high drop-outs and repetition rates thus wastages, inadequate and uncoordinated funding with weak governance and financial management, geographical disparities, limited availability to teaching and learning material and apathy in community participation.

It is instructive to note that free primary education was introduced in 2003 and concomitantly free secondary education in 2008. The objective of this programme is to increase access to secondary education by providing additional resources in line with the policy of providing twelve (12) years of basic education as well as meeting the constitutional requirements to provide education to all her citizens. In addition, the State Party introduced mobile schools in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya. The State Party banned extra coaching by teachers to reduce indirect and imposed fraudulent costs by some schools to parents. There was need for the government and key stakeholders to address the concerns (Chepsiror & Kessio 2015; Sifuna, 2005).

3.4 Pre-requisite conditions for effective implementation of educational Policies

Empirical literature reveals that top-down' theorists devised a list of six necessary and sufficient conditions for effective policy implementation (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979; KIPPRA, 2018), indicating that if these conditions were realized; policy should be implemented as intended:

- i. clear and logically consistent objectives
- ii. adequate causal theory (i.e. a valid theory as to how particular actions would lead to the desired outcomes)
- iii. an implementation process structured to enhance compliance by implementers (e.g. appropriate incentives and sanctions to influence subordinates in the required way)
- iv. committed, skilful, implementing officials
- v. support from interest groups and legislature
- vi. no changes in socio-economic conditions that undermine political support or the causal theory underlying the theory

Overtly, conditions necessary for effective implementation of educational Policies by political parties through the ruling government are clear and concise goals and objectives, structured systems and necessary compliance, commitment by political elites and technocrats including implementers. There is need for continuous support by all and sundry. Content analysis and key informants like County Directors of education and head teachers corroborated the aforementioned necessary conditions and was supported by findings from World Bank. (2018).

Table 1

Strategy for planning and managing the implementation of reforms in education

<i>Macro-analysis of the ease with which policy change can be implemented</i>	Analyse conditions for facilitating change and, where possible, make adjustments to simplify, i.e. one agency, clear goals, single objective, simple technical features, marginal change, short duration, visible benefits, clear costs
<i>Making values underlying the policy explicit</i>	Identify values underlying policy decisions. If values of key interests conflict with policy, support will have to be mobilized and costs minimized
<i>Stakeholder analysis</i>	Review interest groups (and individuals) likely to resist or promote change in policy at national and institutional levels; plan how to mobilize support by consensus building or rallying coalitions of support
<i>Analysis of financial, technical and managerial resources available and required</i>	Consider costs and benefits of overseas funds (if relevant); assess likely self-interested behavior within the system; review incentives and sanctions to change behaviour; review need for training, new information systems or other supports to policy change
<i>Building strategic implementation process</i>	Involve planners and managers in analysis of how to execute policy; identify networks of supporters of policy change including ‘champions’; manage uncertainty; promote public awareness ; institute mechanisms for consultation, monitoring and ‘fine tuning’ of policy

Source: Adapted from Walt (1998)

It is evident from table 1; that prudent policy makers who are technocrats and legislative politicians should consider use of several approaches to analyse their context and stakeholders simultaneously, both, ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’. A crucial skill would entail being able to map the key stakeholders, their situations, their worldview , their value system and culture , their strategies, their desired outcomes and their ability to delay, obstruct, overturn or help policy implementation and educational development. It entails Building strategic implementation process, stakeholders analysis and resources and financial analysis within a given context. It is political and involves tradeoffs.

4. Conclusions

It is evident from the study findings that political parties and government at large will continue to play an integral role in the policy development of education due to pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits it offers to its citizens. The structural and operational challenges bedeviling educational sector would be effectively addressed through collaboration and involvement of the key stakeholders as espoused by stakeholder theory. Monitoring of educational programs implementation should be ongoing to enhance effectiveness and efficiency which is inherently elusive to perfectly achieve.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that the government should continue to prioritize education through provision of both human and physical resources including sound policy frameworks as espoused in their political manifestos and key policy documents. This should be done through increased funding and timely disbursement of funds by the treasury. Further, the government and key stakeholders should also plan and manage implementation and evaluation of educational programmes. This should be done through involvement of all and sundry including the teachers unions and other players in education. Finally, there is also a need for the government and stakeholders to improve education access, equity and quality for improved economic development. Access should be done through progressive implementation of one hundred percent transition and other related policies and improvement of quality

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